

Mini Bus ADA Paratransit

Ridership Policies And Guidelines

**Finney County Transit
FIT**

**1008 N. 11th Street
Garden City, KS 67846
620-272-3626
FAX-620-271-6191**

**It is understood that FIT
passengers ride at their own
risk.**

**No liabilities will be
accepted.**

Effective Sept. 2012

Approved by the
Finney County Committee
on Aging, Inc.
09/18/2012

Eligibility: Persons who are certified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as having a disability that prevents them from riding fixed-route buses are eligible to use the Mini Bus Paratransit Service which operates within 3/4 mile either side of the City Link fixed routes. We are committed to offering courteous, safe and reliable service for all of our riders, without regard for race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, or other non-merit reasons, or handicap, nor will sexual harassment be tolerated. In order to qualify, the applicant and a health care provider must complete and both must sign the Mini Bus Paratransit application form. The applicant has 21 days from the date they first rode to submit a COMPLETED application. A decision will be made within 21 days of receipt of a completed application. Applicants will be assessed on their ability to complete a series of exercises to determine their ability to board and access the City Link fixed route bus service. Disability alone does not qualify passenger for paratransit service. If passenger is capable of riding fixed route and is over age 60 and/or has a medically documented disability he/she will receive a half fare City Link fixed route card and will not be approved for Mini Bus paratransit service. If a decision is not made within that 21 day period, the applicant will be considered as eligible until a decision is made. If an applicant is denied, the applicant will be given an explanation in writing explaining the specific reason as to why they were denied. Applicant also will be provided in writing the appeals process (see # 18). Application forms are available from the Finney County Transit (FIT) office or on-line at www.seniorcenterfc.com. The applicant will not be charged any "user fees" that cause an unreasonable burden upon the applicant, including doctor's fees and application fees. An ARNP is available at the Senior Center on a limited basis for no-cost consultation on the application and subsequent signature if verified by the ARNP. It is highly recommended that passengers utilize the integrated child safety seats for their children while riding the bus, passengers use the seat belt/shoulder harness and carry a picture ID. While riding in the small mini-van, infants and children must be secured in appropriate child safety seats per Stat of Kansas law. Child safety seats are available on a first come first served basis.

2. Hours/Days of Operation: Hours are Monday through Friday (except Holidays) from 6:00 am -7:00pm with the last call for return being 6:30 pm. Holiday notices are posted in the bus, in the transit lobby and are distributed through the local media the week prior to closings.

3. How Do I Get A Ride? All requests for rides must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. We can schedule rides up to two weeks in advance. Riders should not attempt to schedule a ride by leaving the ride requests on the answering machine. For situations when you need a ride but can't be sure of the time the ride will be needed, we will schedule you for a "will call" ride. You call the dispatcher when you are ready to be picked up and your ride request will be processed for the first available ride. We do not encourage rides that are scheduled on the same day. We realize that on occasion unforeseen circumstances arise and a same day request may be unavoidable. On those rare occasions we will attempt to accommodate rides on a first come first serve space available basis. Due to the way we schedule we do not allow on-board changes of ride destinations. You may not board the bus and ask the driver to change your booked destination. Changes should be called in to dispatch 2 hours prior to the beginning of the pick up window as outlined in #6.

4. What About Trips That I need Regularly: A subscription can be made for rides that are taken on a regular basis, at the same time, by the same individual, to regularly scheduled appointments. It is the responsibility of the rider with subscriptions to cancel any subscription ride that they do not intend to take. Individuals with subscription rides will be subject to the No Show policy and late cancellation policy outlined in #7. In addition, 3 No Shows for the subscription within 1 month will result in the loss of the subscription ride privileges. Upon request, the passenger may again be scheduled for a subscription after a 4-month suspension period.

5. Cost: Fare per person per one-way trip inside the city limits-\$1.00. Monthly Pass (unlimited rides on all Mini Bus Paratransits and City Link) - \$40.00 (Must show Monthly Pass each time on boarding or pay \$1.00 fare). Punch Cards are available in the FIT office. All passes and punch cards are non-transferable, non-refundable and non-replaceable. In the case of a fare dispute, the passenger will pay the fare and report the circumstances to the FIT office. County Fare: outside of city limits and within 5 miles driving distance of city limits - \$2.00. Driver will calculate miles driven from city limits to pick up location. Children 5 and under are free with a paying passenger. A one-way trip is considered to be one-way service to a location from another location whether or not the person disembarks. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by a person 16 or older and have the same origin and destination. Children 11 to 16 must

present picture ID to driver on boarding to ride alone.
6. Pickup Times/Wait Policy: Pick up window: Passengers must be at the main entrance 15 minutes ahead of their scheduled pick up time. Drivers may also pick up 15 minutes after the scheduled pick up time; however, they will arrive as close to the scheduled time as possible. Drivers will not wait more than **FIVE (5)** minutes for anyone to board the bus as long as it falls within the 15 minute window on either side of the scheduled pick up time. If not on board within five (5) minutes, the driver will leave and will not return that day. This will be considered a No Go and all other rides scheduled for that day will be cancelled. (See #7)

7. No Shows/Cancellations: The definition of a No Show is: A rider who has a scheduled trip and does not appear at the designated pick-up point and time, and does not cancel the trip at least two hours before the start of the scheduled pick-up window (See #6) and does not take the scheduled trip. Cancellations on and does not take the scheduled trip. Cancellations on the answering machine for rides before 6:00 am must be made by 4:00 am, or they are considered a No Show. This includes failing to be ready to board the bus within five minutes of its arrival during the pick-up window and/or cancelling with the driver when the bus arrives. The driver will attempt to notify the rider that he/she is there by honking the horn to alert the rider that the bus has arrived. FIT will attempt to contact riders who are not at the pick-up location when the vehicle arrives to let them know they must go to the vehicle or they will receive a No Show. If the rider cannot be contacted, a message will be left on an answering machine if available. FINES: \$5.00 per No Show will be assessed. Three or more unpaid No Shows and the passenger will be suspended until the No Shows are paid for. If a rider No Shows the first half of a round trip, the second half will be cancelled. Riders will receive a warning in writing after they receive the second No Show within 30 days. After 3 No Shows within 30 days, the rider will be sent a suspension letter resulting in a 30 day suspension of service. If a rider is suspended and then demonstrates a pattern of No Shows after the original suspension has ended, the rider may subsequently be suspended for longer periods. First Suspension+: 30 days; Second Suspension*: 60 days; Third Suspension*: 90 days; Fourth Suspension*: Indefinite pending demonstration that the problem behavior can and will be changed within a minimum of 90 days. Riders are not penalized for No Shows that occur due to sudden emergen

cies which make it impossible for them to cancel. Because only two hours notice is needed to cancel, it is anticipated that most riders will be able to cancel in a timely fashion. Riders are not penalized for being a No Show if the bus arrived late, that is, after the end of the pick-up window, or if a reservation error was made by the dispatcher. Riders are encouraged to discuss their record with staff if they feel they have been given a No Show in error. Disputes regarding this policy will be referred to the FIT Committee through the grievance procedure as outlined in guideline #18 and appeals process #19.

*within two years of the most recent suspension

8. Delays: Due to the number of rides provided, it is not always possible for buses to run exactly on schedule. It is important to allow extra time to ensure passenger's scheduling needs can be met.

9. Personal Assistance to Riders: Drivers may enter a commercial lobby to assist a rider to the vehicle but are not permitted to enter a residence. Drivers are permitted to assist passengers with activities directly related to boarding and de-boarding the bus. Drivers are permitted to assist special needs passengers with their packages up to the limits outlined in guideline #15 up to the door of the residence. One Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may ride with a disabled rider to assist them with their personal needs without charge. Only drivers will operate mobility aid lift/restraint system equipment. All medical equipment (oxygen tanks, walkers, etc.) will be secured by the driver for the duration of the ride. Drivers are permitted to assist in fastening/unfastening seat belts/shoulder restraints if requested by passenger. Child safety seats are available on all FIT vehicles for parents/guardians to use on a first come first serve basis.

10. Mobility Aids: Section 37.3 of the DOT's regulations implementing the ADA Act of 1990 (49 CFR Parts 27, 37 and 38) defines a "common wheelchair" as a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or four-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. A "common wheelchair" does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Drivers may assist passengers using mobility aids. Drivers will not assist passengers using mobility aids up or down stairs. Passengers are responsible for either a ramp or someone other than the bus driver in getting in and out of their home, doctor's of

fice, etc. where steps are present. Drivers are not permitted to assist individuals in transferring from a mobility aid to regular vehicle seating. Such riders must provide their own PCA to assist in their transfer. Drivers are not permitted to push mobility aids whose weight of combined passenger and mobility aid exceeds 300 lbs. These passengers are responsible for their own movement or a PCA to push and maneuver the mobility aid onto the bus, into a forward facing position and in moving it out of and away from the bus when de-boarding. All mobility aids must be secured by the 4-Point Tie-down system. It is highly recommended that passengers use the shoulder and seat belts while riding in the bus. Power driven mobility aids must be in the "off" position while on the lift.

11. Conduct, Hygiene and Prohibited Behaviors:

Threats of violence, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against any employee or other individuals are prohibited. FIT has a "zero tolerance" policy for such conduct. It will not be tolerated and it is the duty of all employees to report such conduct. If at any time the driver feels they are in an unsafe situation the driver will have the right to exercise judgment and stop the vehicle and ask passenger to get off vehicle or call authorities if needed. Inappropriate conduct, including behaviors which present a danger to other passengers, will not be tolerated. These include, but are not limited to: intoxication, fighting, arguing, sexual harassment, threatening the driver or fellow passengers, use of foul or derogatory language including excessive conversation, playing loud audio devices or engaging in any type of business, legal or illegal, on the bus or at a bus stop. Anyone's behavior that poses a safety hazard to him/her or others caused by misplaced bodily fluids will be denied bus service. At the driver's discretion, a rider who engages in persistent inappropriate and/or dangerous behavior may be required to vacate the vehicle. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed on the bus. No other food or drink is to be consumed on bus except for medical purposes as allowed by the driver. NO TOBACCO USAGE OR OPEN CONTAINERS, NO WEAPONS, AMMUNITION OR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SUCH AS CAR BATTERIES, GASOLINE, PROPANE, ETC. ARE ALLOWED ON THE BUS. NO SMOKING is allowed within 20 feet of the bus or 50 feet of FIT main entrance. If a passenger is found to have aforementioned item, he/she will be asked to vacate the bus immediately and will not be allowed to ride anymore that day. If a person refuses to vacate the bus when requested to do so by the driver for any of the above listed reasons, the police will be called to escort him/her off the bus. A Second offense

will result in a 30 day Suspension, a Third offense in a 60 day Suspension and a Fourth offense in an Indefinite Suspension pending demonstration that the problem behavior can and will be changed with a minimum of 90 days Suspension from bus service.

12. School Bus Service: Exclusive school bus transportation is not provided.

13. Pets/Service Animals: No animals other than service animals are allowed on the bus for any reason. A "service animal" is defined as an animal that is individually trained to perform a specific task for a person with a disability. Service animals include, but are not limited to, animals that guide individuals who are blind, alert individuals with hearing disabilities, pull wheelchairs or carry and pick up things for persons with mobility disabilities. Comfort or therapy animals which are used solely to provide emotional support are generally not considered service animals under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

14. Bad Weather Policy: In the event of inclement weather check local radio/TV for related closings. If USD 457 schools close down, the Mini Bus also closes down. The Senior Center Director may override the school closing by announcing via radio/TV that the bus service will run. Additionally, if the management of the Mini Bus Service feels the weather is so severe it is unsafe to operate, then operations will cease for the day in question. Drivers have the right to exercise judgment as to whether he/she can safely drive on a particular roadway, driveway or highway. In the event of high wind warnings, high profile vehicles are not allowed to travel outside the city limits. Drivers will not push wheelchairs on ramps/walks/etc. that are not clear of snow and ice.

15. Limitations: Drivers will not carry or lift parcels/carry-on items greater than 20 pounds in weight. Drivers are limited to carrying bags up flights of steps no more than 7 steps high and are only allowed to make 2 trips to carry packages to the main entry door or lobby. Drivers are not permitted to transport furniture or appliances for passengers.

16. Emergencies: The Mini Bus is not designed for medical emergency situations (absent a natural disaster where vehicles may be used for evacuation). Transportation will not be provided in these instances. Persons having a medical emergency will be instructed to call 911 so an ambulance can transport them.

17. Evictions: Passengers who do not adhere to these guidelines can and will be evicted from using the bus.

18. Grievance Procedures: This grievance procedure has been developed to assure passengers of fair and equitable access to FIT Bus Service. In the event of suspension, information will be sent outlining the appeals process with the suspension letter. When a consumer has any problem, the following procedure should be followed to resolve the conflict: each passenger is expected to communicate in writing directly to the Transportation Director or his/her designee regarding ride-related actions, occurrences or attitudes perceived as unfair or inequitable. A passenger who believes he/she has suffered a grievance should communicate the matter with the Transportation Director or his/her designee within five working days of the occurrence of the alleged grievance in an attempt to arrive at a satisfactory solution. The Transportation Director or his/her designee will have five working days to respond, making every effort to resolve the grievance at this level. If a resolution is not reached, the grievance must be described in writing and submitted to the FIT Committee within 30 days for their review. FIT is Title VI Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights compliant as posted in vehicles. Copies are available upon request.

19. Appeals: If the customer wishes to appeal the decision of the FIT Committee a written appeal must be submitted to the Finney County Committee On Aging, Inc. within 30 days. The board of directors will review the evidence presented by the party bringing the grievance and by the Transportation Director at their next regularly scheduled meeting and will provide a decision in writing within 30 days including specific reason for decision to all parties involved. If no decision is made within the 30 days, provisional services will be provided until a decision is reached. Board of Director's decision is final.

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