



General Operating Policies – Bus System

Pickup Window

The bus may arrive to transport a customer up to 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. This time period is known as the “pickup window” and is essential for the transit system to operate efficiently. The pickup window allows dispatchers to process ride requests at different times and helps drivers account for uncontrollable variables such as traffic problems and poor road conditions. Therefore, customers are required to be ready to board the bus 10 minutes before the scheduled pickup time. Unfortunately, the buses are unable to wait for people. Due to the nature of Dial-A-Ride service, waiting for customers to board generally causes delays for other customers who have scheduled rides. Therefore, it is important to be ready to board when the bus arrives within the pickup window.

Scheduling and Cancellations

Customers may schedule rides with a dispatcher up to one week in advance. Requests for bus service made more than one week in advance will not be accepted. However, requests for standing orders may be made up to two weeks in advance.

Rides must be cancelled with the dispatchers at least one hour prior to the scheduled pickup time except for early morning ride requests, which must be received before 6:30 a.m. the day of service. Rides that are cancelled and rescheduled for earlier on the same day are also exempt from this requirement. One-hour notice is still required for any rides that are cancelled and rescheduled for later in the day.

No-shows

A customer will be considered a no-show under the following circumstances:

1. When a bus arrives at a scheduled pickup location to transport a customer that does not utilize the appointment he/she made to use the bus service.
2. When a customer is not present at the specified entryway or ready to board when the bus arrives within the pickup window.
3. When the customer does not properly cancel his/her scheduled ride according to policy.

A customer will not be charged with a no-show in the event a bus does not arrive within 10 minutes after the scheduled pickup time *and* the customer calls to cancel the ride. Even if the bus is running late, failure to cancel the ride will result in a no-show.

Customers are not required to pay a fare for a no-show, nor will payment eliminate the record of a no-show. Instead, the first no-show will result in a verbal warning. The second no-show will result in a written warning. A customer with three no-shows within any six-month period will be suspended from all Trailblazer Transit and SMART services for a period of one month. Dispatchers will deliver warnings and notices of suspensions. Customers may file an appeal with a manager to lift or reduce the suspension.

Passenger Assistance

Drivers may provide limited passenger assistance to customers for the purpose of providing support and stability. For an ambulatory passenger, drivers may assist by extending an arm for the passenger to hold onto or by grasping the arm of the passenger. An individual who needs additional assistance, such as someone who is extremely weak or frail, may be required to use a wheelchair or find a personal assistant.

Drivers must be able to keep the bus in sight at all times while providing passenger assistance.

For private residences, drivers are not permitted to go beyond the threshold of the outermost door or entryway. For buildings open to the general public, drivers may assist someone through the single or double entrance doors into or out of the lobby area immediately next to the entrance. However, drivers may not roam throughout the lobby or hallways of the building. Therefore, drivers are unable to escort people to and from their rooms inside apartment complexes, nursing homes, and similar facilities.

Drivers may help carry groceries and other small packages to and from the bus. The drivers are limited to assisting with two bags of groceries or packages per passenger, and each bag or package must weigh no more than 15 pounds. Trailblazer is not responsible for any damage to items the drivers may help carry.

Customers should be prepared to ask for assistance either verbally or by waving their arms at the drivers. Drivers may automatically attempt to provide assistance if they have reason to believe a customer will have difficulty moving to or from the bus. Drivers may not assist customers without first asking and receiving permission to do so, except in cases of emergency.

Drivers are not responsible for clearing pathways. A driver may not be able to assist or transport the customer if the pathway to and from the bus is not clear or safe for passage.

Trailblazer is not responsible for any injuries sustained by someone moving to or from the bus, whether or not a driver assisted the individual. Please remember that it is the passenger's responsibility to get to and from the bus. Trailblazer may provide limited passenger assistance only as a last resort for individuals who have no one else to help them.

Backing Up

Trailblazer buses are not permitted to back up while in service. Therefore, drivers may be unable to turn into driveways and other confined areas. A bus may not travel on private, non-commercial property unless requested by a customer to do so.

Health Status and Medical Emergencies

A passenger's physical condition must be such that bus transportation will not adversely affect the health or well-being of the passenger or any other passenger. Individuals exhibiting signs of excessive pain or suffering being caused by bus travel will be immediately returned to their pick-up location or dropped off at the nearest care facility. Individuals with physical conditions that prevent them from riding the bus will be referred to an alternate transportation service.

Trailblazer does not provide transportation for medical emergencies. In the event a customer has a severe injury or illness (i.e. bleeding, vomiting), a Trailblazer team member will contact the appropriate emergency response personnel and/or instruct the customer to do the same.

Caretakers and Assistants

In the event a customer is capable of riding the bus alone but cannot make responsible decisions regarding his/her care, a caretaker is required when the customer is picked up and dropped off. If a customer is not responsible enough to ride alone, a caretaker is required at all times.

Schoolchildren in first grade or higher may be picked up or dropped off at a designated loading or unloading area at school without the need for a caretaker to be present.

In the event a passenger is non-responsive or unable to communicate in any manner, he or she will be required to have an assistant ride along to observe and care for the individual.

Wheelchairs and Scooters

Occupied wheelchairs must be in proper working order with footrests and brakes. Wheelchair occupants are required to wear both lap and shoulder belts if they remain in their chairs during transit. Drivers may

push or pull the wheelchairs to and away from the buses. However, drivers must push the wheelchairs in a forward direction for distances of more than 15 feet. Customers who transfer from a wheelchair into a seat are not required to have footrests provided the driver does not push the wheelchair when occupied.

Drivers must be able to properly secure occupied wheelchairs on the bus facing forward using standard wheelchair securements.

Trailblazer does not provide wheelchairs for customers to use, nor does Trailblazer transport empty wheelchairs unless an assistant or aide is delivering one. All wheelchairs must be secured somehow on the bus regardless of occupancy. Empty wheelchairs, scooters, and/or similar mobility devices should be secured to the floor in the same fashion as loaded wheelchairs with exception of the shoulder strap.

Mobility devices that are not compliant with the specifications defined by the Americans with Disability Act may not be permitted on the bus depending on the design of the device and circumstances of the ride.

Trailblazer may transport electric scooters designed for persons with mobility problems on a space available basis subject to the scooter being accompanied by a rider. In addition, drivers must be able to properly secure the scooter to the floor of the bus using standard wheelchair securements or the scooter will not be transported.

A passenger may remain seated on an electric scooter during transit only if the scooter is specifically designed to allow the customer to do so. The scooter must be stable and provide sufficient back support for the customer. In addition, there must be a way for the driver to properly secure the passenger to the floor of the bus using Trailblazer's lap and shoulder belts.

If a scooter does not meet the requirements to allow a person to ride on it while the bus is moving, the passenger choosing to use the scooter must transfer into a standard bus seat to provide the opportunity for customers to utilize proper safety restraints. If this is not possible, the individual will be referred to an alternate transportation service.

Miscellaneous

Passengers must present exact payment to the driver when boarding the bus unless other arrangements for payment have been made in advance with a dispatcher. Drivers do not make change. Customers without exact payment may overpay, but credit for future rides will not be provided and refunds are not permitted. However, customers may purchase tokens on the bus and keep any unused tokens for future use.

Customers are asked to pay each time they board the bus and to pay only for the current one-way ride being provided. Pre-payment for future rides on the bus is strongly discouraged. Failure to make payment for rides may result in the denial of service.

Customers are not permitted to consume food or drink on the bus with the exception of bottled water in clear plastic containers. Groceries and food items may be transported in limited quantities provided there are measures taken to prevent spilling on the seats and/or floor.

Smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted on the bus.

Weapons are not permitted on the bus including guns or knives of any sort. Trailblazer management will review requests made in advance for passengers to board with questionable items on a case-by-case basis.

Customers with walkers, packages, bags of groceries, and other loose items must be able to properly secure such items next to them on the bus. Drivers may assist with securing such items, which cannot be stored in the aisle or the elevator area. As such, bicycles and/or other large objects are not permitted on

the bus. Elevators may not be used to lift anything but people, wheelchairs, and scooters that can be properly secured on the bus.

Oxygen tanks are not permitted on the bus unless they are securely attached to a wheelchair or walker. Soft-pack oxygen tanks designed to be handheld and portable are also permitted on the bus.

Standing while the bus is in motion is not permitted, and the total number of people on the bus during transit, including the driver, may not exceed the posted bus capacity.

Animals are not permitted on the bus except for service animals recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Creatures that can be transported in spill-proof, airtight containers may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. The volunteer driver program may be an option for people needing to transport pets.

Passengers are required to wear seatbelts on the buses. Caretakers of children and infants are invited to utilize their own car seats on the buses. Although drivers may assist customers in buckling their seatbelts, caretakers are responsible for securing children in their own car seats and strapping them down in the buses. Strollers are permitted on the bus provided that they can be secured properly next to the caretaker.

Drivers are not permitted to accept tips. However, customers are welcome to offer employees non-monetary gifts of nominal value on an occasional basis to show appreciation. Customers insisting on making a monetary donation or wishing to leave a memorial may do so by contributing to the Trailblazer Employee Fund, which is designed for use only by the employees. Although such contributions are greatly appreciated, Trailblazer employees gladly serve without the expectation of a gratuity.