

Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department

Passenger Guidelines

*A Passenger's Guide for Accessing Services and Operating
Policies and Procedures*



APPROVED BY FORT BEND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

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ABOUT FORT BEND COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Our mission is to provide safe and efficient public transportation services while maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction.

All residents and visitors of Fort Bend County are eligible for services offered by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department.

Fort Bend County Public Transportation is a recipient of Federal funding to provide public transportation. In certain circumstances, statutes or funding sources may dictate passenger and scheduling limitations, including but not limited to, service type, service area, scheduling and/or rider limitations (all elderly, handicapped, etc.). When applicable, these restrictions will be posted on the County’s website and/or in route schedules.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Passenger Guidelines is to provide our passengers a guide for accessing services and information on operating policies and procedures.

Translation of these policies into different languages will be accommodated upon request.

CONTACT INFORMATION & HOURS

Fort Bend County
Public Transportation Department
12550 Emily Court, Suite 400
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Toll Free: 866-751-TRIP (8747)

Office Number: 281-633-RIDE (7433)

Fax Number: 281-243-6710
832-471-1843

Email: Transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov.

Individuals with hearing impairments can make a reservation utilizing the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). The individual would dial 711 which would connect him/her to TRS. Individuals with vision impairments may request printed materials in larger fonts upon request.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: www.FBCTransit.org.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 Closed Saturdays, Sundays and County Holidays*
 *With the exception of special services.

COUNTY HOLIDAYS

Dates for each County Holiday are available on the County website.
 New Year’s Day
 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 Good Friday
 Memorial Day
 Independence Day
 Labor Day
 Fort Bend County Fair Day
 Veterans Day
 Thanksgiving Holiday
 Christmas Holiday

SERVICE HOURS

Operating hours for Demand Response services vary according to trip requests. In most cases, first drop-offs are scheduled for 8:00 a.m. and last pick-ups are scheduled for 5:00 p.m.

Operating hours for Commuter and Point Deviation services are provided according to published schedules. Services may begin as early as 4:30 a.m. and end as late as 9:00 p.m. Schedules for these services are posted on the County website and are available through our office.

Special services, including events and/or charter services may also be provided during and after regular business hours.

Information, including service type, service hours and fares is posted on the County’s website and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.

Changes to operating hours due to grant funding and/or special services, emergency events (weather and other emergencies) will be published on the website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.), through Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management, when applicable, and any other sources deemed necessary and/or available.

SERVICE AREA

Trip must originate in Fort Bend County.

1. For Demand Response services, the service area is described as all locations

within Fort Bend County and locations up to one (1) mile outside the boundaries of Fort Bend County.

2. Services to the Texas Medical Center and Veterans Hospital in Houston will be provided via transfer to the Fort Bend Commuter service into the Texas Medical Center. A transfer point to the service may be made at any of the Fort Bend County Park and Ride locations or at other transfer locations designated by Fort Bend County. The transfer point location must be made in advance by calling and speaking to a reservationist.
3. Transfers to Houston’s Metro service, or to services provided by other public operators servicing areas adjacent to Fort Bend County, will also be provided by the Demand/Response and Commuter services. As a general rule, park and ride facilities or other locations immediately adjacent to Fort Bend County or within Fort Bend County will be used as transfer locations.
4. Special event and charter services may be provided in service area, see Charter Policy for more information.
5. Commuter, Point Deviation and Fixed Routes will have the service area defined in published schedules. Schedules are available on the Fort Bend County website, Transportation office and/or in vehicles.

SERVICE TYPES

Fort Bend County Public Transportation offers “Shared Ride” services. Shared ride service is a transit service that picks up several passengers at different pick up locations before taking them to their respective destinations.

DEMAND RESPONSE / PARA-TRANSIT

Shared ride bus service requiring advance reservations. Buses serve different locations and passengers each day dependent upon the locations requested by passengers. Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the driver or bus attendant must assist individuals with disabilities with the use of ramps, lifts, and securement systems. If it is necessary for personnel to leave their seats to provide assistance, they must do so. Fort Bend County Public Transportation personnel must ensure a passenger with a disability is able to take advantage of the vehicle accessibility and safety features provided.

CURB-TO-CURB SERVICE

Bus arrives and departs from curbside. Drivers are instructed to use a curbside location that provides a safe environment for boarding and alighting

AMBASSADOR SERVICES

As grant funding is made available, Ambassador Services may be provided by Fort Bend County. An Ambassador is an individual who works directly with passengers providing assistance from the passenger’s door to the vehicle and from

the vehicle to the final destination. This personalized service is to assist with the safe passage for those unable to travel unescorted or alone; those who need additional help with boarding and alighting vehicles, and passengers with agitation, behavioral and cognitive issues. Ambassadors may be assigned to bus stop locations and/or transit vehicles. Ambassadors will not be drivers, will not attach passenger securements (seat belts, wheelchair tie down, etc.) or operate mechanical lifts or ramps. An Ambassador's function is solely restricted to the duties stated below and can assist with the following:

1. "Gentle Support," such as opening doors and providing verbal guidance.
2. Physical support such as assisting passengers with balance, climbing steps, handling packages or performing similar functions.
3. Assistance at bus stops will be limited to ensuring passenger boards the correct vehicle and are advised not to wander into the street or unsafe locations while waiting for vehicle or transfer.
4. Assistance from **door-to-door** will be limited to escorting the passenger to or from a building doorway to the vehicle.
5. Escort a passenger to or from a building doorway as necessary to "**hand over**", or "receive", the passenger to/from a personal escort within the building.

Drivers and/or Ambassadors are not authorized to cross the threshold of building doorways or responsible for locking building doors. Drivers and/or Ambassadors are authorized to open and close building doors as a courtesy. Drivers and/or Ambassadors are not responsible for signing any passenger in or out of a facility.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

A subscription ride is offered as a convenience to passengers and is provided to passengers who request routine trips to the same destination on a regular schedule (school, work, medical appointments). It enables the passenger to reserve a trip without having to phone in reservations each time the trip is needed.

An eligible subscription trip is defined as a "set/fixed transportation trip (trip is at the same time, same place, same day(s)) on a continuing schedule." Subscription riders are still required to phone in cancellations according to the cancellation policy defined in these guidelines.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) limits subscription rides in complementary para-transit services to no more than 50% of the trips available in any given service hour. Subscription trips will be allowed based on this limitation.

POINT DEVIATION

Shared ride bus service that travel along the same road(s) each day with timed stops at designated locations. With pre-arranged approval, buses can deviate up to ¼ of a mile from the route to pick-up and drop-off customers and/ or to accommodate pick-ups and drop-offs at high demand locations.

COMMUTER

Shared ride bus service which operates on a set schedule from and to set parking lot locations with scheduled drop-offs and pick-ups within the business districts. Designed primarily to accommodate employment trips but open for general trip purposes. Park and Ride locations include:

Fort Bend County Fairgrounds
 4310 State HWY 36 South
 Rosenberg, Texas 77471

University of Houston Sugar Land
 14000 University Blvd
 Sugar Land, Texas 77479

AMC Theater First Colony
 3301 Town Centre Blvd
 Sugar Land, Texas 77479

Drop off locations within the business districts include the Texas Medical Center, Greenway Plaza and the Galleria area in Houston.

DEMAND RESPONSE / PARA-TRANSIT

RESERVATIONS

Reservations are accepted one (1) business day and up to thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the need for transportation. “Will call” trips are not allowed as Fort Bend County Public Transportation does not offer same day service.

Reservations **are** accepted by telephone Monday through Friday, excluding County Holidays, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Trips are scheduled for drop-offs accommodating first appointment times no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and last pick-up times no later than 5:00 p.m.

Reservations are **not** accepted by voicemail, telephone message, text, facsimile, or electronic mail. Passengers or their delegate must speak directly with a Reservationist to schedule a ride.

For every Demand Response call, the Reservationist requires the same information. Before you call, have all of the necessary information ready. This will ensure shorter

wait times for each passenger making a reservation.

1. **Have your ID number or first and last name.** Passengers are required to furnish their contact information at the time a reservation is made and/or when their information has changed.
2. **Know how many passengers are coming along.** Passengers may reserve a ride for themselves and/or other passengers. All passengers must be listed at the time the primary reservation is made.
3. **Special needs accommodations and/or requests must be disclosed at time of reservation.** Special needs accommodations include requests for assistance to/from the door, use of a wheelchair, walker, cane, hearing or vision impairment accommodations, assistance with packages, assistance with boarding and alighting vehicles, etc.
4. **Know your exact pick-up and drop-off location(s) and time(s).** All reservations are subject to space and time availability. Passengers may reserve a single ride, multiple rides, and multiple destinations for one day or multiple days. Multiple rides, multiple destinations, or multiple day trips require additional reservation time.
5. **Passengers requesting multiple days** may be asked to call back later to find out availability for the requested trips, and/or to get their scheduled pick-up times. At this point in the call, the Reservationist will determine if there is availability to book the reservation.
6. **Keep track of the date and time of the reservation.** Make sure you are at the scheduled pick-up location **15 minutes prior** and 15 minutes after to the scheduled pick-up time. The bus driver is unable to call you when they arrive and will only wait 5 minutes before they must move on to the next passenger.
7. **Passengers presenting themselves** for boarding without a prior reservation may be turned away. Drivers do not make a determination on additional, unscheduled passenger boarding. Drivers are required to contact dispatch for instruction.

SUBSCRIPTION RIDE RESERVATIONS

1. Subscriptions will be taken on a first come, first serve basis based upon availability in the requested service hour(s).
2. Passengers are allowed to request subscription rides for one-way trips and multiple leg trips.
3. When only one leg or portions of a multiple leg trip subscription request is available, passengers will be allowed a subscription for the portion(s) of the trip

that are available.

4. Any change to a subscription ride (time, location, day, etc.) will cancel the subscription and a **new** subscription will need to be requested. **The subscription will be treated as a new request.**
5. Subscriptions may be placed on hold for a period of no more than thirty (30) calendar days without cancellation.
6. Passengers must notify the reservations office to place a subscription ride on hold. The Reservationist will note in the passenger's file: the name of the person requesting the hold, date of the request, date(s) for the subscription hold and the date the subscription trip is to resume. Requests to place a subscription trip on hold must be made prior to a passenger receiving a late cancel or no-show trip.
7. Subscription requests will be denied if more than 50% of the total available trips in any given service hour are dedicated to subscription rides. Subscriptions may be cancelled if the subscription rides in any given service hour exceed 50% of the available trips in the service hour.

SCHEDULING GUIDELINES

1. Reservation and scheduling personnel are not authorized to book/schedule trips that will violate on-time performance goals, ride time limitations, and/or service boundaries.
2. Time needed to accommodate passengers with disabilities will be considered and allowed in all routes. Passengers should expect extended wait times to accommodate these needs when applicable.
3. Drivers are not authorized to adjust schedules on the day of service.
4. Passengers should expect an on-board time (ride time) of ten minutes to an hour and a half. If the passenger is on the bus for more than an hour and a half it is a violation against Fort Bend Public Transportation's policy and will be addressed.
5. Attempts will be made to schedule pick-up or drop-offs no earlier or later than requested or set time. All attempts will be made to accommodate the request both when the trip is scheduled and on the day of service; however, passengers are advised that "day of service" conditions can affect the ability to provide efficient service.
6. Passengers should expect to ride with other passengers. Schedulers are not authorized to schedule trips so only one passenger is on-board the vehicle for a trip. Scheduling will be done to ensure the maximum numbers of passengers are

accommodated on each vehicle while meeting on-time performance and ride time expectations.

CANCELLATIONS

Passengers must notify Fort Bend County Public Transportation of all cancellations no later than the business day before the scheduled ride. Passengers are encouraged to call in cancellations as far in advance as possible so that another passenger will be able to use the time allotted for your trip.

ADVANCE CANCEL

An “Advance Cancel” occurs when the cancellation is received before 5:00 p.m. of the business day prior to the day of the scheduled trip or as far in advance as possible. An Advance Cancel does not count against the passenger and is encouraged.

LATE CANCEL

A “Late Cancel” occurs when the cancellation is received after 5:00 p.m. of the business day prior to the day of the scheduled trip or on the day of service. A Late Cancel is counted towards the Suspension Policy.

CANCEL-AT-DOOR

A “Cancel-At-Door” occurs when a vehicle arrives at a scheduled pick-up location within the on-time window and the passenger, or someone at the location on the rider’s behalf and declines the ride. If a passenger Cancels-At-Door on his/her first leg trip (e.g. outbound/pickup) and has one or more trips scheduled on the same day (e.g. return trip), Fort Bend Transit will automatically cancel the subsequent trip(s). It is up to the passenger to call Reservations if the return trip is needed.

NO-SHOW

A “No-Show” occurs when a vehicle arrives at a scheduled pick-up location within the on-time window, waits five (5) minutes and the passenger is not at the location of the scheduled pick-up or refuses the trip. If a passenger No-Shows his/her first leg trip (e.g. outbound/pickup) and has one or more trips scheduled on the same day (e.g. return trip), Fort Bend Transit will automatically cancel the subsequent trip(s). It is up to the passenger to call Reservations if the return trip is needed.

COMMUTER, POINT DEVIATION AND FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

There are no reservations required for the Commuter, Point Deviation and/or Fixed Route services. We offer a variety of bus schedules from three park and ride locations situated in Fort Bend County along with the Point Deviation/Fixed-Route service which operates in the Richmond-Rosenberg area. For more information or to obtain copies of the schedules you can contact our office or visit us online at www.FBCTransit.org.

1. Drivers must follow designated schedules and routes.
2. Drivers are to hold at a stop until the scheduled departure time. The drivers are to leave the stop at the scheduled departure time once all passengers have boarded or alighted.
3. Morning commuter routes will be allowed to perform drop off stops up to five (5) minutes before the scheduled time and continue their route onto the next stop location.
4. Reverse commuters must be at their stop at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled time to ensure they do not miss their bus. The same will apply for noon time reverse commuters boarding at the Fort Bend County park and ride lots.
5. Drivers are not allowed to change the order of pick-up and drop-offs nor are they allowed to change the route taken by the vehicle without prior approval from the dispatcher or operations supervisor.
6. On-board time (ride time) is scheduled to be no longer than one and a half hours (1.5) per passenger. Destination travel time can and will be considered when scheduling trips. Exceptions to ride time limitations must be approved by the operations supervisor or his/her designee.
7. Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fixed route stop announcements by a transit provider must be announced (by personnel or a recording system) at least at transfer points with other fixed routes, other major intersections and destination points, and intervals along a route sufficient to permit individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities to be oriented to their location. Furthermore, the transit personnel must announce any stop upon request.

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM

Guaranteed Ride Home is a free service that provides commuters a way home in the event of a midday emergency. For eligibility, riders must be registered prior to needing service. Registration is done by filling out a registration form and returning the form to Fort Bend County Public Transportation. The Guaranteed Ride Home service can be utilized up to three times per calendar year. Once the three free rides are used, passengers may purchase additional trips at their own expense. Examples of approved emergencies include personal illness, illness of a family member, a death in the family, and unscheduled overtime required by your employer. In the event of an emergency, call 281-633-7433. Once a staff member verifies enrollment in the program, a service provider will pick you up from your place of employment and take you to your car.

DISPATCHING

Dispatchers are communication personnel responsible for providing drivers and passenger's information throughout the day of service. On the day of service,

Dispatchers provide passengers with an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) for a bus when requested. The ETA is calculated by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation's scheduling program.

The ETA changes as the route is performed and data is updated in the system throughout the day. Requests regarding an ETA for Demand Response/Para-Transit before the day of a scheduled ride should be directed to Reservations staff by calling 281-633-RIDE (7433).

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

Demand Response trips are considered "on-time" if the vehicle arrives within a thirty (30) minute window. A trip is considered on-time if the vehicle arrives fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time or fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Commuter, Point Deviation Routes and/or Fixed Route Service are considered "on-time" if the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up time or within 5 (five) minutes after the scheduled time.

FARE POLICY

A one-way fare **must** be paid each time you board the bus. The passenger can use cash or a pre-purchased ticket. From time to time Fort Bend County may offer "free fare" services in order to promote the use of transportation services and/or as part of special event(s).

1. All passengers except for Personal Care Assistant (PCA) are required to pay a fare.
2. Children and infants are charged full fare.
3. Purchases of ticket books are **non-refundable**.
4. **Exact change is required for cash fares.** Drivers do not carry, handle cash, or make change.
5. Tickets and/or cash must be put in fare box located at the front of the vehicle.
6. Passengers will not be immediately refused for non-payment of fares; however, service can be suspended for non-payment. See also Suspension Policy.
 - a. For the purposes of tracking non-payments, passengers refusing to provide their name and contact information, can be immediately denied service.
 - b. Drivers do not determine whether a passenger may board without a fare. The driver is required to have the dispatcher or operations supervisor approve the request for boarding without paying the appropriate fare.

Ticket books may be purchased by credit card online at www.FBCTransit.org, by mail or in person at the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administration office located at:

12550 Emily Court, Suite 400
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

Tickets may also be purchased in person at the following businesses located at:

Kroger
4825 Sweetwater Blvd
Sugar Land, Texas 77479

Passenger employers and/or service providers are allowed to purchase tickets in bulk and distribute them to their employees or patrons. Businesses or agencies wishing to provide this service can contact Fort Bend County Public Transportation for further information.

For more information call the Fort Bend County Public Transportation at 281-633-RIDE (7433).

PASSENGER RULES

Please help us keep our services as safe as possible for you and all of our passengers by following these rules at all times:

1. Do not wait in the street as the bus approaches.
2. Passengers must be dressed in clothing that covers the body and wear shoes. Individuals not properly dressed will not be allowed to enter transit facilities or board vehicles and/or to remain in or around Fort Bend County properties.
3. All passengers must wear seat restraints including shoulder harness, when available.
4. Passengers twelve (12) years or under must be accompanied by a guardian or parent at least eighteen (18) years of age or older.
5. Passengers must provide approved seat restraints for children forty (40) pounds or less.
6. No standing or sitting in the aisle or stairwell.
7. Smoking is NOT permitted on-board vehicles or in transit facilities.
8. Alcohol is NOT prohibited on-board vehicles and/or in or on County facilities in accordance with all local, state, and Federal laws.

9. Consumption of non-alcoholic beverages, small snacks such as candy, chips, fruit, etc. is allowed on-board vehicles provided drinks are in covered non-spill container, kept out of the aisle and seats, and containers or snacks are removed from the vehicle when the passenger exits the vehicle.
10. Immediately notify the driver if a beverage or food is spilled or if any trash or personal items are dropped or not secured inside the vehicle. Passengers should not move from their seats while the vehicle is in motion to clean-up a spill or to secure loose objects. Upon notification of a hazard, the driver will notify dispatch of the need to stop the vehicle. The driver will locate a safe location to stop the vehicle. The route will resume as soon as the spill is cleaned and/or the items are secured.
11. Medical equipment and supplies such as oxygen bottles, syringes, etc. will only be allowed on vehicles if they are prescribed by a physician and are properly secured or stowed while the vehicle is in motion.
 - a. Fort Bend County's Public Transportation service is not equipped to accommodate passengers needing specialized medical attention, monitoring equipment or procedures while traveling. Requests for these types of services will be referred to private providers of medical transportation services.
12. Passengers are to refrain from speaking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion unless it is an emergency.
13. Passengers shall follow the driver's instructions.
14. Passengers will only be picked up and dropped off at the addresses given at the time of booking.
15. No person shall draw, write, paint, mark upon, or deface any bus or portion of a transit facility.
16. Drivers shall secure all wheelchairs tie downs for passengers utilizing wheelchairs. All wheelchairs must have their wheels locked and must be properly secured while on the vehicle. Drivers may also provide assistance securing lap and shoulder belts for passengers utilizing wheelchairs

If a seat or wheelchair tie-down location has a seat belt that is not working or missing the seat or tie-down location it cannot be used for seating passengers or securing passengers in wheelchairs.
17. Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down a single-step curb.

18. Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down one single stair step. Drivers are not authorized to maneuver wheelchairs up or down multiple steps.
19. Drivers are authorized to provide necessary assistance in boarding and alighting vehicles. Assistance includes opening and closing the vehicle doors, hand support on the vehicle stairwell or lift, assistance with bags meeting the bag restrictions contained in these guidelines, and assistance securing seatbelts.
20. Walkers, canes and other mobility devices are allowed on vehicles. Mobility devices must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways.
21. Bags (handbags, shopping bags, briefcases, backpacks, suitcases, etc.), umbrellas and other carry-on items are allowed on vehicles subject to the guidelines provided herein. All items brought on-board vehicles shall be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways or take up seating space. Items shall not be left unattended or block entrances, exits, or passageways at stops or in facilities. Passengers will only be allowed to board vehicles with the number of carry-on items they can effectively handle independently.
22. Shopping bags, similar to those provided in grocery stores, are limited to no more than six (6) bags per passenger with each bag weighing less than ten (10) pounds. Larger shopping bags are limited to no more than two (2) per passenger weighing less than thirty (30) pounds. Briefcases and backpacks are limited to one (1) weighing no more than 30 pounds and must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block aisles and walkways.
23. Suitcases are limited to two (2) small suitcases weighing no more than thirty (30) pounds each and meeting the size limitations imposed by air carriers for carry-on luggage. Suitcases exceeding the quantity allowed and/ or the weight and size requirements are not allowed on vehicles. Suitcases must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block aisles and walkways.
24. Individuals who are unable to travel independently, safely and securely on their own accord, whether due to physical or cognitive disabilities, and regardless of age, must be accompanied by a personal care assistant.
25. Profanity, abusive, or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles, within County facilities, or verbally expressed to an employee or passenger, is **not** allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/ or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.
26. Aggressive behaviors or inappropriate physical contact or displays of body parts by a passenger to the driver and/or passengers at any time **will** result in immediate

removal from the vehicle/facility and potentially permanent suspension from transportation services.

27. No person shall spit in or upon any bus, transit facility, passenger, or transit employee.
28. The transit facilities of Fort Bend County are designated for the sole and exclusive use of passengers of the transit system. Seats, benches, parking lots, and other areas are provided as passenger waiting areas, and no person shall sleep in these or any portion of a transit facility.

BIKE RACKS

All Fort Bend County Public Transportation buses feature exterior bike racks attached to the front of the bus. Each bike rack can hold two bicycles with 20" wheels. Spaces are on a first come, first serve basis. There is no charge to use them.

Please help us keep our services as safe as possible for you and all of our passengers by following these rules at all times:

1. Bicyclists **MUST** notify the bus operator before loading or unloading their bicycle.
2. Bicyclists are responsible for securing and removing their bike to/from the bike rack.
3. The bus operator **cannot** assist with securing or removing the bike; however, they can provide verbal instructions.
4. After unloading your bike, never cross in front of the bus. Wait until the bus has left the stop.
5. Motor-powered bicycles, tandem bicycles, tricycles and bicycles with training wheels are **NOT** permitted.
6. Bicycles are **NOT** allowed on the bus.
7. If bicyclists violate this policy, they may be asked to remove their bicycles from the bus.
8. Bicyclists must provide their own lock and assume responsibility for their bicycle.
9. Bicycles left on the bus bike rack or at a Fort Bend County Public Transportation facility for ten days or longer are considered abandoned and will be removed by Fort Bend County.

10. Any unclaimed personal property (i.e. bicycle) removed by Fort Bend County will be held for a period of two weeks (14 calendar days). At the expiration of two weeks, any unclaimed personal property will be deemed “abandoned” and turned over to the County Purchasing Agent for disposition.

Fort Bend County Public Transportation is not responsible for personal injury, property damage or property loss arising from the use of the bike racks. Fort Bend County Public Transportation assumes no responsibility and passengers use the bus bike racks at their own risk.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations, which serve the public, must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are allowed. Service animals are also permitted to ride on board Fort Bend County Public Transportation vehicles and accompany individuals in any Public Transportation facilities where the public is normally allowed or where an individual has been invited by a staff member to a location not normally open to the public.

The following definition describes the service animals permitted. Service animals are animals individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities including assisting people who have visual or auditory impairments, assisting with wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. For example, a person with diabetes may have a dog that is trained to alert him when his blood sugar reaches high or low levels; or a person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.

In situations where it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, the staff may ask:

1. Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the service animal been trained to perform?

Information obtained will be used to determine access to Public Transportation facilities and vehicles. Passengers who use service animals will not be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons.

Passengers are responsible for service animals in transit facilities and vehicles.

1. A service animal must always be under the control of the owner or handler.
2. The owner or handler is responsible for caring for and supervising the service animal.
3. All service animals must be current with their vaccinations.

A passenger who uses a service animal will not be refused access or be asked to remove his/her service animal from the premises (i.e., bus, facility) **unless**:

1. The service animal is out of control, and the animals' owner does not take effective action to control it.
2. The service animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
3. The service animal is not housebroken.
4. The service animals are not current with their vaccinations.

Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not considered service

animals and are not allowed in vehicles or in transit facilities.

SAFETY / SECURITY POLICY

The safety of passengers, employees and contractors is a primary concern for our department. As with other segments of the transportation industry, Fort Bend County Public Transportation has developed practices designed to prevent security incidents. Employees, contractors and passengers are encouraged to increase their awareness of security concerns and to immediately report **ANY** concern to department staff or law enforcement officials. Matters of security are taken **seriously**, and **violations** of the security policy will result in service suspension and/or prosecution. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will contact appropriate law enforcement or medical services to respond to security incidents where and when it is deemed necessary by Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s). The department has developed the following policies to help ensure the safety of our passengers, employees and contractors.

1. Firearms are strictly prohibited unless specifically authorized by law.
2. Threatening language or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles, within County facilities, or verbally expressed to an employee or passenger, is not allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.
3. Any passenger who poses a threat to himself/herself, the driver, or any other passenger will be removed from the vehicle and county facilities.
4. Fort Bend County Public Transportation and/or its contracted service provider(s) will request law enforcement or medical officials to remove individuals from vehicles or facilities who are violating laws, presenting a danger to themselves or other passengers, disrupting services and/or have physical or mental symptoms requiring medical attention.
5. Passengers who observe any suspicious behavior by individuals or groups notice unattended or suspicious looking bags, packages, or substances on board vehicles or at county facilities should immediately report the observance to Fort Bend County staff and appropriate law enforcement agencies.
6. All threats of bodily or physical harm to Fort Bend County employees, agents, passengers or threats regarding destruction of facilities, equipment, or vehicles, are taken seriously and will not be considered a joke. Individuals posing such threats will be immediately removed from facilities and subject to the legal consequences of such actions.
7. Loitering is not allowed in or around any Fort Bend County Public Transportation Facility or on-board vehicles. Any individual(s) seen in office areas, parking

premises, bus stop areas, and/or on-board or around vehicles and equipment are subject to being stopped and questioned regarding their reasons for being in or around the facility. If the individual(s) have business reasons for being in or around Fort Bend County Public Transportation equipment and facilities, they may be escorted to the proper person or facility to verify a legitimate business reason for being on site and/or asked to complete their business as expeditiously as possible. If no legitimate business reason is noted, the individual(s) will be escorted off Fort Bend County properties.

If the individual(s) become threatening in any way, law enforcement officers will be called to the scene and asked to remove the individual(s) from Fort Bend County Properties.

8. Disturbing, threatening, or prank telephone calls will be reported to law enforcement organizations for appropriate handling and follow up.
9. Any unreasonably loud, disturbing or unnecessary noise that causes material distress, discomfort, or injury to passengers and/or drivers is not allowed. This includes playing a radio, radio device, phonograph, musical instrument, portable stereo, etc. at volumes that can be heard by other passengers and/or the driver. The use of portable speakers is not allowed by passengers.
10. Passengers on-board vehicles and/or in or around facilities during threatening events must follow directions given by Fort Bend County staff and/or law enforcement officials. This includes following instructions for evacuating vehicles and facilities and/or sheltering in place.
11. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) reserve the right to request medical attention and/or emergency medical services for passenger's on-board vehicles or in transit facilities.
12. All Fort Bend County employees are instructed to follow universal precautions to reduce the likelihood of exposure and spread of disease. Employees may use disposable latex gloves, disinfectants, and/or hand sanitizers and/or have them available for use by passengers.
13. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider reserve the right to request police intervention should any type of altercation or disagreement occur regarding fare payments in/or around vehicles or county facilities.
14. Fort Bend County may take legal action against passengers who refuse to pay fares, are involved in altercations or incidents regarding fares, and/or who utilize fraudulent or counterfeit fare media.
15. NEVER try to retrieve something that rolls under the bus.

16. It is Fort Bend County Public Transportation’s policy to require all commuter passengers to board at the designated pick up/drop off locations. This policy exists because of a number of safety concerns including: passengers chasing buses, running across parking lot/parking aisles and through-ways, running in front of/behind or alongside buses while they are stationary and in motion, and waiting in areas where there is no sidewalk or medium.
17. Vehicle Operating Standards dictate vehicles will not be operated without working heating and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and/or working safety features (windshield wipers, turn signals, etc.). If a HVAC or safety system failure occurs while the vehicle is in service, passengers will be required to transfer to another vehicle when another vehicle is made available at a transfer location designated by the dispatcher.

SUSPENSION POLICY

A combined total of six (6) or more late cancellations, cancel-at-door, and/or no-show trips within a ninety (90) day period will result in a thirty (30) day suspension of service. A late cancel, cancel at door, and/or a no show trip will not count against the passenger when it is an error on Fort Bend Transportation’s part. For instance if the bus arrives outside the window of the scheduled pickup time and/or the bus does not wait five minutes after arriving for pickup.

Passengers will not be immediately refused for non-payment of fares; however, service will be suspended for a minimum of 30 days upon three (3) non-payments of fares in a ninety (90) day period.

1. A warning letter will be sent to violators informing them of their policy violation. The warning letter will include a listing of the number of late cancellations, cancel-at-door and/or no-show trips that have occurred.
2. After a warning letter is sent and the passenger continues to violate the policy, a suspension letter will be sent. The suspension letter will include a listing of the number of late cancellations, cancel-at-door, and/or no-show trips that occurred, and the dates of the pending suspension.
3. No more than two (2) suspensions per year are permitted.
4. A “third” suspension within a one year period will result in a six (6) month suspension from service. The one year period begins with the date of the first suspension.

For additional information or questions regarding our Suspension Policy, please call our office at 281-633-(RIDE) 7433.

SUSPENSION APPEALS

Passengers receiving a service suspension notice for violation of late cancellations,

cancel-at-door, no-shows, safety and security, fare policies or any other reason are allowed to appeal the decision.

1. In order to request an appeal the passenger must submit a written request to the Public Transportation office postmarked within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the suspension notice. A request for an appeal can also be emailed to: transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov
2. A Fort Bend County Public Transportation staff member will contact the passenger to schedule an appeal hearing.
3. Appeals will be held at an accessible Fort Bend County facility or can be conducted over the phone if requested by the passenger.
4. Passengers who choose to appeal should be prepared to provide a detailed description of why they believe the violations should be excused. Supporting documentation, if applicable, should be included.
5. The Advisory Committee will hear all appeals and the decision of the Advisory Committee is final.
6. No suspension will take effect if the customer has filed an appeal in accordance with the instructions and deadlines noted in this policy, and/or the Advisory Committee has not determined the outcome of the appeal.
7. A Fort Bend County Public Transportation staff member will advise customers in writing of its decision concerning their appeal within ten (10) days of the hearing. If the Advisory Committee upholds the suspension, the notice of decision will provide customers with the beginning and end date of the suspension period.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Fort Bend County Public Transportation welcomes your comments and complaints. We are committed to using passenger feedback as a tool to improve our quality of service. If you experience any dissatisfaction with the service and wish to file a complaint, you can call our office and our staff will take a verbal complaint.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities.

Fort Bend County is committed to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation in support of our mission to provide high quality transit services for all Americans. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination you may file a complaint with the Fort Bend County Title VI Coordinator.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, or other protected status in programs & activities receiving federal financial assistance (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

Fort Bend County is committed to taking affirmative action to assure that no person shall be excluded with regard to the routing, scheduling, or quality of service of transportation service on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, or other protected status.

If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination you may file a complaint with the Fort Bend County Title VI Coordinator by calling the Fort Bend County Title VI Officer at 281-633-RIDE or by sending a written complaint to:

Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department
 ATTN: Title VI Officer
 12550 Emily Court Ste. 400
 Sugar Land, TX 77478

Or via email at: transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov

Complaints may also be filed with the following organization no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination:

Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights
 ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator
 East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
 Washington, DC 20590

PUBLIC COMMENT

Fort Bend County Commissioners have established a means of providing the public with an opportunity to express opinions and concerns regarding a major service change or fare increase. Refer to the Public Participation Plan for details which can be found on the Fort Bend County Public Transportation website.

All Fort Bend County employees and contractor are expected to treat the public and passengers courteously. Employees and contracted staff are expected to be responsive to concerns and to use tact and diplomacy while interacting with customers. Customers are encouraged to report any instance where they feel an employee or contractor has failed to meet this policy.

APPROVED BY:



Grady Prestage, Commissioner, Precinct 2
Presiding Officer of Commissioners Court, January 15, 2019

1-15-2019

Date

REVIEWED BY:



Paulette Shelton
Public Transit Director

Date

Attest:



Laura Richard
Fort Bend County Clerk

