



Community Transit
of
Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.
(Updated 2-5-2024)

Passenger Handbook

Mission Statement

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc. is committed to providing safe, reliable and courteous public transportation to the counties of Brown, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Edmunds, Faulk, Grant, Hamlin, Lincoln, Marshall, McPherson, Roberts and Spink, Public transportation promotes quality of life, livability, self-sufficiency and freedom through mobility.

Core Values of Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.

*Accessibility * Availability * Accountability * Coordination * Equality * Integrity
* Professionalism * Quality * Respect * Teamwork

Website: www.communitytransitws.com

Intent of Passenger Handbook

Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc. is happy to serve the counties of Brown, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Edmunds, Faulk, Grant, Hamlin, Lincoln, Marshall, McPherson, Roberts and Spink. With affordable and efficient demand response public transportation system.

Our passengers are the most important part of our agency and providing you with safe, comfortable and affordable transportation is our number one priority.

This document provides a reference related to your responsibilities as a passenger of our service. The enclosed policies serve as a guide in making decisions which affect your responsibility and safety.

All policies will be enforced in a consistent manner. If you feel you have been treated unfairly in any way, please see the appeals process included in this document.

Hours of Operation and Scheduling Rides

Hours of operation and days of service are dependent on the location of the system. Please call the local number for information. (See CTWSI Phone Directory on page 11).

Out-of-town trips are available upon request and available assets. Scheduling out-of-town rides should be done with as much advance notice as possible. Out-of-town trips are based on a price per mile and will coincide with current Medicaid rates.

Scheduling rides in Codington, Hamlin and Clark counties must be scheduled one business day prior by 3 p.m. Out-of-town trips should be scheduled one week in advance and are subject to available resources.

The city of Watertown is the only location currently providing Saturday service (6 a.m. to 4 p.m.) and said service is available only in the city of Watertown. The office is closed but a dispatcher will be on duty for phone calls only. No reservations are taken.

Drivers in Watertown **CANNOT** take reservations on the bus) - only cancellations. Cancellations can be called in anytime from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday thru Friday and from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Scheduling rides in all other locations should be done a day in advance, however, same day service can be done if there are resources available. Out of town trips should be scheduled at least one-week in advance. When scheduling your ride, please provide the dispatcher with your first and last name, physical addresses of pickup and drop off destination and your appointment and pickup time(s).

Passengers who require a regular ride (work, therapy, school, etc.) may create a standing reservation that can last up to a year. It is the rider's responsibility to notify dispatch of changes or cancellations to a standing schedule. If you are calling to arrange transportation and have never ridden with CTWSI before, you will need to provide your name, phone number, DOB, and address before transportation can be provided.

(See CTWSI Phone Directory on page 11)

“No one shall be denied a ride based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, political affiliation or belief in any other consideration prohibited by law.”

Service may be limited or suspended on these holidays:

Presidents Day	New Year's Day	Memorial Day
Martin Luther King Day	Independence Day	Labor Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day
Veterans Day	Friday after Thanksgiving	

Service hours and holiday schedules are subject to change. Updates are posted in vehicles, on our website and on our Facebook page.

Medicaid Sponsored Trips

CTWSI is a Medicaid provider. If you require transportation to a medical appointment and have a South Dakota Medicaid card, you may be eligible for transportation services. Call your local office to make a reservation, provide the transit personnel with your name, address, date of birth and Medicaid number and staff will process the information for eligibility. If your travel is covered, clients will be given a Medicaid trip record voucher prior to your appointment to be signed by the medical facility as well as you, the client and returned to the driver after the appointment is completed.

Presenting the voucher to the medical facility and getting it signed is the responsibility of the rider – not the drivers – no exceptions.

Medicaid pays from client address to the medical facility address and return home. Medicaid does not pay for unloaded miles, unloaded miles will be paid by the Medicaid client if CTWSI must drive more than 10 miles to recipients' address for medical appointment pick up/return. Medicaid related trips must be from home to the medical facility and home again, Medicaid does not pay for other stops.

Refusal of Service and Suspensions

CTWSI reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who:

- Is intoxicated or belligerent towards drivers or other passengers;
- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others;
- Has open wounds, or highly contagious diseases;
- Is not wearing a shirt, pants, or footwear;
- Transports pets without a designated carrier, other than service animals. Transportation of pets must be declared to dispatch at the time the ride is scheduled;
- Brings Dangerous Weapons on the vehicles;
- Engages in behavior that is violent, illegal, seriously disruptive, or considered a direct threat to the safety of others

First offense: Riders posing a safety risk will be immediately refused service/suspended by the bus driver and a follow-up warning letter will be sent by CTWSI Administration to the rider requesting a signature of the acknowledgment of behavior.

Second offense: Discontinued service/suspension for one week. An acknowledgment letter will be sent from CTWSI Administration.

Third offense: A final letter will be sent from CTWSI Administration to the rider and service will be discontinued/suspended indefinitely based on the event and potential risk.

CTWSI will attempt to apply these actions progressively but may, depending on the severity of the incident and situation, skip one or more of the above steps without warning or notice.

Pickup and Arrival Times

Arrival times may vary according to location and demand for service. Buses could arrive for pick-ups as much as 10 minutes prior to or after requested pick-up time. Buses/Vans have a 3-minute wait time which begins at the requested pickup time or from the arrival time if it is past the requested pickup time. If you have waited more than 10 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time, please contact dispatch or your driver to inquire about the ride.

Our buses serve many passengers within very short time frames; please ensure you are scheduling pickup times 30 minutes before your appointment to allow our buses to serve multiple passengers while getting everyone to their destinations on time.

All passengers must be ready and watching for the bus/van at their scheduled pick-up time.

3 Minute Rule

Buses have a 3-minute wait time which begins at the requested pickup time or from the arrival time if it is past the requested pickup time. Drivers will wait for 3 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time at which time the driver will leave and list you as a “no show.” If you anticipate being late for your scheduled ride, please call dispatch to see if we may be able to accommodate you.

If the bus has to go back for a passenger after they have been classified as a “**No-show**” the rider will owe for the missed trip plus the “**new trip.**”

Return Trips

Passengers are encouraged to schedule a return pick up time for transportation which is not medical. A scheduled pick up requires the passenger to be ready at the set time. If the passenger is not ready at the set time, the result is a “**No-show**” and return by our vehicles would result in an additional fare. Riders can also schedule a “**will call**” for return trips. “**Will call**” rides require the passenger to call dispatch when they are ready for their return ride. We make every effort to pick up our “**will call**” passengers in a timely manner. Drivers **will not** make any unscheduled stops.

No-Show fares

If you schedule a ride with CTWSI and fail to keep that appointment, you will be considered a **No-Show**. Riders will need to pay for the missed ride prior to or at the time of their next scheduled ride. If you are a **No-Show** for a scheduled ride which is covered by a contract, you the rider will be charged for the **No-Show** – not the contract. No-shows for a scheduled

Out-of-Town ride will be charged \$25.00. All fares need to be paid prior to or at the time of your next scheduled ride.

If a rider has three consecutive **No-show's**, CTWSI reserves the right to take the following action:

- Refuse future rides until all outstanding fares are paid
- Remove the rider from the schedule if they are in a standing reservation
- Suspend the rider from service until fees are paid

Cancelling Rides

Riders are encouraged to cancel rides a minimum of 1-hour in advance of the scheduled ride. Out-of-town transportation should be cancelled as soon as possible. If the transit driver is on the way for their pick-up, it is too late to cancel. The ride will become a **No-show** at that point.

Fares/Forms of payment

All locations have set fares to various destinations. Please call your local provider for the exact fare. CTWSI accepts a variety of forms of bus fares which can vary depending on the location of the transit system being utilized.

Acceptable bus fares include cash, checks, tokens, punch cards and vouchers such as Medicaid, Indian Health Services, Veterans transportation grants, Salvation Army, other charitable organizations providing travel vouchers.

CTWSI currently has contracts with designated health care facilities and businesses for riders. Please contact your local provider for fare information.

All bus fares shall be paid by the rider when boarding the transit vehicle or prior to boarding. Vouchers will be issued (if required) by the driver at the same time. No exceptions.

For questions regarding **Out-of-Town Fares**, contact Community-Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc. office. (See CTWSI Phone Directory on page 11).

Actual cost

The actual cost per ride is considerably higher than the CTWSI fare structure, however, fares can be subsidized because of federal funding received. CTWSI fares are subject to change without notice.

Medicaid Recipients

CTWSI is a Medicaid provider. Dispatch will need to verify travel expenses are covered before your ride will be scheduled. Transportation not covered by Medicaid is your responsibility.

Door to Door Service

Private homes: Our drivers are instructed not to enter past the first door of a private home for any reason. Drivers cannot enter a residence to assist a rider or to carry in packages, groceries, etc.

Businesses/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings, Apartment complexes: When picking up or dropping off passengers from a business/medical facility/public building, drivers may go to the lobby area, but not beyond. Drivers shall not enter a building to look for passengers who have scheduled a ride.

NOTE: CTWSI rules prohibit drivers/operators being out of sight of the transit vehicle they are operating

Lift Capabilities and Service

Many of our vehicles are equipped with **lifts** which are available for use by anyone. CTWSI complies with ADA requirements for accessible vehicles. To access these requirements, please visit www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html.

Training on how to board and disembark a vehicle with a mobility device will be provided on an as needed basis. Please call dispatch to schedule training prior to your ride.

All transit vehicles and related equipment shall be operated by trained CTWSI staff only. Passengers or escorts are **NOT ALLOWED** to assist with operating a lift mechanism, or any other operating functions of the transit vehicles. Escorts are allowed to assist the driver with certain aspects of the activity if asked by the driver. This includes:

- Assisting driver with getting rider and mobility devices on and off a lift
- Setting or releasing brakes on a mobility device
- Assisting driver with removing securement devices upon arrival at destination

If you cannot be properly secured, you will be given the option of whether or not you would like to proceed with the ride

Escorts & Personal Care Attendants

Escorts or Personal Care Attendants can ride free of charge but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the rider. Escorts/PCA's shall be willing and able to assist you with mobility, personal and/or medical needs. If the rider requires assistance with any of these needs, an escort must accompany the rider. Drivers will provide reasonable assistance to all passengers; however, our drivers are not licensed medical professionals. Because of this, we require passengers who need additional assistance to use an escort.

Vehicle Backing

CTWSI drivers are instructed to avoid backing up vehicles if possible. Drivers will not pull in residential driveways or put themselves in a position to which requires backing up is required.

Items on the Bus

Groceries - There is a 5-bag limit per rider. Please place your items on the floor of the bus.

Bikes - Transporting a bike is allowed, but the bike must be secured in the same fashion as a mobility device. The rider is responsible for transferring the bike to and from the bus.

Please notify dispatch if you need to transport a bike.

Other packages - If you cannot carry larger items yourself, they cannot be transported.

Lost Items - CTWSI is not responsible for lost or stolen items! Items found on the bus are placed in the lost and found at community transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.'s office.

Lost items are posted weekly on community transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.'s

Facebook Page. Unclaimed items will be donated to selected entities periodically.

Weapons - To ensure that CTWSI maintains a transportation system safe and free of violence for all employees and riders, CTWSI prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on company property, including our vehicles. "Dangerous weapons" include firearms, explosives, knives, and other weapons that might be considered dangerous or that could cause harm. Drivers are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by the driver is not prohibited by this policy.

Seat Belt/Riding Policy

All passengers are required to wear a seat belt. If you refuse to wear a seatbelt, you may be denied service. CTWSI does not provide car seats for youth passengers. If you would like a car seat for your child, it is your responsibility to provide and secure one. You must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before leaving your seat. You must also remain seated with your seat belt on at all times while the bus is in motion and be prepared for sudden stops.

Food and Drinks

There is NO eating or drinking allowed on CTWSI in town service routes. Out of town routes will allow food, if passengers pick up their trash when deboarding CTWSI vehicles. Drivers will not stop while enroute to scheduled appointments for food. Drivers will not go into establishments to purchase food and beverages for passengers.

Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol

Use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and alcohol is not permitted on or near CTWSI vehicles, inside CTWSI facilities or on CTWSI premises.

Medical Emergencies

CTWSI is not an ambulance service. If you require emergency medical attention, please call 9-1-1. If a rider has a medical emergency while in a CTWSI vehicle, medical personnel will be notified. If a rider has a medical condition CTWSI should be aware of, inform dispatchers prior to scheduling services.

Transportation for Ages 3-18

- No child will be transported unless an Emergency Contact Form is on file at CTWSI. Rides cannot be charged. A bus fare must exchange hands for every trip.
- Schedule changes must be made by a parent or guardian. We cannot take ride information from children.
- K-12 passengers should start looking for the transit vehicle 10 minutes prior to approximate pick-up time unless otherwise noted. Schedules change daily so riders must be ready when the bus arrives each day.
- There are no guarantees on pick-up or drop-off times. Routes are determined based on the most efficient method for that particular day's scheduled rides.
- Buses will arrive at the schools at dismissal time and depart when all riders are accounted for.
- An adult must wave at the driver indicating he or she is home before a child can be dropped off.
- Negative behaviors will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or removal of your child from the schedule. All CTWSI vehicles are equipped with surveillance cameras for the protection of the riders and the CTWSI employees.

Weather related access to private homes and businesses

For your safety and the safety of CTWSI staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible.

Weather Related Service Suspensions

CTWSI staff will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions occur, which makes travel unsafe; CTWSI reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable.

Appropriate announcements will be made to the local media, including but not limited to, Kelo-land Close Line, Dakota News Close line, the CTWSI Facebook page, the CTWSI website (www.communitytransitws.com) and local radio stations.

- Keep informed of weather conditions, which may affect services.
- If streets are icy, allow additional travel time.
- Prior to entering the bus, clean footwear of snow and slush so it doesn't gather on the steps or on the floor of the bus, potentially posing a hazard.

Severe Weather Guidelines

- Severe weather may affect CTWSI service. The buses will run slower to be safe in adverse weather. The following service changes may occur at any time hazardous road conditions exist.
- Timed pick up intervals may increase
- Non-essential trips may not be provided
- Bus service on less travelled streets, especially those not plowed, may not be provided
- Absolutely no alley travel will be allowed
- In cases of severe weather changes, passengers on transit vehicles will be taken home or to the nearest shelter, as deemed necessary

Proper and Adequate Clothing

You or your care provider is responsible for ensuring that you are dressed properly for your transportation. This is especially relevant to passengers who use the mechanical lifts and may be exposed to adverse weather for longer periods of time. Drivers will not assist you with your clothing. Winter attire should include proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

CTWSI PHONE DIRECTORY

Campbell County Bus – 605-848-4417

Eureka – 605-848-2750

Bowdle – 605-281-0456 (Tue thru Thu); 605-281-1446 (Mon)

Faulkton – 605-228-7938

Redfield – 605-472-1552

Groton – 605-397-8661

Britton – 605-228-0862

Webster – 605-265-0372 Day County – 605-924-1301

Sisseton – 605-698-7511

Milbank – 605-432-4866

Watertown, Deuel, Clark and Hamlin Co. – 605-882-5287

Lennox – 605-496-4069

Addendum A: Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the policies outlined in the Passenger Handbook of Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. (CTWSI). I understand that CTWSI has the right to change this manual without notice at any time. It is understood that future changes in policies and procedures will supersede or eliminate those found in this manual, and that passengers will be notified of such changes through normal communication channels.

I understand that the policies and procedures described in the Passenger Handbook of Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. (CTWSI) are not an expressed or implied contract of service between the company and me and should not be viewed as the basis of any contractual obligations of the company.

Printed Name of Passenger/Client _____

Signature of Passenger/Client _____

Date _____