

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.



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, 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.watertowntransit.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

Hours of operation are dependent on the location of the system. Those times may vary from locations to location.

Reservations in Codington, Deuel, Hamlin and Clark counties must be scheduled one business day prior by 3 p.m. Out-of-town trips must be scheduled two business days 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 **CANNOT** take reservations (Watertown only) - 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.

“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.”

Office: 605-882-5287

Fax: 605-882-5174

Email:

Terry – terry.wat@midconetwork.com

Deb - deb.wat@midconetwork.com

Service may be limited or suspended on these holidays:

New Year’s Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas 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.

Scheduling Rides within Watertown city limits.

When scheduling your ride, please provide the dispatcher with your first and last name, your appointment time and your destination. Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. requires all pick-up times to be scheduled in half-hour increments. For example, if you have an appointment at 10 a.m., your scheduled pick up time would be 9:30 a.m. This allows for other passengers to ride at the same time, while ensuring everyone reaches their destination on time.

Please do not schedule your rides for more than 30 days in advance. 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 Community

Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. before, you will need to provide your name, phone number, DOB, and address before transportation can be provided. Please Note: If you need to schedule a ride or make changes to an existing ride, you must contact dispatch. Drivers cannot take ride information.

Scheduling Rides outside of Codington County

Travel outside of Codington County must be arranged by calling dispatch at least two business days in advance of desired pickup time by 3 p.m. Please refer to Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. website for information regarding all out of County transportation. Reservations will be contingent on demand for service and conditions beyond our control (i.e. weather, shortage of drivers).

Refusal of Service

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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 unreasonable personal hygiene, open wounds, or highly contagious diseases;
- 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.

Pickup and Arrival Times

Arrival times may vary according to location and demand for service. Passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to 10 minutes before your scheduled pickup time with the possibility of a 10 minute delay. Buses will only wait for 3 minutes past your scheduled pickup time. If you've waited more than 10 minutes after your scheduled pick up time, please contact dispatch to inquire about the ride.

Our buses serve many passengers within very small 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.

3 Minute Rule

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. If a bus does not arrive after 15 minutes please call dispatch. Drivers **will not** make any unscheduled stops which were not scheduled with the dispatcher.

Cancelling Rides

Please make every effort to cancel rides an hour before the scheduled pick up time. If repeated **“no shows”** occur, refusal of service may apply.

Door to Door Service

Private homes: Our drivers are instructed not to enter past the first door of a private home for any reason.

Businesses/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings: When picking up passengers from a business/medical facility/public building, drivers may go to the lobby area. Drivers will not go past the lobby to drop off or pick up

Apartment Buildings: Drivers' schedules do not permit them to enter a building to look for passengers who have scheduled a ride

Lift Capabilities and Service

Our vehicles are equipped with lifts which are available for use by anyone. Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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.

The bus and all equipment are to be operated by trained staff only. For safety reasons, passengers or escorts are **NOT ALLOWED** to assist with operating lift procedures, or any other operating functions of the transit vehicles.

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 Attendants

Escorts (Aides) can ride free of charge but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you. Escorts (Aides) **MUST** be willing and able to assist you with mobility, personal and/or medical needs. If you require assistance with any of these needs, you should use an escort. Drivers will provide reasonable assistance to all passengers; however, our drivers are not licensed medical professionals. Because of this, we encourage passengers who need additional assistance to use an escort.

Vehicle Backing

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. drivers are instructed to avoid backing up vehicles if at all 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

There is a 5 bag limit per rider. Please place your items on the floor of the bus. Transporting a bike is allowed, but you are responsible for its transfer. Please notify dispatch if you need to transport a bike. If you cannot carry larger items yourself, they cannot be transported.

Lost Items

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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 Community Corner Thrift Store periodically.

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. Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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 Community/Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc. vehicles.

Smoking and Alcohol

Use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and alcohol is not permitted on Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. vehicles, inside Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. facilities or on Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. premises.

Fares

Fares will vary depending on the location of the transit system being utilized.

Advance reservations within Watertown (proper) are \$3.00 and rides to homes and/or businesses located adjacent to Lake Pelican, Lake Kampeska or bodies of water attached to said lakes have a fare of \$5.00 per ride. Bus fare to Dakota Sioux Casino is \$8.00 per ride. These are one-way fares which are due upon entering the bus.

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. currently has a contract with Prairie Lakes Healthcare system which allows anyone in the designated Watertown area free transportation to any medical appointment to any medical provider in said area. If you have questions on who is eligible for this service, please call Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. offices.

For questions regarding **Out-of-Town Fares**, contact Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. office.

Bus Tokens

Some locations use tokens as a form of payment. Tokens may be purchased from Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. offices or from Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. drivers.

Tokens values vary from location to location. Bus fares can be paid with check, cash or tokens. Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. has a card reader in some locations. Drivers cannot make change on the bus. You must have exact amount.

Actual cost

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. actual cost per ride is considerably higher than our fare structure, however, we are able to lower the passenger cost because of donations, Federal & State funding, and local support. Fare structure is subject to change as necessary.

Medicaid Recipients

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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.

Medical Emergencies

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. is not an ambulance service. If you require emergency medical attention, please call 9-1-1. If you have a medical emergency while on the bus, medical personnel will be notified. If you have a medical condition you feel Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. should be aware of, let dispatch know prior to scheduling services.

Transportation for Ages 3-18

- No child will be transported unless an Emergency Contact Form is on file at Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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 bus at 7:30 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Bus schedules change daily so riders must be ready when the bus arrives each day.
- Preschool passengers should be ready for pickup 30 minutes before the class start time. The bus will arrive within that 30 minute window. Preschools do not allow drop-off more than 5 minutes before class start time. Drivers will pick-up Preschool riders with this in mind.
- 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 will result in removal of your child from the bus schedule. Each vehicle has camera surveillance to monitor these issues.
- Contact Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. if your child is not home within 45 minutes

Weather related access to private homes

For your safety and the safety of Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible.

Weather Related Service Suspensions

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. staff will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions occur, which makes travel unsafe; Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable. If service is temporarily suspended, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

- Appropriate announcements will be made to the local media, including but not limited to, Keloland Close Line, KWAT 950 AM; KSDR 1480 AM; KS93 FM, KIXX 96 FM; KPHR 104.3 FM; KDLO 96.9 FM; KXLG FM 99.1; our Facebook page, our website and the Watertown Public Opinion.
- 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 Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. 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 buses will be taken home immediately 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.