

Seward County Public Transit



Driver & Passenger Handbook

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Seward County Public Transit (SCPT) to provide safe and affordable public transportation to the residents of Seward County, regardless of age or need.

It is the responsibility of Seward County Public Transit (SCPT) and its employees to ensure the services offered to our riders and general public - meet the standards as are provided by Local, State and Federal guidelines.

Seward County Public Transit (SCPT) stands committed to improving the quality of life of its riders and encourages environmentally friendly practice, while reaffirming the meaning of customer care and service.

Intent of Passenger Handbook

Seward County Public Transit (SCPT) is pleased to serve the area with transportation services. This service has a set of policies and procedures that passengers must follow.

This booklet provides policies pertaining to passenger safety and responsibilities for using our service.

It is for the benefit of all passengers that policies regarding passenger safety and responsibilities are followed. The policies in this booklet are critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of our system.

All passenger policies will be enforced in a consistent, fair manner. If you feel you have been dealt with unfairly, the appeals process and a telephone comment number have been included in this booklet on page twelve (12).

For the purpose of this manual Seward County Public Transit will be from this point forward referred to as “SCPT”.

Seward County Public Transit Services

SCPT prides itself on providing safe and reliable transportation services to the public. SCPT is open to anyone who wishes to ride, regardless of age, gender or need. SCPT operates demand response, curb-to-curb service, operating Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. SCPT maintains a set schedule for different sections of Seward County. Residents requiring transportation outside the normal schedule should call the SCPT office for system availability.

Seward County Public Transit Weekly Schedule

Monday thru Friday: Seward County & Surrounding Counties

Federal Holiday Schedule

SCPT is closed in observance of all Federal holidays. Holidays include:

- **New Year's Day:** January 1
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:** third Monday of January
- **President's Day (George Washington's Birthday):** third Monday of February
- **Memorial Day:** last Monday in May
- **Juneteenth:** June 19
- **Independence Day:** July 4
- **Labor Day:** first Monday in September
- **Indigenous Peoples' Day (also observed as Columbus Day):** second Monday in October
- **Veterans Day:** November 11
- **Thanksgiving Day:** fourth Thursday in November (Closed Thursday & Friday)
- **Christmas Day:** December 25
- Any day declared as a holiday by the Governor of Nebraska (except Arbor Day)

If the Holiday lands on a weekend, then the office will be closed on Friday in the Holiday is on Saturday or Monday if the Holiday is on Sunday.

Policy of Nondiscrimination

SCPT assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, Disability/Handicap, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. SCPT further assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all its programs and activities, whether those programs are federally funded or not.

In the event SCPT distributes federal aid funds to a sub-recipient, SCPT will include the Title VI language in all written agreements and will monitor for compliance.

For further information regarding Seward County's Title VI policy, please refer to the Seward County Title VI Plan adopted on June 14th, 2011.

Scheduling Rides

Request Service:

All rides must be scheduled through the SCPT office or transit driver. Appointments should be made at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to service. If an appointment is needed or an extra stop is added to your existing appointment and it is not possible to meet the twenty-four (24) hour policy, transportation can only be provided if the appointment or extra stop coincides with the current transportation schedule and priority availability. All appointments should be set so that they are not before the designated schedule and hours of operation of the transit system and adhere as closely to the "Specified-Timed Appointments" schedule provided below.

Rides in Seward are \$2.00 • Seward County into Seward is \$4.00 • Seward County to Lincoln is \$16.00/\$20.00 • Seward County into Omaha is \$60 • Call for additional destinations.

Specific-Timed Appointments:

To allow adequate time to meet the needs of our riders, SCTP asks that medical, therapy and all other personal appointments be made within the following timeframes:

Monday Thru Friday: between 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Veterans

Veterans' rides must be scheduled through SCPT office or Veterans office. SCPT will transport veterans to Veteran Affairs appointments and to Veteran Contracted health care providers for free. A chaperone may ride for free as well when accompanying Veteran to appointment, any additional stops may cause for rider/chaperone to be charged. Rides must be scheduled for 5 business days prior to scheduled appointments.

Long-Term Appointments

Riders who require regular transportation service (work, therapy, medical appointments, etc.) may schedule up to **30 days** in advance.

CANCELLATION POLICY/ NO SHOW POLICY

Passengers are encouraged to cancel scheduled pick-ups in a timely manner. Cancellations can be made by contacting the transit office at (402)643-4067 between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance or as early as possible. Cancellations will be accepted up to one hour prior to scheduled pick-up times without penalty. Any cancellation received later than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up will be considered a late cancellation and will be noted as such by the dispatcher in the passenger's record. Three or more late cancellations in a 90-day period will be considered excessive, and the passenger will receive written notification of such via the U.S. Postal Service. Passengers having additional late

cancellations during the next 90-day period will be assessed a \$5.00 late cancellation fee, payable at the next boarding call or charged to your EPass.

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the Seward County Public Transit at least an hour prior to scheduled pick-up time. Upon arrival at the scheduled pick-up point, the transit driver will wait for the passenger for five (5) minutes. After five minutes, the driver will continue his/her route, and the ride will be marked as a no show, and you will be charged for the ride payable at the next boarding or charged to your EPass.

It is the goal of SCPT to provide timely service to our passengers. “No shows” poses a unique challenge which limits our ability to provide quality service. It is vital that each rider makes their arrangements in a timely manner and ensures that advanced notice of cancellations is given. Abuse of the system, such as scheduling rides and repeatedly not taking them, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Scheduling Trips:

SCPT makes every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. Due to the unpredictable nature of our service, arrival times may vary. A fifteen (15) minute variance will be used to further ensure that riders meet their appointment obligations.

- All passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to fifteen (15) minutes or the possibility of a fifteen (15) minute delay from the time given by the SCPT staff.
- All bus operators will wait at least five (5) minutes past the scheduled pick-up time or longer (at the transit driver’s discretion) before leaving without the passenger.
- In an event that the transit vehicle leaves due to “no show” the rider will be charged for the missed trip during their next scheduled appointment.

Contact Seward County Public Transit to schedule your ride. The scheduler may require the following information:

- Passenger Name
- Date of Birth

- Address
- Phone Number
- Destination Name & Address
- Expected Arrival Time or Appointment Time/Duration

CURB-TO-CURB SERVICE

Seward County Public Transit provides “curb-to-curb” service only. The following policies further define this service:

1. Private Homes:

- Passengers must enter and depart the transit vehicle at the designated pick-up and drop-off points.
- Drivers will not enter private homes for any reason.
- Drivers may assist passengers to and from the vehicle only.
- Drivers are not permitted to lift passengers.
- Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or downstairs.

2. Business/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:

- Drivers may assist passengers into and from the inside door. Due to extreme temperatures in entryways, drivers may assist passengers through the second entry door when necessary. Drivers will not assist passengers further into the building.
- When picking up passengers from a business or medical facility, drivers may go through the first door. Drivers will not go past this point.
- It is the individual’s personal care attendants’ responsibility to ensure that passengers are waiting inside the door for their ride.
- Drivers will not enter nursing homes, medical facilities, shopping centers or businesses to locate passengers. Passengers must be waiting at the designated pickup point at least 15 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time or the no-show policy will apply.

Payment Policy

Cash Fares: Payment is required upon boarding the vehicle. If paying cash, correct change is preferred and would be appreciated. Bus operators are not authorized to give refunds for any reason.

EPass / Charge Accounts: EPasses (Electronic Pass) are available to any individual that would like to prepay for their rides. These passes start at \$10, and you can add funds at any time. Charge accounts will be provided to individuals whose rides are charged to an agency or facility with a contract for services with SCPT. Individuals will not be allowed to charge unauthorized transportation that is not authorized by these respective account holders. **The account holder is the only person that can use this account. Each person must have their own account. Funds can be transferred between accounts when the account owner of the account that is donating the funds to another account calls the office to authorize the transaction.**

There will be no refunds for EPasses that have less than a \$10 balance.

Seat Belt Policy

It is required that all SCPT passengers wear an approved safety device while riding in the Seward County Public Transit vehicles. Child passengers must abide by the state statute and car seats are not to be provided by SCPT at any time.

Personal Assistants/Guests Policy

Personal care attendants are directly involved in the mobility assistance of the attendee and will be allowed to ride free of charge while accompanying their attendee. Generally, the following conditions would warrant a fare free attendant: immobility, disorientation, non-comprehension, and communication impairment. Any other person riding with a passenger will be considered a guest and will be required to pay full fare.

Personal care attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Assisting the passenger from his/her door to the bus and back
- Opening doors
- Pushing wheelchairs to and from the vehicle
- Transfer assistance from mobility device to a seat
- Carrying packages
- Communicating with the driver (if passenger is unable)

Child Rider Policy

It is the policy of SCPT to provide the most cost effective, efficient, and environmentally friendly transportation services to the people of Seward County. In providing these services it is necessary to establish policies that govern SCPT's role and responsibility in the transportation of children over the age of ten (10) years and those under the age of sixteen (16). These roles and responsibilities are as follows:

1. All children must follow all SCPT rules, regulations, and policies. Violations of these rules by either the child or parent may lead to service suspension and/or termination.
2. All children under the age of eight (8) must wear an approved safety restraint (in compliance with Nebraska State Statute). Parents or guardians are responsible for providing SCPT with an approved safety restraint to be used for their child.
3. Children under the age of ten (10) must be accompanied by an adult. Exceptions to this policy are for children over the age of five (5) and further meet the following guidelines:
 - Agency to agency transportation, such as from a licensed daycare facility to a public/private school.
 - Transportation where the parent or guardian provides supervision at the pick-up and destination which has been prescheduled by either the parent or guardian.

4. Children under the age of sixteen (16) will be transported only to the destination scheduled by their parent or guardian. Parents or guardians must make reservations and update their schedule if necessary. Minor children are not allowed to change scheduled rides at any time.
5. SCPT cannot guarantee pre or post school transportation due to volume and safety considerations.
6. Parents or guardians must notify SCPT at the time of trip scheduling the age and special considerations for their child.
7. If no adult is at the destination location to accept the child (under ten (10) years of age), the child will not be left at the drop-off location. Drivers will be instructed to deliver the child to the local police station and parents will be notified.
8. SCPT will charge for the ride when the child is a “No Show” and we are not informed that the child will not be riding.

Adverse Weather Policy

Weather Related Access to Public Homes:

Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their homes accessible to the SCPT bus operators. Bus operators **are not** allowed to assist passengers through snow or ice.

If a passenger schedules service knowing that a path has not been cleared to their homes, the trip will be considered a “no-show”, and that policy will apply.

Discontinuing Service Due to Weather Conditions:

It is the intention of SCPT to provide a service whenever possible. In the event severe weather conditions exist which make travel unsafe, SCPT reserves the right to cancel all scheduled appointments until conditions are more favorable.

It is the policy of SCPT that in an event that local schools are canceled due to weather, SCPT will only operate inside the City of Seward. If it is determined that driving conditions are not favorable for city driving, the director reserves the right

to cancel all appointments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the passengers, drivers and vehicles.

In the event of severe weather please consider that travel time may increase, routes may be shortened or cancelled, and operations may cease at a moment's notice.

TRANSPORTING SERVICE ANIMALS & ACCOMODATION OF OTHER ANIMALS

Seward County Public Transit allows service animals to accompany owners as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) definition, a service animal is any animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. This includes, but is not limited to, animals that guide individuals with impaired vision, alert those with impaired hearing, provide minimal protection or rescue work, pull wheelchairs, or fetch dropped items. The key aspect is the training to perform specific tasks related to the individual's disability, not merely providing comfort or emotional support.

For more information about the rules and regulations regarding service animals, go to ADA's website [here](#).

Animals other than service animals as described above may be allowed to ride the transit vehicle only in a secure pet travel carrier or under control of the passenger.

Service for Wheelchair Users

Service will be provided from vehicles up to and from specialized equipment (ramps, etc.) for wheelchair users. SCPT reserves the right to refuse service for unsafe or malfunctioning equipment.

SCPT bus operators are not allowed to assist passengers in wheelchairs up or down any steps. If such a condition exists, passengers are responsible for arranging assistance from someone other than the SCPT bus operator.

All wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured while the transit bus is in motion.

Special Services Offered

SCPT vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. If the rider is unable to complete travel by his or herself, an attendant/escort will be required to assist. Drivers are available to assist with grocery bags or other belongings, but the driver is restricted to lifting no more than 20 lbs.

Refusing Services Policy

SCPT reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who displays the following behaviors:

- Intoxication
- Disruptive
- Belligerent/Rude
- Displays a serious safety or health threat to them or others.
- Unreasonable personal hygiene
- No Shoes/No Shirt

SCPT has a zero tolerance towards violence. Any overt act of violence or threat of violence will result in termination of passenger rides and reporting of the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency for further investigation.

SCPT has a NO firearms, guns or concealed weapons policy on all transit buses and transit property.

SCPT also has a set of policies for normal and standard behaviors when using the system. If these behaviors cannot be followed by the passenger, the following steps may be taken:

Behaviors:

1. Remaining seated while the bus is in motion.
2. Keeping hands and personal objects to yourself.
3. No foul language to any other rider or driver.
4. No screaming or yelling on the bus. Normal volume levels when speaking

Behavior Penalties:

First Offense – A warning letter will be sent.

Second Offense – A second letter will be sent, and rides will be discontinued for one week.

Third Offense – A third and final letter will be sent, and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

SCPT reserves the right to terminate services immediately if it is deemed necessary to protect the best interests of our riders or drivers.

Appeal Process

If a passenger disagrees with any penalty resulting from the enforcement of any of these policies, a written request for appeal may be submitted to:

**Seward County Public Transit
320 S. 14th Street
Seward, NE 68434**

Appeals may be presented in writing or in person and must be submitted within thirty (30) days from the date of notification of discontinued service. All requests for appeals will be referred to a hearing officer, designated by the Seward County Board of Commissioners, for a fair hearing. The following procedure will apply:

1. The applicant shall have the right to:
 - a. Examine all documentation pertaining to individual's case.

- b. Be represented in the proceedings by a lawyer, friend, relative or anyone else he/she may select.
 - c. Present evidence; and
 - d. Confront and cross-examine witnesses.
2. The hearing officer shall:
 - a. Tape records the hearing.
 - b. Make a decision within thirty (30) days following the hearing based upon the evidence adduced and the law.
 - c. Provide appellant a written copy of the decision setting forth findings and conclusions; and
 - d. Preserve the tape of the hearing and all exhibits offered at the hearing for not less than sixty (60) days following entry of the hearing officer's decision.
3. Upon the request of either party or the hearing officer's own motion, the hearing may be continued, and the hearing record held open for a period not to exceed ten (10) days, to obtain additional information or to very new information.
4. Transportation services will be provided during the appeals process, so long as the reason for termination was not for a violent act or expression or threat of violence against another person or property.