

Volunteering Task Force and Perth Community Transport Consortium

Individual Transport Driver Guidelines

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Customer Service Guidelines for Driving Staff

The primary role of driving staff is to provide safe, comfortable and timely transport services to Community Transport passengers. These guidelines aim to assist drivers to attain and maintain the high service standards that Community Transport passengers require and deserve.

1. Becoming an individual transport driver

To become an individual transport driver a person must be an Endorsed Community Transport Driver and agree to abide by the Community Transport Driver Guidelines.

2. Number of trips per day

Paid drivers will be expected to complete, on average, 12 passenger trips per day. This figure may be lower if the trips are very long or there is significant empty running or may be higher if the trips are short or where multiple passengers are carried.

Volunteer drivers will not be expected to complete as many trips as paid drivers.

3. Preparing for the service

3.1 Vehicle preparation.

Drivers must ensure that the vehicle they are to drive is fit for use on the day. This may include checking fluid levels (oil, water etc.), inspecting tyres and ensuring the vehicle is in a clean and tidy condition.

3.2 Dress

Drivers must either wear a prescribed uniform or dress neatly and modestly and wear closed footwear suitable for driving.

3.3 Identification

Drivers will carry a badge or other means of identifying them as being from Community Transport.

3.4 First Aid Kit

Drivers shall have the responsibility to ensure that the First Aid Kit has all of its necessary components and that the contents are within their use by dates.

3.5 Route

Drivers will check the route to be taken with the Booking Coordinator.

3.6 Equipment

Drivers will note from the run sheet whether specialist equipment is required and must check whether it can be secured safely in the nominated vehicle. Some passengers may travel with an oxygen cylinder in which case a suitable restraint for the cylinder must be taken by the driver (some restraints attach to a seat-belt fitting). The driver should check the service date on an oxygen cylinder and verify that it has been serviced within 12 months of the day of travel.

3.7 Parking Permit

If the passenger has low mobility an ACROD Parking Permit may be supplied by the Booking Office.

3.8 Mobility and access

The Booking Office may supply a City of Perth Access Map if deemed necessary.

3.9 Special needs of passengers

Drivers will discuss any special needs of passengers with the Booking Coordinator before embarking on a service (such needs will be noted on the run-sheet).

3.10 Passenger restraints

Before moving off the driver must ensure that all of the passengers are suitably restrained by a seat belt or other device. Some passengers may have a medical certificate indicating that they cannot wear a seat belt. The passenger should carry a copy of this certificate with them.

Children under 5 years of age should use a child seat, booster seat or infant restraint suitable for their size. These are not to be used in the front seats of vehicles fitted with airbags. This is dangerous and illegal.

4. On the service

4.1 Smoking

Drivers must not smoke while driving or while in close proximity of passengers.

4.2 Atmospheric comfort

Drivers should not use strong perfumes or air fresheners in the vehicle as they may affect passengers with breathing disorders. Some people's breathing may also be irritated by the air conditioner, so it is also a good idea that new passengers are asked if they mind the air conditioner being on.

4.3 Alcohol and other substances

Drivers must not be over the legal limit for alcohol while driving on a service. Doing so will be considered a dismissable offence.

Drivers must not drive under the influence of other substances, legal (medication etc.) or illegal, that may affect their ability to drive safely.

4.4 Passenger pick-ups

Drivers will pick up passengers in their driveway or from the kerb and will not oblige them to cross the road to access the vehicle.

4.5 Use of mobile phones

Using a mobile phone, even hands free, while driving may distract the driver from driving safely. Using a handset while driving is, in any case, illegal. As a result, phone calls are to only be answered or made while the vehicle is pulled over and stationary. If this means missing a call the driver can retrieve the call from their message bank or voicemail.

4.6 Personal assistance to passengers

Individual transport drivers will not normally leave the vehicle except to assist a passenger into and from their home or destination. Drivers will remain in the vicinity until they are satisfied that the passenger has entered their destination. Passengers that require additional assistance will need to be accompanied by a carer or companion.

4.7 Monitoring passengers

Drivers have a role in monitoring the welfare of passengers. If a driver has concerns about a passenger's welfare they may ask them how they are and, with the passenger's permission, relay any relevant information back to the Booking Office for further action. If a passenger's condition appears to require immediate attention

the driver may drive to the nearest medical help or call an ambulance if that would be quicker. If in any doubt the driver must call an ambulance.

If the situation is not so urgent a driver may call the Booking Office for advice.

4.8 Travel sickness

Some passengers may experience travel sickness. Travel sickness bags are to be kept in the vehicle. If a passenger appears to be experiencing travel sickness the driver should reassure them that they are willing to “pull over at any time”.

4.9 Drivers not to take bookings

Drivers must not take bookings directly from passengers. Passengers are to be informed that they must contact the Booking Office. Business cards may be provided for this purpose.

4.10 Accidents, Emergencies and Vehicle Breakdowns

If there is an accident, emergency or vehicle breakdown the driver must implement the Accident or Emergency Policy or Vehicle Breakdown Policy. Copies of these should be kept in the vehicle.

5. Running to time

5.1 Running late

If a driver finds that they are running significantly behind their schedule they should inform the Booking Office. If the appointment is urgent this will allow the Office to allocate another driver or a taxi. The Booking Office also need to know if a driver is going to be late in case the passenger rings to enquire about their pick up.

5.2 Keeping the passenger informed

If a driver is running late either the driver or the Booking Office must ring and let the passenger know when the likely arrival time will be. Who will ring will depend on organisational policy.

6. Fares

6.1 Collection

The collection of fares or donations will be subject to each organisation’s own policy. Fare collection may include cash, payment by invoice or pre-payment of some kind. The Booking Office will inform the driver of the method of collection.

6.2 Handling cash

If cash is handled a receipt must be issued. This protects the driver and assists with accountability. Cash is to be handed in to the Booking Office on the day of collection if at all possible or at the driver’s earliest convenience. Drivers are not to accrue significant amounts of cash from passengers before handing it in.

6.3 Negotiating fares

Drivers are not to negotiate fares with passengers. If a passenger is unwilling or appears unable to pay an agreed fare the matter must be referred to the Booking Office. Drivers must remain aware of the sensitive nature of such issues and should not discuss them in the presence of other passengers.

7. At the passenger’s home

7.1 No-one at home

If a passenger fails to appear or to answer the door the “No-one at home” policy will be implemented by the driver.

7.2 Equipment

Drivers will ensure that any equipment accompanying the passenger or provided by the transport service is secured safely within the vehicle. Passenger's mobility aids and baggage should be safely secured or placed in the boot or rear of a station wagon. If a cage is not fitted to a wagon the items should be restrained with straps to prevent them becoming missiles in the event of an accident or sudden braking.

7.3 Use of toilet

Drivers must not use the toilet at passengers' homes.

7.4 Use of telephone

Drivers must not use the telephone at the passengers' homes unless there is an emergency and they do not have access to a mobile phone.

7.5 Visiting passengers while not on service

Drivers are not to visit passengers out of hours and are not to visit them in their homes as this may establish false expectations and dependency. These invitations are to be politely refused. In any case, passengers are to be treated equally and some passengers are not to be favoured in this way over others.

8. At the destination

8.1 Accompanying passengers

Drivers are not permitted to accompany passengers into appointments. Requests for this type of support should be referred to the Booking Office.

8.2 Return trip arrangements

Passengers are to be advised about the arrangements for their return trip when they are dropped at their destination. There are several options available according to the organisation's policy on managing return trips.

If the duration of the appointment is known, either:

- the driver should take the doctor's telephone number and ring the doctor's room after the expected duration of the appointment has elapsed; or
- the driver should inform the Booking Office of the doctor's telephone number and the office will ring the doctor's room after the expected duration of the appointment has elapsed. The office will then contact the most appropriate driver to undertake the return pick-up.

If the duration of the appointment is unknown, either:

- leave the driver's mobile phone number with the passenger or the doctors receptionist; or
- leave the Booking Office telephone number with the passenger or the doctors receptionist.

The driver and passenger must agree as to exactly where the return pick-up is to be made. If a different driver is to pick the passenger up this information should be passed on to the Booking Office.

If the appointment is short and there is time before picking up another passenger the driver should wait whilst the passenger completes the appointment. However, the passenger should be informed that if the appointment runs late the driver may need to leave to attend to another passenger. In this case the passenger should be told to inform the Booking Office as soon as they are ready to leave for home.

9. The return journey

9.1 If the passenger fails to turn up at the designated point at the time arranged, the “Lost Passenger Policy” must be implemented.

9.2 Medication and prescriptions

Requests to pick up medical prescriptions can only be met if the stop was arranged beforehand or if the driver has time and it will not affect their schedule for the day.

Drivers must not ever administer medication, even if requested to do so by a passenger.

9.3 Change in passenger’s condition

Drivers must be aware that a passenger’s physical and mental condition may change due to treatment at their appointment. Where possible the Booking Office should have informed the driver of any likely conditions (nauseousness, poor balance etc.). The Booking Office may use a Table of Treatments to identify possible problems.

9.4 Transport after medical procedures or anaesthetic

Some agencies may agree to transport passengers after medical procedures or anaesthetic. In these cases a Fitness to Travel Certificate must be obtained from the hospital or clinic prior to travel. This should have been arranged by the Booking Office beforehand.

9.5 Safe delivery of passenger

When the passenger arrives home the driver should ensure that they have safely entered their house or flat before leaving.

10. At the completion of a trip

10.1 Documentation

The driver must complete the relevant documentation (run sheet, mileage claim form etc.) ensuring that all of the required details have been filled in. These should be returned to the Booking Office at the end of a paid drivers shift or at the earliest opportunity for volunteers.

11. Further advice and feedback

11.1 If a driver requires further advice or clarification about these guidelines they should contact their supervisor or volunteer coordinator or the Booking Office.

11.2 Feedback from drivers about these guidelines is welcome.