



# Passenger Handbook

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement.....	4
Goals of Passenger Handbook.....	4
Title VI Notice to the Public.....	4
Notice of Nondiscrimination and Complaint Procedure.....	5
RYDE Transit Services.....	5
Scheduling Rides .....	6
Curb-to-Curb Service .....	7
No Show Policy .....	8
Passenger Readiness.....	8
Transporting Service Animals and Accommodation of Other Animals.....	8
Personal Assistants/Guests/Caregivers .....	9
Passenger Safety and Security.....	9
General Passenger Rules.....	10
Seat Belt Policy .....	11
Child Rider Policy .....	11
Packages and Personal Items.....	12
Severe Weather Policy.....	12
RYDE Transit Bus Operating Policies .....	13
Refusing Service – Violations of Policy.....	13
Payments.....	14
Reasonable Modification/Accommodation.....	14
Complaint/Grievance Procedures.....	15
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska Grievance Policy.....	15

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*It is the mission of RYDE Transit to provide safe, efficient, affordable public transportation to area residents in accordance with Local, State and Federal guidelines.*

*It is the duty of all staff and passengers of RYDE Transit to provide safe transportation for the general public.*

*It is the responsibility of RYDE Transit to provide services economically, and in accordance with, sound management practices and procedures under the direction of the Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska - RYDE Transit: Transportation Director, Business Manager, and Executive Director.*

## **GOALS OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK**

RYDE Transit is a transportation provider for seven counties in Central Nebraska. This service has a set of policies and procedures that passengers are required to follow. This passenger handbook provides the policies pertaining to passenger safety and responsibilities for using our service. It is to the benefit of all passengers that the all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are followed. All policies will be enforced in a consistent and fair manner. If passengers perceive they have been treated unfairly, they have the option of filing a written statement of the grievance or completion of a grievance form complaint with RYDE Transit –Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska as outlined on the last page of the passenger handbook.

## **TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

RYDE Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint of discrimination by completing and submitting the agency's Title VI Discrimination Complaint Form. This form can be downloaded on the agency website at [www.communityactionmidne.com/ryde.html](http://www.communityactionmidne.com/ryde.html); additionally, the form can be requested by contacting the agency at the address provided below. A telephone interpreter can be provided to assist persons of limited English proficiency. To request more information on the agency's Title VI obligations, or to obtain a detailed description of the agency's Title VI discrimination complaint procedures, please visit the agency website or contact the agency using the information provided. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms and additional information can also be obtained through the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) website at [www.transportation.nebraska.gov](http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov), or by contacting NDOR using the information provided below. A telephone interpreter can be provided to assist persons of limited English proficiency.

### **RYDE Transit**

Attn: Title VI Transit Manager

715 East 11th Street PO Box 2288 Kearney, NE 68848

308.865.5677 - [rydetitlevi@mnca.net](mailto:rydetitlevi@mnca.net)

**Nebraska Department of Roads**  
Attn: Title VI Transit Manager 1500 Hwy 2 Lincoln, NE 68502  
402.479.4694 kari.ruse@nebraska.gov

**Federal Transit Administration**  
**Office of Civil Rights**  
Attn: Title VI Program Coordinator  
East Building, 5th Floor-TCR  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

RYDE Transit complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other federal equal opportunity laws. RYDE Transit serves a diverse population of individuals with varying ages, physical challenges, economic status, and ethnic backgrounds. RYDE Transit shall ensure that no person shall be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by RYDE Transit based solely on his/her, religion, sex, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by laws.

Title VI complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies of RYDE Transit may be directed to the RYDE Transit, Transportation Director. Complaint forms are available at the RYDE Transit Offices, located at 715 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, in Kearney, Nebraska.

## **RYDE Transit SERVICES**

RYDE Transit prides itself on providing safe and reliable transit services to the general public. Public Transit is open to everyone. RYDE Transit operates demand responsive, curb-to-curb service daily. RYDE Transit serves residents of rural areas in Buffalo, Adams, Dawson, Hamilton, Franklin, Kearney, and Gosper Counties with scheduled service. Rural residents needing service should call RYDE Transit Dispatch for system availability.

Call the RYDE Transit Regional office at 308.865.5677 for specific hours of service, areas served and fare schedule.

## **Holiday Transportation**

No public transportation service will be provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

## **SCHEDULING RIDES**

### **Request Service:**

All rides must be scheduled with the RYDE Transit Office at least **24 hours** prior to service. Rides may be requested by calling the local RYDE Transit Office between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Rides requested with a shorter than 24 hour notice will be scheduled on a first come first serve basis. Transit employees will make every effort to schedule your ride, if it cannot schedule the ride, an alternative date and time will be offered for transportation services.

***New Transit Riders*** need to provide the following information: Passenger Name, Address, Phone Number, Date of Birth, Ambulatory or Non-Ambulatory, Emergency Contact, Date of Trip, Destination Name & Address, and Appointment Time.

***Existing Transit Riders*** need to provide the following information: Passenger Name, Date of Trip, Destination Name & Address, and Appointment Time.

### **Regularly Scheduled Rides:**

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

### **Canceling Rides:**

To cancel a ride, passengers must call the RYDE Transit office at least **ONE HOUR** before scheduled pick-up time. If you do not call one hour in advance, the trip will be regarded as a "no show." (See No Show Policy)

### **Scheduling Trips:**

RYDE Transit makes every effort to arrive as closely to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. Due to the nature of the service, arrival times may vary. A 15 minute window has been established to accommodate for this variance.

- ❑ All passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to 15 minutes or the possibility of a 15-minute delay.

Example: If you schedule a 9:30 a.m. pick-up, the bus may arrive as early as 9:15 a.m., so you should be prepared to leave at 9:15 a.m. The bus may be delayed, so be prepared to wait until 9:45 a.m. for the bus arrival.

- ❑ **All bus drivers will wait five (5) minutes past their arrival time before leaving without the passenger – the trip will then be considered a “No Show”. (See No Show Policy)**
- ❑ In the event the appointment is completed prior to the scheduled return time, passengers are encouraged to notify the RYDE Transit office that they are available for early return. Every effort will be made to pick up the passenger as soon as possible, but if the demand for service does not allow, passengers will be picked up at their scheduled return time.

Will Call or Pooled Rides are used for those clients who do not know their exact return time. Please indicate to dispatch that you will need a Will Call or Pooled Ride when scheduling trips.

## **CURB-TO-CURB SERVICE**

RYDE Transit’s service provides “curb-to-curb” service. The following policies explain the meaning and intent of curb-to-curb.

### **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 will not drive a transit vehicle into any private driveway.

Drivers may assist passengers to and from the vehicle only as requested.

Drivers are not permitted to lift passengers.

Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down stairs.

### **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 – See Passenger Readiness.

## **NO SHOW POLICY**

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify RYDE Transit at least 1 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 minutes. After five minutes, the driver will continue on his/her route and the ride will be marked as a “no show”.

It is the goal of RYDE Transit to provide timely service to our passengers. “No shows” pose a unique problem for our service. It is vital that each rider make their arrangements in a timely manner. Abuse of the system, such as scheduling rides and repeatedly not taking them, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Three (3) “no shows” within a 30 day timeframe results in a – 30 day suspension from the RYDE Transit Transportation Program. **RYDE Transit will notify the client by telephone only of their suspension and the date the suspension will be lifted. All No Shows are documented through dispatch software.**

For those clients whom have consistent “no shows” the following suspension will apply.

1 <sup>st</sup> offense	30 days suspension from transportation services
2 <sup>nd</sup> offense	60 days suspension from transportation services
3 <sup>rd</sup> offense	90 days suspension from transportation services
4 <sup>th</sup> offense	Denial and indefinite suspension of transportation services

## **PASSENGER READINESS**

Passengers should be prepared for transit vehicles to arrive 15 minutes before or after your scheduled pick-up time. Schedule rides accordingly to arrive at your destination for appointments.

## **TRANSPORTING SERVICE ANIMALS AND ACCOMODATION OF OTHER ANIMALS**

RYDE Transit allows service animals to accompany owners as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Service animals are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities. The transit driver may ask if an animal is a service animal and what task(s) the animal has been trained to perform. The driver cannot ask for a demonstration of the animal performing the task or ask about the person’s disability.

Under the ADA, “comfort,” “therapy” or “emotional support animals” do not meet the definition of a service animal.

Animals other than service animals as described above are allowed to ride the transit vehicle only in a secured pet travel carrier.



## **PERSONAL ASSISTANTS/GUESTS/CAREGIVERS**

Personal care attendants are persons who 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. RYDE Transit requires that a TRAN 710- Transport Verification Form be on file with the RYDE Transit office for any client caregiver. That form must be signed by a MD, PA, or APRN.

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)

## **PASSENGER SAFETY AND SECURITY**

It is required that all passengers wear an approved safety device while riding on the bus. Passengers utilizing mobility devices will be required to have their mobility device properly secured.

A passenger who cannot enter the vehicle using the stairs or ramp, but who does not use a wheelchair, will be allowed to enter the vehicle using the lift.

Drivers have the discretion to assign seats and determine wheelchair placement when necessary for the efficiency and/or safety of the passengers.

The driver may recommend that a passenger transfer from his or her mobility device into a vehicle seat. In this instance, the passenger has the final decision as to whether a transfer is appropriate.

State laws apply toward child passengers. Car seats are NOT provided.

## **GENERAL PASSENGER RULES**

The general rules listed below are not intended to be all-inclusive but are considered a guideline for proper passenger behavior.

1. Riders shall wait until the transit vehicle has come to a complete stop before attempting to board or disembark. All riders shall stay seated until the vehicle stops.
2. No roller skates, roller blades, ice skates, etc., are to be worn in the bus.
3. All passengers are to be clothed and wearing some form of protective footwear.
4. While waiting for the transit vehicle at the designated pick-up point, riders shall stay off the traveled roadway at all times. Riders shall not walk along the side, directly in front of or behind the bus for any reason.
5. All passengers will remain seated while the vehicle is in motion and for the duration of their ride.
6. Riders shall be considerate of others at all times. Threats, hitting, tripping, shoving, kicking, spitting, foul language, horseplay, teasing or any other improper or disruptive behavior towards anyone or themselves will not be tolerated.
7. Devices such as radios or any other electronic device can only be used with headphones.
8. Passengers carrying or using alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substances will not be permitted in the transit vehicle
9. Riders shall keep hand(s), head or any other body part inside the bus and within their seated area at all times.
10. Riders shall obey the driver willingly and report any problems to the bus driver or dispatcher promptly.
11. Riders shall assist in keeping the transit vehicle clean by using sanitary practices. Any offensive odors to others or any type of unsanitary practices are to be avoided.
12. Eating or drinking beverages in the vehicle is not permitted.
13. Use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited (this includes vapor and e-cigarettes).
14. Lighting matches, lighters, or any other type of flammable material is not permitted on the vehicle.
15. Any type of perceived, suspicious or actual explosive device or weapons are not allowed on transit vehicles.

## **SEAT BELT POLICY**

It is requested that all RYDE Transit passengers wear an approved safety device while riding on the bus.

State laws apply toward child passengers.

## **CHILD RIDER POLICY**

It is the policy of RYDE Transit to provide the most effective, efficient, safest, and uninterrupted transportation service to all residents. In providing this service it is necessary to establish policies that govern RYDE's role and responsibilities in the transportation of children under the age of 16. These roles and responsibilities are as follows:

1. All children must follow all RYDE Transit rules, regulations, and policies. Violations of these rules by either the child or parent may lead to service suspension.
2. No child under the age of four (4) is permitted to ride alone on RYDE Transit.
3. All children under the age of six (6) must wear an approved safety restraint. Parent or guardians are responsible for providing RYDE with an approved safety restraint. RYDE Transit WILL NOT provide child car seats.
4. Children under the age of sixteen (16) must be accompanied by an adult. Exceptions to this policy for children over the age of four (4) include:
  - a. Agency to agency transportation, such as from the Y.M.C.A. to a Public School.
  - b. Transportation where the parent or guardian provides supervision for the child at both the pick up and destination of the child's trip. (example: Head Start Clients)
5. Children under sixteen (16) will be transported only to the destination scheduled by the parent or guardian. Children are not allowed to change scheduled rides.
6. Children under sixteen (16) will be transported within the city limits of their trip origin, unless accompanied by an adult.
7. RYDE Transit cannot guarantee pre or post school transportation due to passenger volume.
8. Parent or guardians must notify RYDE Transit at the time of trip scheduling the child's age.

9. If no adult is at the destination location to accept the child (under 16 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.

## **PACKAGES AND PERSONAL ITEMS**

Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to not more than the equivalent of **five** brown paper grocery sacks or **five** plastic bags per person. An attendant may travel to assist with the loading/unloading of packages. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. No one package shall weigh more than 20 pounds.

An oxygen tank must be portable and secured in some fashion so it cannot fall or roll. Securement can be with a seat belt or tank holder on the wheelchair.

***Drivers are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.***

## **SEVERE WEATHER POLICY**

### **Weather Related Access to Private Homes**

Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their homes accessible to the RYDE Transit bus drivers. Bus drivers are **not allowed** to assist passengers through un-shoveled 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 the “no show” policy will apply.

### **Discontinuing Service Due to Weather Conditions**

RYDE Transit will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exist which make travel unsafe, RYDE Transit reserves the right to discontinue services until conditions are more favorable. We do not consider routine appointments (medical, hair, etc.) necessary during severe weather. If service is discontinued, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

### **Winter Riding Tips:**

- ❑ Be aware of current weather conditions, which may affect RYDE Transit services.
- ❑ If streets are icy, allow additional travel time.
- ❑ Avoid delays by being on time and having correct fare ready.
- ❑ Clean footwear of snow and slush before boarding so it does not gather on the steps and floor of the bus, causing danger of slipping to others.
- ❑ Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before leaving your seat and before boarding.
- ❑ Be prepared for sudden stops while riding the bus.
- ❑ At all times, watch your step, wear your seatbelt, and wear appropriate winter clothing.

### **Severe Weather Passenger Guide**

Severe snow and rainstorms can affect RYDE Transit service. The following may occur any time hazardous road conditions exist:

- ❑ Travel time may increase.
- ❑ Some routes may be shortened or cancelled.
- ❑ Bus service on less traveled streets, especially those not plowed or sanded, may be cancelled.
- ❑ Absolutely NO alley travel allowed.
- ❑ In case of severe weather, all passengers will be taken home immediately.

Passengers and/or care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are properly dressed for their ride. Bus drivers will not assist passengers with their clothing. This includes proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

## **RYDE TRANSIT BUS OPERATING POLICIES**

No backing of RYDE Transit vehicles (transporting passengers) is permitted. Please inform RYDE Transit when you schedule your ride if there are issues with RYDE Transit buses backing up at your pick up or drop off point – Another pick up or drop off point may be requested from the RYDE Transit Office.

All RYDE Transit Buses are required to stop at all marked rail grade crossings.

All RYDE Transit Buses are prohibited from making right turns on red at any given stop light.

## **REFUSING SERVICE – VIOLATIONS OF POLICY**

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

- ❑ Intoxication
- ❑ Disruptive
- ❑ Belligerent/rude
- ❑ Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others
- ❑ Unreasonable or offensive personal hygiene

RYDE Transit has zero tolerance towards violence. Any overt act of violence or threat of violence will result in termination of passenger rides. Any threatening acts of violence will be reported to law enforcement.

RYDE Transit has a NO firearms, guns or concealed weapons policy on all transit buses and transit property, in accordance with the Firearms Information Policy of Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska.

RYDE Transit also has set a policy 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.
- 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.

***RYDE Transit reserves the right to terminate services immediately.***

## PAYMENTS

**Cash Fares:**

Payment is required at time of service. If paying cash, ***EXACT*** change is required. Bus drivers do not carry cash and are not authorized to give refunds or change.

**Punch Cards:**

Punch Cards are available for purchase to frequent riders. Contact the RYDE Transit office for pricing. Punch Cards are also available to purchase from any transit bus driver. All RYDE Transit Punch Cards are **NON REFUNDABLE**.

**Charge Accounts:**

Charge accounts will be provided to only those individuals whose rides are charged to an agency or facility with a contract for services with RYDE Transit. Individuals will not be allowed to charge rides.

## REASONABLE MODIFICATION/ACCOMODATION

Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines require RYDE Transit will make reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure that programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

To request an accommodation, please contact the RYDE Transit, Transportation Director listed below for more information or to request a complaint form.

RYDE Transit  
Transportation Director  
715 East 11th Street PO Box 2288 Kearney, NE 68848  
308.865.5677 - ryde@mnca.net

## **COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

As a recipient of State and Federal funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, RYDE Transit hereby attests that it will abide by the eligibility guidelines and service priorities as stipulated by all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The process for submitting a Title VI complaint is outlined in the Nondiscrimination section of this handbook. For all other complaints, clients have the option of filing a written statement of the grievance or completion of a grievance form complaint with RYDE Transit – Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska as outlined on the last page of the passenger handbook.

### **Community Action Partnership GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska will not discriminate in the provision of services to an applicant because of their race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political affiliation, marital status, family status, or disability status.

It is our intent to provide courteous and professional services to all who meet the eligibility guidelines for the individual programs we administer.

If a program participant or applicant has a complaint about an incident or denial of services they should immediately notify the supervisor of the program involved for resolution of the problem. This information will be provided by on site staff, is available on our web site at [www.communityactionne.net](http://www.communityactionne.net), or may be obtained by calling our toll free number of 1.877.335.6422.

If the participant or applicant is not satisfied with the response or if the problem involved the program supervisor, they may send a written statement of the grievance or complete a grievance form (*Mid-36*) and send it to the following address:

Grievance Committee  
Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska  
16 W. 11th Street  
P.O. Box 2288  
Kearney, NE 68848

All complaints or grievances will be promptly investigated by the Grievance Committee and the resolution will reflect the program guidelines. The Executive Director, will issue a final determination for resolution of the grievance. This determination may be subject to review by the Community Action Board of Directors' Executive Committee.