

# Garden County Public Transportation

## Passenger Handbook

### MISSION STATEMENT

This service is to provide safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transportation for anyone in the Garden County area.

### GOALS OF PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Garden County Public Transportation is a transportation provider for Garden County. This service has a set of policies and procedures that passengers are required to follow. 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 an appeals complaint with Garden County Public Transportation as outlined on Page 9.

### NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

We provide a door to door service for anyone in Garden County and on the Highway 92 between Highway 61 and Highway 26.

Please note, in 49 CFR Part 37 Subsection 37.5 (h) the regulation states the following:

It is not discrimination under this part for an entity to refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities because that individual engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct or represents a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

However, an entity shall not refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities solely because the individual's disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience employees of the entity or other persons.

The Garden County Public Transportation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal equal opportunity laws. Garden County Public Transportation serves a diverse population of individuals with varying ages, physical challenges, economic status, and ethnic backgrounds. Garden County Public Transportation 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 Garden County Public Transportation solely based on his/her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Title VI complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of Garden County Public Transportation may be directed to:

**Office of Civil Rights**  
**Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator**  
**East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor - TCR**  
**1200 New Jersey Ave, SE**  
**Washington, DC 20590**

Complaint forms are available at Garden County Clerk's Office or in the vehicle.

### DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

Service is provided Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
**Calls are accepted from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Monday through Friday  
 Caretakers ride for free. **We are closed on County Holidays.**  
 We do not accept Same Day calls for out of county rides.

Area/Mileage	Per Boarding			CONTACT FOR SCHEDULING:  GARDEN COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  (308) 778-7649
In Garden County	\$1.00	Earliest pick up is 7:30 am	Last pick up 4:30 pm	
Out of County	\$4.00	0-39	miles	EXTRA STOPS IN ROUTE \$1.00 EACH
	\$5.00	40-50	miles	
	\$8.00	51-60	miles	
	\$10.00	61-70	miles	
	\$15.00	71-100	miles	
	\$20.00	101-135	miles	
	\$25.00	136-150	miles	
One Way/No Wait McCook	\$35.00	162	miles	

**ALL VEHICLES ARE ADA ACCESSIBLE**

Earliest leave time for out of county rides is 7:00 am pick up in county  
 Latest leave time from cities is to arrive at drop off in county by 5:00 pm  
 Children 12 and under ride free when traveling with legal guardian.

The scheduler may require the following information:

- Passenger Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Destination Name & Address
- Expected Arrival Time
- Date of Birth
- For children under 18 years of age – Emergency contact information

## CURB-TO-CURB SERVICE

Garden County Public Transportation provides “door to door” 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 down stairs while in use.

### 2. Business/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:

- Drivers may assist passengers into and from the inside door. Driver's may assist those who need direct assistance to the first help desk of the business for them to get necessary assistance. Drivers will not assist passengers further into the building.
- When picking up passengers from a business or medical facility, drivers may not enter in the building. If passengers require more assistance they need to take someone to care take for them.
- 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.
- Passengers **MUST** be ready to go at the time designated. Out of county rides have times specified for latest leave time. **IF CUSTOMER IS NOT READY BY THIS TIME, THE BUS WILL LEAVE WITHOUT THEM.**

## CANCELLATION POLICY AND NO SHOWS

Passengers are encouraged to cancel scheduled pick-ups in a timely manner. Cancellations can be made by contacting the transit office at 308-778-7649 between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday.

Cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance or as early as possible. Cancellations will be accepted up to two hours prior to scheduled pick-up times without penalty. Any cancellation received later than two hours 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.

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the Garden County Public Transportation at least 2 hours 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.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services also has grants available based on income. Call the Nebraska ACCESS Line at (800) 383-4278.

Medicaid paid Rides. Please call Garden County Public Transportation for phone number.

## **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 & ACCOMODATION OF OTHER ANIMALS**

Garden County Public Transportation allows service animals to accompany owners as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA's revised regulations define a "service animal" as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Where reasonable, miniature horses are also allowed as service animals.

The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability. Under the ADA, "comfort," "therapy" or "emotional support animals" do not meet the definition of a service animal.

For more information about the rules and regulations regarding service animals, go to ADA's website [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

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

## **PERSONAL ASSITANTS/GUESTS**

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.

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 but not onto the vehicle
- Transfer assistance from mobility device to a seat
- Carrying packages
- Communicating with the driver (if passenger is unable)
- Parents of children that are not handicapped do not qualify as caretakers.

### **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 I-Pods 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 and E-cigarettes is strictly prohibited.
14. Lighting matches, lighters, or any other type of flammable material is not permitted on the vehicle.
15. Any items that the driver assumes may be explosive or any type of weapon is not permitted on the vehicle.

### CHILD RIDER POLICY

Garden County Public Transportation has established rules, roles and responsibilities in the transportation of children under the age of 16. Therefore, the following policies will be followed:

1. All children must follow the transit rules, regulations, and policies. Violations of these rules by either the child or parent may lead to service suspension.
2. Children 12 years of age and younger can ride free with a Legal Guardian.
3. ***Beginning January 1, 2019, the Nebraska Child Restraint law is changing following the passage of LB42. The three main points of the law are:***
  - a. ***Children ride rear facing until up to age two or until they reach the upper weight or height limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer.***
  - b. ***Children up to age eight must be correctly secured in a federally approved car seat or booster seat.***
  - c. ***All children up to age eight must ride in the back seat as long as the back seat is equipped with a seat belt and is not already occupied by other children under eight years of age.***
4. Children between the ages of 8 and 16 can ride the bus in the county by themselves with parental permission. Special contract with Garden County Schools will provide transportation for daycare and Elementary School as outlined in contract.
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. Due to safety considerations, children under sixteen (16) will be transported within the county limits of their trip origin, unless accompanied by an adult.
7. Parent or guardians must notify Garden County Public Transportation at the time of trip scheduling the child's age. Garden County Public Transportation must have the parent or guardian's direct authorization for their child to ride the bus.
8. If no adult is at the destination location to accept the child (between 8 and 12 years of age), the child will NOT be left at the drop off location (exception will be to their home address). 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 ten 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 30 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**

Passengers are responsible for snow removal so their driveways and sidewalks are accessible to transit vehicles.

If extreme weather conditions make travel unsafe, services will be discontinued until conditions are more favorable. Passengers with scheduled trips will be notified as soon as possible. In the event that transit service is closed due to a weather event, reasonable attempt will be made to notify every individual passenger or the pick-up locations.

Winter Riding Tips:

- Be aware of weather conditions which may affect transit services.
- Allow extra time to reach your destination.
- Be prepared for sudden stops while riding the bus.
- Wear appropriate winter clothing.



## **VIOLATIONS OF POLICY**

Any violation of the policies, rules, and procedures outlined in this handbook will result in the following:

- First Offense: A warning letter will be issued.
- Second Offense: A second letter will be issued which will result in rides being discontinued for one week.
- Third Offense: A third and final letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

Garden County Public Transportation reserves the right to terminate services immediately.

## **COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

As a recipient of State and Federal funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, Garden County Public Transportation 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, contact the following for additional information and a copy of the complaint form:

**Garden County Attorney**

**Re: Garden County Public Transportation**

**611 Main Street**


**PO Box 350**

**Oshkosh, NE 69154**

**[bah@gardencountyattorney.com](mailto:bah@gardencountyattorney.com)**

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Garden County Public Transportation administrator will request written detail of the complaint or take an oral statement from the complainant. The complaint should include all details regarding the situation including date, time, driver, problem, etc. All complaints or statements should be signed or, if by telephone, the actual complainant should be the individual calling. Complaints received by telephone will be investigated and resolved prior to ending the call. A written response will not be required if complainant is satisfied with the resolution. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response issued to the complainant no later than 10 days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and action taken will be forwarded to the Nebraska Department of Roads, Transit Section, and a copy will be kept on file at Garden County Public Transportation; 619 Main Street, Oshkosh, NE 69154.

Introduced and passed this 26th day of September 2022, by the Board of County Commissioners.

  
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DIXANN KRAJEWSKI – Chairman

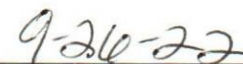
  
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DAVE DYMAK

  
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TERRY KRAUTER

**ATTEST:**

  
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MINDY KEZAR  
GARDEN COUNTY CLERK



  
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DATE