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# Guilford County

# Transit System Rules and Procedures

Guilford County Transportation and Mobility Services operates a public transit system for people living within the county that do not have access to public transit or any other form of transportation. We provide transportation for medical appointments, employment and education and for people over 60 years of age to senior centers and adult day care. Most of our service is the provision of a trip through one of our transit vehicles.

We are dedicated to delivering quality, customer-oriented service. The efficient operation of a transit system requires the cooperation of passengers, caregivers, the county and its contract transit providers. Call our office at 336-641-2561 with comments or suggestions.

## Transit System Rules and Procedures

These Transit System Rules and Procedures were established by the Guilford County Transportation Planning Board to ensure quality customer service, efficient service delivery and safety for all our passengers, drivers and other transit staff. These rules and procedures must be adhered to, to achieve these goals.

### Trip Reservations

All trip reservations should be made through TAMS (Guilford County Transportation and Mobility services) at 336-641-2561 or call 336-641-3000 for Medicaid rides. Trips can be either a single occurrence, referred to as a Demand Trip, or reoccurring on a set schedule, referred to as a Subscription Trip. A trip to see a doctor is an example of a Demand Trip. Demand Trips must be scheduled individually. A trip must be scheduled for noon on the business day prior to the appointment. For example, a doctor's appointment on a Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. must be called in before noon on Tuesday. A doctor's appointment on Monday at 9:00 a.m. must be called in before noon on the Friday of the previous week. Also, please be cautious of the days the TAMS office is closed. If Monday is a holiday and your appointment is Tuesday, you must call in before noon on the Friday of the previous week.

Trips to dialysis centers or daily trips to adult daycare are examples of Subscription Trips. Subscription trips must be on a recurring, set schedule. TAMS reserve the right to treat the trip as a Demand if 1) there are variances in the days or times to a recurring trip, or 2) a set Subscription Trip is frequently canceled. The reservations for these trips only need to be called in once, unless there are changes to your schedule or address. These changes must be called in by noon on the business day prior to the day the change would take effect. All reservations and changes to the existing subscription must be made by calling TAMS. Do not attempt to communicate schedule changes with drivers.



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When you call to reserve a trip, please be prepared to supply us with the following information:

- Your name
- Your address (or where you are to be picked up)
- Your phone number
- The name and phone number of someone we can reach in case of an emergency
- Your Medicaid number, if applicable
- The address, name, if applicable, and phone number of the location you are going to
- The time of your appointment or when you need to be there
- The time you need to be picked up

Please be willing to repeat all the information for every reservation and to spell names and confirm addresses to ensure accuracy. When your trip is scheduled, you will be given a reservation confirmation number. Please write this number down along with your pick-up time. If you need to call to confirm or change your trip, you may be asked for the confirmation number.

## Service Days and Hours

Transportation is provided Monday through Friday from 4:50 a.m. to 6 p.m., except on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, and two days at Christmas. Dialysis trips are provided Monday through Saturday except, Christmas and New Year's.<sup>1</sup> Transportation employment is provided 6 days except for New Year's, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, and three days at Christmas.

## Same Day Service

A driver's daily route is determined a day in advance based upon reservations for that day. Adding a trip to an established route or modifying trips on the day of the trip can cause other passengers to be delayed. Same day trips will not be scheduled. TAMS is a transit system, not a personal transportation service. If you have a medical emergency, you need to call 911.

### Checking on the Status of Your Trip

On the day of your trip, you can check the status of the trip by calling TAMS at 336-6412561 or the NEMT providers. When you call, please be prepared to provide your name and where you are going. Our contract providers have 20 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time (see below) before considered late. We ask that you wait those 20 minutes before calling TAMS or the contract provider. If you have waited more the 45 minutes past your scheduled return trip, please call TAMS at 336-641-2561.

## Scheduled Pick-up Time

Passengers are to be picked up within a window 20 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time and 20 minutes after. Passengers should be ready at least 30 minutes prior to their scheduled pick-up time. Drivers will wait a minimum of 5 minutes beyond the scheduled pick-up time before leaving. If the client does not appear, he or she is counted as a No Show. Refer to the No-Show policy.



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## Passenger Assistance

TAMS provides door-to-door service in which the driver assists passengers while boarding and exiting vehicles. We are not responsible for getting passengers, not in wheelchairs, up or down more than one single group of steps per stop. Drivers cannot lift or otherwise assist passengers in wheelchairs down steps. Therefore, passengers in wheelchairs have a route from the door to the vehicle that is flat or moderately sloped. Handicapped ramps that meet ADA standards are acceptable. The passenger is responsible for the cost and installation of the ramp.

Since this is a door-to-door service, drivers will go to the door and knock or ring the doorbell at a residence or go to the main door of the facility to assist the passenger to the vehicle. Impaired passengers (i.e. visually or memory) may receive additional assistance beyond the main door of a facility upon request, including signing people in or assistance to a front desk.

## Wheelchair Safety

TAMS requires that each wheelchair passenger be buckled or secure in their wheelchair. Passengers must provide their own lap belts. The driver will lock the wheelchair while the lift is in motion and secure the wheelchair once situated in the van.

**Pharmacy Trips:** Trips to the pharmacy may be scheduled along with a medical appointment. The driver will wait for ten (10) minutes outside the pharmacy for the passenger. If the passenger's transaction is not completed within ten (10) minutes, the driver may leave and have another vehicle dispatched. Should an unscheduled trip to a pharmacy be necessary following a medical appointment, the passenger must inform the driver as soon as they are picked up from the appointment. The pharmacy should be in close proximity of the medical office or the passenger's drop-off.

**Waits:** Occasionally, an appointment will only take a few minutes. If you know this to be true, please let the reservation staff know when you call. The trip can either be set up for the driver to return in thirty (45) minutes or the driver can wait. The best option is for a thirty (45) minute return time. The driver will wait a maximum of ten (10) minutes. After that time the driver may need to proceed with the route. If that happens you will need to call, and a vehicle will be dispatched. Under these circumstances we have up to one (1) hour to return.

## Return Trips

All trips are scheduled with a return time. If the passenger has no idea when a medical appointment will be completed, the reservation staff will ask for an estimated time. If the passenger is ready to return prior to their scheduled pickup time, they may call TAMS or the provider to inform them they are ready to be picked up. Passengers should be picked up within sixty (60) minutes of notification to say that they are ready or at the scheduled return time, whichever comes first. Passengers will be picked up where they are dropped off. Passengers should stay at the location where they will be picked up and in an area where they can see the vehicle pull up. The driver is not permitted to take a passenger to any location other than the location that the reservation is made for. If you miss your return trip you may have to find alternate transportation to return home.



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## Appointment Overruns

If an appointment runs past the scheduled pick-up time, the passenger should attempt to contact TAMS or the provider. If a passenger misses their scheduled return, they should call TAMS or the provider as soon as possible. The passenger should allow sixty (60) minutes for a pick-up in these situations.

## Cancellations and No-shows

Passengers should notify TAMS between 4:50 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. of a cancellation at least sixty (60) minutes prior to a scheduled pick-up. Failure to do so will cause the trip to be considered a No-Show. A passenger is allowed three no-shows within a month's period before they are suspended. The first suspension shall be for one week, second suspension for two weeks, and the third suspension for three weeks. The fourth suspension will cause an indefinite suspension. Reinstatement will require a written request for reinstatement and approval by the TAMS Manager.

## Service Animals

Service animals are allowed on the transit vehicles to assist people with disabilities including those with visual, hearing and mobility impairments, epilepsy, rheumatoid, arthritis and other physical or mental disabilities. Service animals are defined as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to help an individual with a disability. Animals that do not meet the above criteria are not allowed on transit vehicles.

## Escorts/Companions/Personal Assistants

TAMS will allow a passenger to ride with one (1) escort, companion or personal assistant. Any person riding with you must be reported to TAMS when you make the reservation. Escorts must board and exit at the same location as the eligible passenger. Children of escorts, companions or personal assistants, under the age of 12, may ride at a cost of \$2.50 one-way per child. You must indicate if an escort, companion or personal assistant will be riding, including the number of their children if applicable, at the time you make the reservation. People that do not meet the criteria above or under the next section may not ride the system.

## Service Disruption

Please understand that TAMS is a transit system, not a personal transportation service. There are numerous occurrences that disrupt service. TAMS' goal is to take any necessary action to prevent or minimize the inconvenience experienced by our passengers and try to ensure their safety and comfort. In the event of a service disruption or delay, TAMS and the provider will make every effort to correct the situation as soon as possible.

## Service Concerns

If you have a complaint related to your trip, please call TAMS. Depending on the nature of the



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complaint, we may refer you to the contract provider. Regardless of your concern, provide an explanation if applicable, and explain what we can do to keep it from happening again. If one of our vehicles is involved in an accident resulting in injuries, the contract provider will handle any medical claims. TAMS can assist with contact information.

## **Title VI Discrimination Complaints**

TAMS hereby gives notice that it is their policy to assure full compliance with the Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low- Income Populations, Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and services. It is TAMS's policy that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, income status, national origin, or disabilities be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, activities, or services for which Guilford County receives Federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been mistreated by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with Guilford County. Any such complaint must be in writing or in person with the TAMS office, 301 W. Market Street Greensboro, NC. 27401, within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discrimination occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint forms may be obtained from the TAMS office at no cost by calling 336-641-3515.

## **Inclement Weather**

TAMS is responsible for canceling service or modifying service due to inclement weather. A decision concerning service for the day will be made by 5:00 a.m. Decisions are based upon actual and predicted driving conditions, schedule modifications made by the school system, local governments and other local transit systems. Service disruptions will be posted on TV with WFMY News 2, WGHP Fox 8, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Nextdoor and on the Guilford County website.

If service must be modified after it begins, TAMS and the providers will make every attempt to complete trips and deliver passengers to their point of origination. We will also make every attempt to notify passengers whose trips cannot be performed that day.

## **Passenger and Caregiver Behavior**

The behavior of passengers on vehicles is important. Disruptive behavior can cause a safety issue for the driver. Our passengers have diverse ethics, economic, physical and mental backgrounds. Transportation will be suspended or canceled for passengers who are disruptive or who pose a threat or danger to themselves, to other riders, or to the driver. This policy extends to caregivers and could lead to suspense of the passenger being cared for. All vehicles are equipped with cameras that can be activated by the driver. This policy does not apply if the inappropriate behavior is caused by the nature of an individual's disability (e.g. Tourette syndrome). Allowances will be made long as it does not create a safety issue.



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TAMS staff and the staff of our providers are committed to quality customer service. We all value the assistance that we provide. Numerous actions are required for each trip to go smoothly. Therefore, we ask that all communications with all transit staff, including employees of contract providers, be respectful and courteous. We understand that the safety of the person you care for is important. We share that concern and pledge to you to be respectful and courteous.

Inappropriate or disruptive behavior that is prohibited on TAMS vehicles and/or directed to any passenger or transit staff (including the driver, administrative staff, dispatch from a passenger or caregivers consists of the following:

- Smoking, eating or drinking while onboard. Diabetics may eat or drink if medically necessary.
- Playing radios, disc players or other such sound devices without earphones or in a way that disturbs other passengers or the driver.
- Getting out of a seat while the vehicle is in motion.
- Leaving the vehicle while it is parked to pick up or drop-off another passenger.
- Disturbing the driver while he/she is driving.
- Disturbing passengers in a manner they feel is inappropriate.
- Refusing to exit the vehicle.
- Being verbally abusive and cursing.
- Making or placing false trips.
- Writing bad checks.
- Violent behavior.
- Physically or verbally threatening.
- Engaging in conduct or activity that is a danger to oneself, other passengers or the driver.
- Riding while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment.
- Weapons, explosives, flammable liquids, acids or other hazardous materials or items are not permitted in vehicles.
- Other illegal behaviors.

When a passenger or caregiver demonstrates inappropriate behavior as described above, it negatively affects the service that TAMS provides to all its passengers. Therefore, suspension or cancellation of service will occur as follows:

- After the first documented instance of inappropriate behavior, TAMS staff will make the passenger or caregiver aware that such behavior cannot be tolerated. This will be done through either a written warning or verbally.
- After the second instance of such behavior within sixty (60) days of the warning, the passenger service will be suspended for thirty (30) days.

If two additional instances of such behavior occur within sixty (60) days of the reinstatement of service after a suspension, the rider's service will be permanently suspended.

Reinstatement will require a written request for reinstatement, detailed changes that have been made to address the disruptive behavior and approval by the TAMS Director.



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## Definitions

**Passenger:** Includes the persons receiving the trip, personal assistants, companions, children accompanying an adult, or a caregiver.

**Caregiver:** Any person or entity reserving trips, making inquiries or acting on behalf of a passenger.

**Children:** Any person under the age of 16. The person must be related to the passenger or their legal guardian.

**Demand Trip:** A single trip, for example to a doctor's appointment, which is not reoccurring.  
**Subscription Trip:** A reoccurring trip on a set daily schedule.

**Trip Cancellation:** Contact with the county or service provider at least one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

**No-shows:** Failure on the passenger's part to board the vehicle within 5 minutes of its arrival but not before its scheduled arrival time.

**Will Call:** Allows the passenger to have a flexible return time when the length of the appointment is unknown. A return time is preferred.

