

SWHRA Consumer Handbook

Rules and Complaint Procedures For Passengers

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Customer Rules and Discipline Policies

PASSENGER RULES

1. All Passengers must wear seat belts while in transit aboard the vehicle until arrival at his/her destination. There is no exception to this rule.
2. Weapons (guns, explosives, brass knuckles etc.) are prohibited on all government property including the Southwest Human Resource Agency vehicles. T.C.A. Title 39, Chapter 17, Part 13.
3. All passengers will comply with a **NO SMOKING, EATING, or DRINKING** policy while anytime inside the vehicle. Exceptions will be made for those who have medical conditions that require food and/or drink (documentation of the condition may be required).
4. All passengers shall maintain orderly conduct while aboard the vehicle. The driver should not have to discipline the passenger and tend to driving responsibilities at the same time.
5. Passenger requested “extra stop” trips will not be acknowledged. The driver has a specific route to follow and no changes will be permitted. The responsibility of the passenger is to request all stops at the time of reserving the trip.
6. Passengers are responsible for the condition of their belongings and cleanliness of their person. Others, including the driver, are entitled to a safe and clean environment while aboard the vehicle. There will be NO exceptions to this rule.
7. Passengers shall have the ability to manage themselves before, during and after their trip. The driver is **NOT** responsible for assisting the passenger in areas other than boarding and unloading the vehicle. The driver is **NOT** to assist in carrying groceries, administering medicines, assisting with restroom duties, or helping one to get inside or outside of their home or appointment location.
8. Passengers will be allowed two (2) grocery bags per trip.
9. Passengers are allowed to have a companion if they are under the age of 18 or if they are in need of physical assistance that the driver cannot provide (documentation may be required).
10. The drivers are **NOT** allowed to accept gifts. They are not to be tipped or given any gift for simply doing their job.
11. Passengers are responsible for payment of all fares to the Driver for the Agency upon boarding the van, before the trip begins. If another agency is paying for the trip (for example, TennCare, Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran’s Services etc.), the passenger should confirm this status with the Dispatcher at the time the trip reservation is made.
12. Passengers may request a “Trip Evaluation Form” at the end of a trip. This form will be sent to the Transportation Director for review.
13. Seating positions at the front of the passenger seating area are for the physically challenged. All other passengers will make sure that these seats are made available to those who are in need of them. The front seat located beside the Driver will not be used by any passenger unless the vehicle has reached the seating capacity of the passenger seating area.
14. To assure the safety of both the Driver and a Wheelchair bound passenger, the Drivers’ help is limited to a “one step” entrance and exit of a facility.
15. In order for the Drivers to better serve the needs of the passengers, it is the responsibility of the passenger to make known to the Driver any medical condition that may require special attention during the trip. The passenger will make their condition known to the Driver **BEFORE** boarding the vehicle.
16. A passenger is allowed three (3) unexcused “no-shows”. After the third “no-show”, the Agency reserves the right to terminate future transportation services.

By boarding this vehicle, you (the passenger) are accepting these “Passenger Rules”. You (the passenger) agree that you have received, read, and understand the rules for passengers as set forth above. You further understand that if the above rules are not followed, you will NOT be allowed to be a passenger of the Southwest Human Resource Agency.

Policy on Personal Hygiene for Customers

SWHRA strives to make the transport of clients a pleasant experience. Any person(s) that are transported should be mindful of other customers and their right to a clean environment. Good personal hygiene is necessary to ensure that everyone on board the vehicle is comfortable while being confined with others in a closed area. Therefore, all clients will be required to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the transportation program regarding this policy. Any client that refuses to follow the good personal hygiene policy, which includes proper bathing and wearing clean clothing, may be refused transportation services. The Contracted Agency will follow the SWHRA policy for refusing transportation stated below:

Policy for Refusing Transportation

Drivers may refuse transportation for a particular trip to any customer:

- that refuses to secure their seat belt before the vehicle is in motion;
- that refuses to pay their required fare before boarding the vehicle; and/or
- that commits one or more of the Prohibited Activities on Vehicle.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials have advised that transit systems should provide "due process" before suspending a rider for disruptive behavior. The concept of due process is implicit in the protection of any civil right for a transportation customer.

1. First incident — The customer will be provided an explanation of the prohibited activity committed and will be given the opportunity to correct their action. If they correct their action, then they should be transported. The driver must inform their supervisor of the incident as soon as possible. The supervisor should give the customer a verbal warning and document the incident.
2. Second incident — If there is no recourse after the verbal warning, then the customer must be sent a written warning via certified mail stating the prohibited activity committed and what the customer must do to correct the misconduct. The warning should include the grievance procedure. A copy of the customer rules should also be included with the letter.
3. Third incident — If the problem continues to exist and suspension of service is warranted, the supervisor must afford the customer adequate due process rights prior to any suspension or termination of service. This process includes mailing a certified letter to the customer stating the prohibited activity committed, the pending adverse action, and given the opportunity to meet with the appropriate staff and transportation committee to present their own information and arguments prior to the action.
4. After the above process has taken place a written notification of the final decision must be sent to the customer via certified mail. The written notification should include a statement giving the customer an opportunity to appeal any adverse action.

If the customer continues misconduct, a certified letter will be mailed notifying him/her that he/she has been permanently suspended from riding a transportation agency vehicle. A copy of this letter should be sent to the appropriate agency if it is a contract customer.

Remember, if you as the driver or passenger fail to document incidents, the incident never happened. Document, document, document!

Customer & Employee Complaints/Comments

Customers will be given the opportunity to file a complaint with the Agency if they feel treatment has been unfair. The agency will follow the following procedure. The procedure should be posted at the Agency and the Level 1 information filled out accordingly.

SWHRA TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL COMPLAINTS

Level 1: Dispatcher (731) 989-5111 or dispatch@swhra.org
Complainant _____

If not resolved, go to Level 2.

Level 2: Dispatch Center Supervisor Tilda Pearson (tperason@swhra.org)
OR Operations Supervisor Kevin Lipford (klipford@swhra.org)
If not resolved, go to Level 3.

Level 3: SWHRA Transportation Director
Diana Turner (dturner@swhra.org)
731-989-5111

If not resolved, go to Level 4.

Level 4: SWHRA Executive Director Mike Smith (msmith@swhra.org)

- All levels will be handled the same.
- The complaint should include your name, address, telephone number and description of the complaint
- The complainant will be contacted by phone within 3 days of the complaint.
- The complainant should be informed that they have the right to have a witness or representative present during the interview.
- The person presiding over the Level at which the complaint was received will review and submit the final report to the Level above them.
- If corrective action is recommended the alleged discriminatory contractor will be given 30 days to inform the Title VI representative or appropriate department of the actions taken.
- The complainant has the right to appeal all written reports to SWHRA and TDOT
- The appeal must be made in writing within (14) days of the receipt of the final report.
- Anyone suspecting the existence of discriminatory practices by this agency should take the following steps in the order listed. Contact should be made in writing, by telephone or in person. The complaint should be made within 180 days from the date of the suspected discriminatory practice. All complaints/grievances will be acknowledged and investigated with results reported to the complainant. A log of all complaints should be copied and faxed to SWHRA and The Department of Transportation.

Drivers and Passengers should be aware that all complaints or comments received on driver performance are thoroughly researched. This procedure does not necessarily mean that a driver or a passenger has been deemed at fault. Management will look for patterns of events and take action as necessary.