

# Rolling Hills Transit Rider Policies

December 2023



## Introduction

Rolling Hills transit provides curb to curb local transportation to the general public. All buses are handicapped accessible and include seatbelts. Let Rolling Hills Transit provide you with affordable, quality service to get you where you're going.

The following guidelines have been established by Rolling Hills Transit to ensure the safety of our passengers, employees, and drivers. These standards have been developed through the review of previous service guidelines, present service capacities, and compliance with State and Federal guidelines.

## General Rider Policies

- The bus is available to everyone for any reason. Individuals of all ages may ride the transit bus to go to places such as the grocery store, medical clinic, pharmacy, hair salon, library, etc. All transit buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts that are accessible to all individuals.
- Rolling Hills Transit operates on a "shared-ride" basis. Shared-ride means that trips will be coordinated to carry as many passengers as possible as economically as possible. For example, several people could be included in one trip, depending on the pickup and drop off points and time schedule, please allow for this when scheduling.
- The bus may arrive up to 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after scheduled pickup time.
- Riders are required to fasten their seatbelt while the bus is in motion.
- Drivers cannot assist with packages or assist passengers into businesses or homes.
- A passenger is expected to be able to get themselves in and out of the door of their residence. If they cannot the passenger would need to have an aide to help them.
- Bags and packages must remain with the passenger and may not obstruct the aisle or the wheelchair securement area.
- Passengers are to be courteous, considerate and respectful of their fellow passengers, driver, and bus. Passengers who are disruptive or unsafe may be asked to leave the bus.
- No foul language, fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay will be tolerated.
- Eating, drinking, tobacco, and drug use are not permitted on the buses.
- When a customer does not properly cancel his/her ride they will be charged for the ride.
- Exact amount of change, check, or pass value is required at time of ride. Drivers do not carry change.
- All rides/changes must be made through dispatch and not with drivers.

## Service Areas & Hours

- Dial a ride service
  - Kasson, Mantorville, & Dodge Center operate M-F from 7 am-5 pm
  - Byron operates M-F from 7 am-5 pm
  - Stewartville operates M-F from 7 am-5 pm
  - Eyota operates M-F from 9 am-5 pm
  - St Charles operates M-F from 7:30 am-3:30 pm
  - Lewiston operates M-F from 7:30 am-3:30 pm
  - Rushford operates M-F from 8 am-4 pm
  - Spring Valley operates M-F from 7:30 am-3:30 pm
  - Chatfield/Harmony operates M-F from 7:15 am-3:45 pm
  - Caledonia operates M-F from 7 am-5 pm

- No transit service on holidays
  - New Year's Day (observed)
  - Spring Holiday (Friday before Easter)
  - Memorial Day
  - Juneteenth
  - Independence Day (observed)
  - Labor Day
  - Thanksgiving Day
  - Friday after Thanksgiving
  - Christmas Eve (observed)
  - Christmas Day (observed)
- Dispatch hours & Scheduling ride
  - M-F 6:30am-4:30 pm, 507-634-4340 (option 1) or 1-800-528-7622 or email [rhtbus@semcac.org](mailto:rhtbus@semcac.org)
  - Rides may only be scheduled through dispatch. Riders should not call drivers directly.
  - Rides are scheduled on a first come first serve basis. RHT prefers that passengers give at least 24 hours' notice when scheduling a ride. RHT will make every effort to provide next day service. RHT will also make every effort to provide rides when 24 hours' notice is not given but cannot guarantee they will take place due to circumstances beyond our control.
  - Passengers shall recognize that RHT's services are based upon coordination of transportation and therefore shall not expect individual trips upon request.
  - Separate rides need to be scheduled for each leg of your trip. Passengers shall schedule all return rides with outbound rides when setting up trip.
  - A passenger's trip shall not be altered by the driver once they have boarded the vehicle. Any changes to the trip would need to be made prior to the trip by the dispatch office based on availability or a future ride would need to be scheduled.
  - Passengers may be requested to take a circuitous route in order to accommodate other passengers.
  - The bus may arrive up to 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after scheduled pickup time. This is known as the "pickup window" and is necessary for the transit system to operate effectively.
  - The driver shall not leave a designated stop prior to the scheduled pick up time.
  - The driver shall not wait longer than 5 minutes past scheduled pick up time for any client.
- Inclement weather
  - In Minnesota, we can experience bad weather such as flooding, ice, and snowstorms. Our service area includes many rural roads. RHT intends this policy as an attempt to safeguard our passengers, drivers, and employees who may be at risk by traveling across any unsafe road in bad weather.
  - If a driver feels a particular trip is unsafe he/she must notify dispatch for a final determination so that RHT dispatch may notify the rider (s) affected by the cancellation. In this case it is the rider's responsibility to prepare alternate transportation or reschedule the trip.
  - Since the RHT service area is wide spread management relies on the drivers to give an adequate report of weather conditions in their area.

## **Fare payment & cancellation/ no show policy**

- Fares
  - In town, one way \$2.00
  - Senior dining, round trip \$2.00
  - Out of town, but within 8 miles, one way \$3.00
  - Out of town, beyond 8 miles, one way \$6.00
- Passengers should be prepared to pay at the time service is provided unless other arrangements have been previously made with RHT management or dispatch.
- Exact amount of change, check, or pass value is required at time of ride. Drivers do not carry change.

- RHT will bill for certain trips under the following conditions:
  - A. A human service agency is paying for the trip.
  - B. A client's guardian request billing due to the client's inability to handle cash.
  - C. Arrangements are made in advance giving RHT the name of the agency to bill, contact name, full mailing address, telephone number, and any applicable reference number.
- Cancellations/ no shows
  - A passenger who cancels a specialized trip within 24 hours of the scheduled trip three (3) times may be suspended from service.
  - The rider is responsible for cancelling a trip that is no longer needed. A trip is considered a "no show" when the driver has made every reasonable effort to locate the passenger within 5 minutes.
  - The driver will notify RHT dispatch of his/her unsuccessful search for the passenger and it will be classified as a "no show". Each no show will be investigated to see if a good faith effort to cancel was made by the rider. A rider who fails to properly cancel his/her ride will be charged for the ride.
  - A passenger who records three (3) no shows in a 60-day period may be suspended from service for a period of time determined by RHT management.

## Rider Assistance, Securement & Accommodations

- Curb to curb service
  - Drivers provide curb to curb service.
  - Curb to curb service shall include the foyer or lobby of a first floor business, store, or other establishment.
  - Drivers may not enter a rider's residence.
  - Drivers are not required to bring riders down steps in a wheelchair. A rider is required to have a safe means of egress such as a ramp from his/her residence.
  - Drivers are not required to act as a personal care attendant, baby sitter, or to provide any medical services.
  - Driver may leave his/her seat to assist ambulatory riders in boarding and de-boarding the vehicle. The assist would be limited to extending an arm or grasping the passenger's arm for the purpose of stability. An individual who needs more assistance would be requested to use a wheelchair or travel with an aide. The vehicle will remain running, in park, and in direct eyesight of driver at all times.
- Wheelchair lifts & securement
  - All buses have wheelchair lifts and positions for wheelchairs. Drivers are trained to operate the wheelchair lifts and safety equipment.
  - Passengers who use the lifts will be assisted onto and off of the lift by the driver. Drivers will always operate the lift and keep passengers in their sight at all times.
  - All wheelchairs and mobility scooters must be secured with the securement devices in each vehicle and drivers must inform passengers that they will be securing shoulder strap and wait for permission. If passenger refuses shoulder restraint, they will be encouraged to follow company policy. If they still refuse the driver will respect their wishes to not use passenger restraints.
  - RHT management would notify passenger that any future service would be denied to any passenger unwilling to use seatbelts or shoulder restraints for future trips.
- Seatbelts & restraints
  - Company policy requires all passengers riding in a vehicle seat and drivers to wear a seatbelt.
  - Passengers transporting a child and opting for the use of a child restraint device (car seat, booster seat) must properly install the device and meet standards adopted by the U.S. Department of Transportation. RHT does not provide these devices, the parent or legal guardian must provide the child restraint device.
  - The driver may not assist a passenger riding in a regular seat in the latching or unlatching of a seatbelt unless specifically requested by the passenger.
  - In the case of pre-school children, the driver **MUST** take the responsibility of latching and unlatching the seatbelts. Attendants are not responsible for this nor is the parent when boarding the bus. Drivers are **NEVER** to

leave the vehicles unattended. It is the responsibility of the school to meet the bus and take the children inside. Drivers will at no time be authorized to leave the vehicle to take passengers inside the building.

- The driver is responsible for informing passengers of these requirements.
- Passengers with animals
  - Animals are allowed on board RHT vehicles under certain conditions. RHT does endeavor to be ADA compliant on regards to service animals.
    - A. Pets carried in carry-on boxes or portable kennels that can be carried on the passenger's lap. Boxes must have a lid that closes and locks, or that can be secured.
    - B. Pets in a box or kennel that can be safely secured without obstructing the aisle or exits and that do not inconvenience or injure other passengers,
    - C. Service animals (need not be in a carry-on box or kennel)
      - 1. A service animal is an animal that has been individually trained to assist an individual with a disability.
      - 2. There is no national standard for certifying service animals.
      - 3. **A driver may not require or ask a person with a disability for certification or identification for service animals.**
      - 4. **A driver may only inquire as to what purpose the animal serves.**
        - I. March 15, 2011-28 CFR Part 35 Titles II & III of the ADA

## Hand to hand transfer & attendants

- Hand to hand transfer
  - RHT is a public transportation provider and does not take on the role of caretaker when picking up or when the client arrives at the final drop off point.
  - Certain passengers may have lost their independence in managing everyday life activities. These passengers may be easily confused, suffer from impaired memory and orientation, limitations of coordination, and planning as well as judgment. These passengers due to age or disability may be unable to care for themselves.
  - RHT may require passengers who have been identified with these conditions to travel with personal care attendants.
  - If attendants are not required family/caretakers must agree to be present at pick up and final drop off locations. RHT will not be responsible if family/ caretakers are not present.
  - If family/caretaker is not present RHT may refuse to transport the individual in the future without an attendant.
- Attendants
  - RHT is committed to ensuring that all of our riders are able to get where they need to go. We recognize that some passengers may need assistance in order to complete the trip.
    - A. A "personal care attendant" is defined as any person that is required to travel with an individual to assure that the individual's trip can be completed; the personal care attendant must have the same origination and destination as the client.
    - B. A "companion" is defined as any person that would like to travel with an individual, but is not required to assure that the individual's trip can be completed.
  - A personal care attendant must be identified when the trip is scheduled with the RHT office.
  - Reservations must be made in advance with RHT in accordance with policy for both the rider and the personal care attendant.
  - One personal care attendant (per rider) may ride at no additional charge while escorting the client.
  - RHT management, at their discretion, may mandate a personal care attendant if the rider's behavior or overall health/well-being would preclude his/her transport.

## Passenger conduct and responsibilities

- Disruptive behavior
  - All passengers riding on a RHT bus are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive or offensive in nature to other passengers.
  - If a passenger becomes disruptive or offensive the driver will bring it to the attention of the passenger and ask them to stop.
  - If the passenger complies they will be allowed to continue their ride.
  - If the passenger does not comply, the driver should not put him/herself or other riders in harm's way and should contact dispatch/management or law enforcement (911) if necessary.
  - Passengers that do become disruptive or offensive may be asked to leave the bus before its destination and may at the discretion of management be barred or suspended from further riding.
- Number of packages
  - Passengers shall always be in control of packages and parcels in a way that will not jeopardize any other passenger's safety.
  - No packages will be allowed to block any aisle or exit, inconvenience or injure other passengers.
  - All packages or parcels must be secured in such a way that no article would come loose and move about the cabin freely should the vehicle come to a sudden, unexpected stop.
  - The number of packages shall be limited to **what a passenger can carry on board in a single trip** and only those which can be secured, not block aisles or exits, and so as not to take up seats needed for additional passengers.
  - Drivers shall not assist with getting packages or parcels from the vehicle beyond curbside drop off point.
- Articles not permitted on vehicles
  - The driver shall exercise good judgement in allowing passengers to carry large objects on board based on vehicle capacity and the impact of safety and comfort of all passengers.
  - The following articles will not be permitted on board RHT vehicles:
    - A. Weapons
      - 1. **Firearms:** any device that shoots a bullet, pellet, flare, tranquilizer, spear dart, or other projectile, whether loaded or unloaded, included those powered by CO2. This includes but is not limited to guns, air guns, dart guns, pistols, revolvers, rifles, shot guns, cannons, and plastic firearms made with 3-D printers.
      - 2. **Weapons:** Any device that is designed to or traditionally used to inflict harm. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) firearms, slingshots, switchblades, daggers, blackjacks, brass knuckles, bows and arrows, hand grenades, hunting knives, nun-chucks, throwing stars, etc.; 2) any object that could be reasonably construed as a weapon; or 3) any object legally controlled as a weapon or treated as a weapon under Minnesota law.
      - 3. **Explosives:** Any chemical compound or mechanical mixture that contains any oxidizing or combustible units, or other ingredients, in such proportion, quantities or packing that an ignition or detonation by fire, friction, concussion, percussion, static, radio frequency, energy, or detonator, or any part of the compound or mixture, may cause a sudden generation of highly heated gases that result in gaseous pressures capable of producing destructive efforts on contiguous objects or of destroying life or limb. This includes, but is not limited to, firecrackers, black powder, dynamite, plastic explosives, or any improvised compound with the same properties etc., as detonating devices such as detonators, blasting caps, timers, incendiary wire and the like.
    - B. Smoking, chewing tobacco and drug use
    - C. Vehicle batteries
    - D. Gasoline, kerosene, diesel, or fuel cans
    - E. Caustic or flammable liquids
    - F. Non-folding shopping carts

- G. Non-folding baby carriages
- H. Large bundles that obstruct the aisle, that cannot be secured, or that may inconvenience other passengers (such as but not limited to bicycles, sharp objects, or instruments, and fishing poles with exposed hooks)

## **General tips**

- Please remember all calls and ride requests go through dispatch and not the driver.
- Please wait until the pickup window expires before calling to see where the bus is. The bus is not late until the pickup window expires, which is 10 minutes after your scheduled pick up time.
- Be flexible, RHT strives to serve as many people in as many communities as we can at the same time. Sometimes we cannot meet everyone's needs at exactly the same time.
- You are sharing the bus with other riders, so please be respectful and patient of others who want to use the bus.
- Do not schedule a ride if you are uncertain you will really need it. Other riders may be denied the opportunity to schedule a ride because that time was reserved for you.
- If you no longer need your ride please be sure to call and cancel.
- Let us know how things are going and how we can serve you better. We certainly want to hear about any concerns but would also love to hear your compliments. Let us know when we are doing a good job and what you like about our service.

## **Lost and found**

Please contact Rolling Hills Transit at 507-634-4340 (option 1) or 1-800-528-7622, or email [rhtbus@semcac.org](mailto:rhtbus@semcac.org) to inquire about lost items. All items lost on the bus will be turned into dispatch.

## **Non-discrimination**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act Rolling Hills Transit will not discriminate against any individual, regardless of race, color or national origin.

Any person who believes that they have, individually, or as a member of any specific class of persons, been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin may file a complaint with Semcac. A complaint must be filed within 90 days after the date of the alleged discrimination. You may file a complaint with Semcac and/or Minnesota Department of Transportation through U.S. Mail to the address's listed.

Transportation Director  
400 Commerce DR. SE  
Kasson, MN  
55944

Title VI Specialist  
Office of Civil Rights, Mail Stop 170  
395 John Ireland BLVD.  
St. Paul, MN  
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