

Freeman Community Transit

Passenger Handbook

“The mission of Freeman Community Transit is to provide coordinated transportation services for all citizens of the Hutchinson County area and foster independence by providing mobility options.”



BrookingsAreaTransit.com

Contact Freeman Community Transit

Office: 605-692-5416

Dispatch: 605-692-2222

Dispatch Toll-Free: 855-962-9120

Fax: 605-692-9120

Email: bata@BrookingsAreaTransit.com

Website: BrookingsAreaTransit.com

***Freeman Community Transit is managed
by Brookings Area Transit Authority in
Brookings, SD.***

***“No one shall be denied a ride based
on race, color, national origin,
religion, sex, disability, political
affiliation, or belief in any other
consideration prohibited by law.”***

Updated December 2020

Intent of Passenger Handbook

Freeman Community Transit is pleased to serve the Hutchinson County area with a demand response public transit system. Our passengers are the most important part of our agency and keeping you safe is our number one goal.

This booklet provides a reference for your responsibilities as a passenger of our service. These policies serve as a guide in making decisions that affect your responsibility and safety.

All policies will be enforced in a consistent manner. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, please reference the complaint process which is included at the end of this booklet.

Service Hours

**Please refer to BrookingsAreaTransit.com
for Freeman Community Transit's
Hours of Service.**

Service may be limited or suspended on these holidays:

New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Labor Day
Christmas Day

Easter Sunday
Independence Day
Thanksgiving Day

Service hours and holiday schedule are subject to change.

Scheduling Rides within the Freeman City Limits

Reservations may be made by calling dispatch or visiting our website at BrookingsAreaTransit.com at least one day before ride is needed. Same day rides will be accommodated for eligible passengers at a higher fare.

When scheduling your ride please provide the dispatcher with your first and last name, your appointment time, number of passengers, and your destination. Freeman Community Transit requires your pick-up time to be 15 minutes before your appointment. For example, if you have an appointment at 10:00AM then your scheduled pick up time would be 9:45AM.

Please do not schedule your rides for more than 30 days in advance. Passengers who require a regular ride (work, therapy, school, etc.) may create a standing reservation that can last up to a year. It is the rider's responsibility to notify dispatch of changes or cancellations to a standing schedule.

If you are calling to arrange transportation and have never ridden with Freeman Community Transit before, you will need to provide your name, phone number, DOB and address before transportation can be provided.

Please Note: If you need to schedule a ride or make changes to an existing ride, you must contact dispatch. Drivers cannot take ride information.

Scheduling Rides in Hutchinson County

Freeman Community Transit provides transportation to all of Hutchinson County. Fares vary according to location. Please refer to our website or call dispatch for fare information.

Scheduling Rides out of Hutchinson County

Travel outside of Hutchinson County must be arranged by calling dispatch. All out of County rides must be scheduled 48 hours in advance. Monday out of County transportation must be scheduled by 12:00PM on Friday. All out of County transportation will be contingent on demand for service and conditions beyond our control. Please call dispatch to confirm your trip 1 day prior to your date of travel. If a driver has to wait for a passenger for more than 2 hours, a \$25/hour service fee will be assessed.

Refusal of Service

Freeman Community Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who:

- Is intoxicated or belligerent towards drivers or other passengers;
- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others;
- Has unreasonable personal hygiene, open wounds or highly contagious diseases;
- Transports pets without a designated carrier, other than service animals. ***Transportation of pets must be declared to dispatch at the time the ride is scheduled.***

Pick Up and Arrival Times

Buses can arrive up to 10 minutes before your scheduled pickup time, but will only wait for 5 minutes past your scheduled pickup time. If your bus arrives more than 5 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time, it will not wait. Please be looking for your bus 10 minutes before your scheduled pickup time to ensure all scheduled passengers reach their destinations on time.

If you've waited more than 5 minutes after your scheduled pick up time, please contact dispatch to inquire about the ride.

Example: If you schedule a 9:00AM pickup, the bus may arrive as early as 8:50AM or as late as 9:05AM. Be prepared to leave at any time within this 15 minute window and schedule your rides accordingly.

5 Minute Rule

As mentioned, drivers will wait for 5 minutes past your scheduled pick-up at which time the driver will leave and list you as a "no show."

If you anticipate being late for your scheduled ride, please call dispatch to see if we may be able to accommodate you at a later time for a same-day fare.

If the bus must go back for a passenger after the passenger has been listed as a no show, the same day fare will apply.

Return Trips

Passengers are able to schedule a return trip pick up time for transportation which is not medical. A scheduled pick up requires the passenger to be ready at the set time.

Passengers can also schedule a 'will call' for their return trip. 'Will call' rides require the passenger to call their driver for a return ride. Drivers will make every effort to pick up our 'will call' passengers in a timely manner. If a bus does not arrive after 10 minutes please call dispatch for information on that ride.

Drivers will not make any unscheduled stops.

Cancelling Rides

Passengers who are cancelling their ride should call in at least an hour prior to their scheduled pick up time. If there are repeated 'no shows' due to passengers not cancelling rides, refusal of service may apply.

Door to Door Service

Private homes: Our drivers are instructed not to enter past the first door of a private home for any reason.

Businesses/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings: When picking up passengers from a business/medical facility/public building, drivers may go to the lobby area. Drivers will not go past the lobby to drop off or pick up passengers.

Apartment Buildings: Drivers' schedules do not permit them to enter a building to look for passengers who have scheduled a ride.

Lift Capability and Services

Most Freeman vehicles are equipped with lifts and are for use by anyone. Freeman Community Transit complies with ADA requirements for accessible vehicles.

To access these requirements, please visit www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html.

Training on how to board and disembark a vehicle with a mobility device will be provided on an as needed basis. Please call dispatch to schedule training prior to your ride.

The bus and all equipment are to be operated by trained staff only. For safety reasons, passengers or escorts are NOT ALLOWED to assist with operating lift procedures, or any other operating functions of the transit vehicles.

Escorts & Personal Aids

Escorts can ride free of charge but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you. Escorts MUST be willing and able to assist you with mobility and personal and/or medical needs. If you require assistance with any of these needs, you should use an escort.

Drivers will provide reasonable assistance to all passengers; however, Freeman Community Transit drivers are not licensed medical professionals. Because of this, we encourage passengers who need additional assistance to use an escort.

If Freeman Community Transit determines that you require an escort for transportation, you will be required to utilize one before further transportation will be provided.

Vehicle Backing Policy

Freeman Community Transit has a **NO BACKING** policy. Drivers will not pull in residential driveways or put themselves in a position to which requires backing up.

Items on the Bus

There is a 5 bag limit per rider. Please place your items on the floor of the bus.

Transporting a bike is allowed, but you are responsible for its transfer. Please notify dispatch if you need to transport a bike. For larger items, if you cannot carry the items yourself, it cannot be transported.

Freeman Community Transit is not responsible for lost or stolen items!

Seat Belt/ Riding Policy

All passengers are required to wear a seat belt. If you refuse to wear a seatbelt, you may be denied service.

Freeman Community Transit does not provide car seats for youth passengers. If your child requires a car seat, it is your responsibility to provide and secure one.

You must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before leaving your seat. You must also remain seated with your seat belt on at all times while the bus is in motion and be prepared for sudden stops.

Food and Drinks

There is **NO** eating or drinking allowed on Freeman vehicles.

Smoking and Alcohol

Use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, or alcohol is not permitted on Freeman Community Transit vehicles.

Fares

Fare is due upon entering the bus. Contact Freeman's dispatch or go to BrookingsAreaTransit.com for information regarding Freeman Community Transit's fare structure.

Children age 12 and under can ride to the same destination as a parent free-of-charge. There is a suggested donation for passengers over the age of 60. Please call management for more information regarding this.

Fare structure is subject to change as necessary.

Medicaid Recipients

Freeman Community Transit is a Medicaid provider. Dispatch will need to verify travel expenses are covered before your ride will be scheduled. Transportation not covered by Medicaid is your responsibility.

Medical Emergencies

Freeman Community Transit is not an ambulance service. If you require emergency medical attention, please call 911.

If you have a medical emergency while on the bus, medical personnel will be notified.

If you have a medical condition which you feel Freeman Community Transit should be aware of, let dispatch know prior to scheduling services.

Transportation for ages 3-18

- **No child will be transported unless a current Emergency Contact Form is on file with dispatch.**
- **Rides cannot be charged.** If your child does not have the bus fare, they will not ride. There are no exceptions!
- Schedule changes must be made by a parent or guardian. We cannot take ride information from children.
- Bus schedules change daily so riders must be ready when the bus arrives each day.
- There are no guarantees on pick-up or drop-off times. Routes are determined based on the fastest order for that day's scheduled rides.
- An adult must wave at the driver indicating he or she is home before a child can be dropped off.
- Negative behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in removal of your child from the bus schedule.
- Contact dispatch if your child is not home within 30 minutes of their pick-up time.

Weather Related Access to Private Homes

For your safety and the safety of Freeman staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible.

Weather Related Service Suspensions

Freeman staff will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions occur, making travel unsafe; Freeman Community Transit reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable.

If service is temporarily suspended, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled. If service is cancelled due to inclement weather, the rider will be notified.

Winter Riding Tips

- Keep informed of weather conditions, which may affect services.
- If streets are icy, allow additional travel time.
- Prior to entering the bus, clean footwear of snow and slush so it doesn't gather on the steps or on the floor of the bus, potentially posing a hazard.
- Watch your step at all times, wear your seat belt, and wear appropriate winter clothing.
- Assess your needs to travel and call to reschedule as needed.

Severe Weather Guidelines

Severe weather may affect Freeman Community Transit's service. The buses will run slower to be safe in adverse weather. The following service changes may occur at any time hazardous road conditions exist.

- Timed pick up intervals may increase
- Non-essential trips may not be provided
- Bus service on less travelled streets, especially those not plowed may not be provided
- Absolutely no alley travel will be allowed
- In cases of severe weather changes, passengers on buses will be taken home immediately or to the nearest shelter, as deemed necessary

Proper and Adequate Clothing

You or your care provider is responsible for ensuring that you are dressed properly for your transportation. This is especially relevant to passengers who use the mechanical lifts and may be exposed to adverse weather for longer periods of time.

Drivers will not assist you with your clothing. Winter attire should include proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

Donations

Freeman Community Transit is a non-profit organization. All donations are appreciated and can be made in person, by mail, over the phone, or on our website. Your support through donations, memorials, estate planning, etc. are humbly appreciated and accepted.

Complaint Process

This transit agency is committed to providing non-discriminatory service. To request more information or to file a discrimination or service complaint, contact Brookings Area Transit at (605)692-5416 or the South Dakota Department of Transportation at (605)773-3540. A written complaint can also be initiated by writing to:

Brookings Area Transit Authority, Inc.
418 Western Avenue
Brookings, SD 57006

Complaints may also be presented in person at the above address. Please call the office in advance if special accommodations will be needed.

