

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.”



BataBus.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@batabus.com

Website: BataBus.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 February 2021

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 BataBus.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

Call dispatch or visit BataBus.com to schedule a ride. Reservations must be made within dispatch hours at least one business day before the ride is needed.

Passengers who need a recurring ride 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 ride. Drivers will not make unscheduled stops.



Scheduling Rides out of Hutchinson County

Travel outside of Hutchinson County must be arranged by calling dispatch. Please refer to BataBus.com for information regarding travel outside of Hutchinson County.

Out of county travel will be contingent on demand for service. Because of this, we do not allow travel outside of Hutchinson County to be scheduled online.

If a driver must wait for a passenger for more than 2 hours, a \$25/hour service fee will be assessed.

Pick Up and Arrival Times

Our buses serve many passengers within very small-time frames. Please schedule pickup times for 30 minutes before your appointment to allow our buses to serve multiple passengers and get everyone to their destinations on time.

Arrival times may vary. Buses may arrive 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Drivers will wait for 5 minutes past your scheduled pickup time. The driver will then leave and list you as a 'no show.'

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.

If you anticipate being late for your scheduled ride, please call dispatch to see if we may be able to accommodate you later. If you have waited more than 5 minutes after your scheduled pickup time, please contact dispatch to inquire about the ride.

Please make every effort to cancel rides as soon as possible. If repeated 'no shows' occur, reservations may be cancelled.

Return Trips

Riders can also schedule a 'will call' or a set time for return trips. 'Will call' rides require the passenger to call dispatch when they are ready for their return ride. We make every effort to pick up our 'will call' passengers in a timely manner, however, if a bus does not arrive after 10 minutes, please call dispatch.

Fares

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

Fares can be paid using cash, check, credit card, or tokens.

Children age 12 and under can ride to the same destination as a parent free-of-charge.

Fare structure is subject to change, as necessary.

Door to Door Service

Private homes/ Apartment Buildings: Drivers are unable to enter past the first door of these locations for any reason.

Businesses/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings: Drivers will not go past any lobby area to drop off or pickup at public locations.

Refusal of Service

Freeman Community Transit reserves the right to refuse service to passengers who:

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

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.

Escorts & Personal Attendants

Drivers will provide reasonable assistance to all passengers; however, Freeman Community Transit drivers are not licensed medical professionals. Drivers will not assist with dressing passengers.

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.

Escorts can ride free of charge but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the passenger. Escorts **MUST** be willing and able to assist you with mobility, personal and/or medical needs.

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.



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. Passengers are responsible for loading and unloading their own items.

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

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

Not Allowed on the Bus

There is **NO** eating or drinking allowed on Freeman Community Transit vehicles. Smoking, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, and alcohol are not permitted on Freeman Community Transit vehicles.

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 remain seated with your seat belt on while the bus is in motion.

Lift Capability and Services

Freeman Community Transit vehicles are equipped with lifts which are available for use by anyone. Freeman Community Transit complies with ADA requirements for accessible vehicles. To access these requirements, please visit www.transit.dot.gov.

Freeman Community Transit staff is specially trained to operate the bus and all equipment. Please follow your driver's instructions on how to board and disembark a vehicle. For safety reasons, passengers or escorts are NOT ALLOWED to assist with operating lift procedures or any other functions of the transit vehicles.

If you cannot be properly secured, you will be given the option of whether you would like to proceed with the ride.

Service Suspensions

If travel is unsafe due to inclement weather, Freeman Community Transit reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable. If service is suspended, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

Appropriate announcements will be made to the local media.

Winter Access to Private Homes

For your safety and the safety of Freeman Community Transit staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible and free of ice and snow.

Severe Weather Guidelines

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

- Travel time may increase if streets are icy.
- Non-essential trips may not be provided.
- Bus service on impassible streets will not be provided.
- Absolutely no alley travel will be allowed.
- Passengers who are on buses when severe weather occurs unexpectedly, will be taken home immediately or to the nearest shelter.

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.

