



Passenger Handbook

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SOUTHEAST PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Southeast Public Transit is a public transit service serving Yankton and Clay Counties. We also provide service to area communities. Please call the dispatch office for details and scheduling.

All our service hours are open to the public and anyone can ride. Regular transit hours are:

Yankton:

Dispatch: Monday - Friday - 7:00am - 5:00pm

Buses: Monday - Friday – 5:00am - 5:00pm

Vermillion:

Dispatch: Monday – Friday – 8:00am – 5:00pm

Buses: Monday – Friday – 7:30am – 5:00pm

Transportation to area communities will occur on an as needed basis and requests need to be made at least one business day before the requested day. We ask that passengers schedule their business between the hours of 9:00 am and 3 pm.

No services will be provided on the following holidays:

Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

SCHEDULING RIDES

REQUESTING SERVICE:

We schedule rides on a first come, first serve basis. Plan to schedule rides as far in advance as you can.

For Yankton riders: Trips must be scheduled at a minimum by 5:00pm the day before you require the ride. (Note: if ride is needed on a Monday or if there is a holiday you will need to call on Friday or the day before the holiday to set up your ride.), Due to federal regulations Southeast Public Transit in Yankton cannot do same day requests. We also recommend that you schedule your ride so there is enough time to get to your destination on time. Buses may arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled pick up time or 15 minutes after the time, so we encourage you to plan accordingly. We ask that you plan to schedule your return trip at the time you make the initial ride with the dispatcher.

For Vermillion riders: We schedule rides on a first come, first served basis, so plan to schedule rides as far in advance as you can. We encourage you to schedule your rides at least one day in advance. This helps us to plan for the trip when we make our schedule for the next day. A ride scheduled the same day (same day ride) will have a higher fare. It is recommended that you schedule your ride so there is enough time to get to your destination on time. Buses may arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled pick up time or 15 minutes after the time, so we encourage you to plan accordingly. We ask that you plan to schedule your return trip at the time you make the initial ride with the dispatcher.

When scheduling a ride, you will need to inform the dispatcher if you will be making more than one stop so we can plan for the ride. Additional destinations or changes cannot be made on the day of the ride. Drivers are not able to wait for you at a location even if you will not be there very long. There are other passengers waiting for their ride. You will need to schedule a separate return ride.

To schedule a ride, call **605-665-4610** or **605-624-7433** during office hours.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED RIDES:

A ride scheduled on a regular basis may be arranged with the dispatcher to be reoccurring. You only need to make one call and the ride will be on the schedule until the end date you provide or you call and tell the dispatcher that you no longer need the ride.

SCHEDULING TRIPS:

Southeast Public Transit operates within a 30-minute window. Due to the nature of the service, arrival times will vary. Please allow a **30-minute** window of time for the bus to arrive.

- The bus may have an early arrival of up to **15 minutes**, or the possibility of a **15-minute** delay. This should be taken into account when scheduling a ride so that you will arrive on time for your appointment. We ask that you plan for an early arrival and be ready to go 15 minutes prior to your pick up.
- Upon arrival, Yankton drivers will wait for the passenger for **three minutes** and Vermillion drivers will wait for **five minutes**. Once the three or five minutes is up, the driver will continue on his/her route and the ride will be marked a no-show. (This excludes boarding time.)
- In the event your appointment is completed early, you are encouraged to call and notify the dispatcher that you are available for an early return. If possible we will pick you up sooner, but for sure you will be picked up at your scheduled return time.
- Because rides are scheduled on a first come, first served basis, customers calling in for return rides may have a longer wait for the bus or may ride the bus longer than usual to reach their destination depending on the bus schedule.

CURB TO CURB SERVICE:

Southeast Public Transit provides curb to curb service. Passengers can request door to door service when they call in to schedule their rides or ask the driver for assistance on the bus. When we transport children, the driver will make sure that they enter the destination before departing.

The services are explained below:

1. Private homes:
 - Drivers will not enter your private home for any reason.
 - Drivers may assist you from your exterior door to the vehicle and from the vehicle to your exterior door if requested.
2. Business/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:
 - Southeast Public Transit drivers may assist you into and from the inside door. Due to extreme temperatures in entryways, drivers may assist you through the second door when necessary. Drivers will not assist you past this point.
 - When picking up from a business/medical facility, drivers may go through the first door, but will not go past this point.
 - It is the passenger's, personal attendant's or care provider's responsibility to ensure that passengers are waiting inside the door for their ride.
 - Drivers will not enter nursing homes, medical facilities, shopping centers or businesses in an attempt to find you. You should be waiting at the designated pick-up point at least **15 minutes** before your pick-up time.
 - The buses are unable to go through drive-thru lanes at the Post Office, banks or restaurants and cannot perform these tasks for you. You will need to be dropped off and schedule a return pick-up time as the drivers cannot wait for you to go in and return because they have other passengers waiting to be picked up.

CANCELING RIDES:

We ask that you call as far in advance as you can to cancel a trip as the drivers have a schedule to maintain and this becomes inconvenient for other passengers and transit. Please contact the dispatcher during office hours.

NO SHOW POLICY:

Passengers who are “no shows” are causing higher fares and a less efficient system for the other passengers riding Southeast Public Transit. Any “no show” that is incurred by a passenger will be marked on their account to collect the next time the passenger rides. Each “no show” is either 1 punch off of a ticket or \$2.50. Southeast Public Transit allows up to 3 “no shows” before interruption in service. Once a passenger hits 3 “no shows” or 3 “no tickets” Southeast Public Transit will stop all rides without notice until the rides are paid for. Once the “no shows” are cleared then Southeast Public Transit will restart rides upon the request to do so. If the “no show” was for a ride that was out of city limits the “no show” collected will be for the same cost of the ride missed. For example; if John Doe misses a ride from his home and his regular cost for rides is \$5.00 when we collect that “no shows” it will be \$5.00 not \$2.50 because he missed the ride from an out of city limits address.

SEAT BELT POLICY:

All passengers of Vermillion Public Transit are required to wear a seat belt, vest or car seat, whichever is appropriate for the passenger. Vermillion Public Transit does not have infant car seats. Parents and/or guardians will be required to supply the appropriate seat for the child.

Caution

The lift is designed to support wheelchairs and scooters. Southeast Public Transit recommends that passengers who stand while using the lift to consider using a wheelchair or have a care attendant (Care Attendants ride free) if they are unable to support themselves. There is no safety equipment available to support standees; therefore, passengers use the lift at their own risk.

SMOKING, ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES & VAPING:

Smoking, electronic cigarettes and vaping are strictly prohibited on the bus.

SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM:

Southeast Public Transit vehicles are equipped with surveillance systems. These are for security purposes only. Recordings are not available to passengers, family of passengers or the public.

FARES

Cash Fares - In city limits, fares are \$2.50 for a one-way trip. Please contact the dispatcher to find out the current fares for transportation to neighboring communities. Please have the correct change ready when you board the bus.

Ticket - Southeast Public Transit also offers a punch card for travel within city limits. One card is good for twenty (20) one-way rides. The cost of the card is \$50.00. The other card is good for ten (10) one-way rides. The cost of this card is \$25.00. For passengers needing rides to or from addresses out of city limits the price will be determined through dispatch and we can make a special punch card for 10 rides times the amount per ride. Example; if your ride costs \$5.00 one-way we could make a card for ten (10) one-way rides for \$50.00. There is no expiration on either of these cards.

Fare card – Southeast Public Transit has electronic fare cards that passengers pre-pay an amount of their choosing. As they enter the bus, the card is scanned and the fare is taken off their pre-paid amount.

If you are a Medicaid recipient and need assistance paying for medical rides, we can bill Medicaid directly. You will need to contact the dispatcher in advance to confirm qualification and register for this service. Contacting the office in advance is very important because not everyone who receives Medicaid qualifies for the transportation benefit. We need to confirm this prior to the trip. Once qualification is determined, you will get a Medicaid Recipient Verification form from the driver before you go to the medical appointment. This form will need to be completely filled out and signed by all parties so we can bill Medicaid for the service. When you get a ride home from the appointment, return the form to the driver. It is the responsibility of the passenger to assure all signatures are on the form when given to the driver. If the form is not returned or is incomplete, you will need to reimburse transit for the ride(s). If you have any questions, ask your driver or call the office.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY:

Service will be suspended until the insufficient funds are paid to Southeast Public Transit. Future transactions with Southeast Public Transit will be required to be in cash.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be on time for pick-ups
- Leave seats in the front for people who are less mobile
- Utilize all hand and safety rails
- No eating, drinking or smoking on the bus, please keep the vehicle clean
- Remain seated until the vehicle makes a complete stop
- If you have to cancel, do so as soon as possible
- Passenger and/or care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are properly dressed for their ride. This includes proper coats, hats, gloves and/or footwear. Drivers cannot assist passengers with their clothing.
- Secure all carryon items before vehicle departure.

REFUSING SERVICE:

Southeast Public Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who displays:

- * Seriously disruptive behavior
- * Violent behavior
- * Illegal conduct

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Filing a complaint

A customer may call the Southeast Public Transit office to report a complaint. Southeast Public Transit employees will work to resolve the complaint with the customer. If the complaint is not resolved:

Any person can file a signed, written complaint up to one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of the alleged incident. The complaint should include the following information:

- Complainant's name, mailing address and viable contact information
- How, when, where and why of the. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses
- Other information that is deemed significant

All complaints of a service or benefit provided by Southeast Public Transit will be directly addressed by Southeast Public Transit. Southeast Public Transit shall also provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities, or who are limited in their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, Southeast Public Transit shall make every effort to address all complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be mailed within seven days. Please note that in responding to any requests for additional information, a complainant's failure to provide the requested information may result in the administrative closure of the complaint.

Notification of Complaint

Southeast Public Transit will send a final written response letter to the complainant. This written response may be drafted subject to review by the Southeast Public Transit attorney. In the letter notifying complainant that the complaint is not substantiated, the complainant is also advised of his or her right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of the final written decision from Southeast Public Transit, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration. Every effort will be made to respond to complaints within 60 working days of receipt of such complaints, if not sooner.

ADA POLICY

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law July 26, 1990. The ADA is civil rights legislation which requires that persons with disabilities receive transportation services equal to those available to people without disabilities.

It is the policy of Southeast Public Transit that, when viewed in their entirety, services, programs, facilities and communications provided by Southeast Public Transit are readily accessible and useable to individuals with disabilities to the maximum extent possible. (49 CFR 37.105) For more information or to file a complaint, refer to the complete Southeast Public Transit ADA Policy. You may view the policy on our website or request a copy of the policy by calling our office at 605-665-4610 or 605-624-7433.

TITLE VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin on programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

Southeast Public Transit is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.A.

For more information or to file a complaint, refer to the complete Southeast Public Transit Title VI Plan. You may view the policy on our website or request a copy of the plan by calling our office at 605-665-4610 or 605-624-7433.

SERVICES NOT OFFERED BY SOUTHEAST PUBLIC TRANSIT:

Drivers will not enter private residences for any reason.

Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers in mobility devices up or down any steps or non ADA compliant ramps. If such a condition exists, passengers are responsible for arranging assistance from someone other than the Southeast Public Transit driver.

Drivers will not run personal errands for anyone.

Drivers cannot accompany passengers during their medical appointments.

Drivers cannot schedule future rides, but may notify dispatcher of a return trip request. Please call the office to schedule rides.

Public Transit Operations

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the overseeing federal agency of public transit. In South Dakota, the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) applies for transit funding from FTA. The local transit agencies apply for funding from SDDOT. Southeast Public Transit is a stand-alone no-profit agency with a local governing board of directors. When a local transit agency accepts federal funding to purchase vehicles and operate their transit, they also are required to follow federal regulations.

One of these regulations requires that the transit agency does not directly compete with private enterprise in the way they do business. When a community has taxi service and private companies providing service, the transit agency has to modify how they do business so they, as a governmentally subsidized business, are not directly competing with these companies. What this means is that they must require their riders to pre-schedule their rides the day before. Yankton has both taxi service and private transportation companies, so therefore must have the pre-scheduling requirement in order to comply with this regulation. Vermillion does not have these services, so does not have the pre-scheduling requirement for in town transportation.

Another regulation states that the money that the agency receives is to provide public transportation. This means that the agency cannot use their federally purchased assets to provide exclusive transportation for a group. Transportation must be the same for everyone. Transit agencies have very limited resources and schedules rides to provide the most efficient service in order to meet all community demand without providing preferential service to anyone. Therefore, depending on what the requests for service are for the day, the schedule for any given rider may vary from day to day. Southeast Public Transit uses the SDDOT recommended standard of a 30-minute window.

When parents sign up their children to ride transit, the agreement is between transit and the parents. When there are changes in the child's schedule, the parents need to notify transit of those changes. The schools and daycares have no obligation to contact transit regarding schedule changes. Public transit is not the same service as school bus service. We are not exclusively scheduling buses for youth transportation. Youth are considered part of the public and pick up and drop off times may vary. Siblings may or may not be scheduled on the same bus. We cannot guarantee that afterschool activity destinations will be on time as schedules vary from day to day depending on our ridership for that day. We will make every attempt to be on time, but the short amount of time from when schools dismiss to when activities start is, at times, impossible to meet.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

LATE START/EARLY RELEASE FOR SCHOOLS:

When there is a late start or early release, we will automatically adjust the pickup time to match the school start or dismissal time. When there is a late start we start picking up an hour before the late start time. For example, if there is a 10:00 am late start then the time the child will need to start watching is 9:00 am. If you do not need the ride, you do have to cancel in order to avoid the "no show" charge.

SNOW STORMS:

When it snows, Southeast Public Transit will run on a snow schedule. This means we will begin services when our lot has been plowed and we are able to move vehicles. We cannot guarantee that we will be running on schedule when this occurs.

In the event of a school closure, it will be the policy of Southeast Public Transit to run the buses on emergency snow routes primarily and other streets as they are opened by the city plows. If your street, driveway or parking lot has been plowed, we will enter these areas. If your street is not plowed, we will pick you up and drop you off on the plowed street closest to your pick up or destination.

Southeast Public Transit will close the bus service when one of the following events occurs:

- If the City declares no travel within city limits
- The Operations Director or Supervisor feels the weather is not conducive to traveling

In the event of the snow schedule or the closing of the transit service, it will be announced on the following radio stations (KVHT, KYNT, WNAX and also look online Southeast Public Transit Facebook web page).

Please note, Southeast Public Transit will only provide service to people whose streets are plowed and sidewalks are shoveled. If the passenger's destination is not clear, the passenger will take the responsibility of getting themselves the rest of the way or they will be returned to their home.

Winter Riding Tips:

- Be aware of weather conditions which may affect Southeast Public Transit services
- If streets are icy, allow extra travel time
- Avoid delays by being on time and having correct fare or tickets ready
- Clean footwear of snow and slush before boarding so it does not gather on the steps and floor of the bus, causing danger to others
- Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before boarding or exiting

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS OR A TORNADO WARNING:

The drivers are trained to go to the nearest storm shelter when the city siren goes off indicating severe weather is approaching. They will assist their passengers into the shelter and remain there until the all clear has been issued.

OTHER WEATHER INCIDENTS:

Drivers will be expected to use their own judgment when there are heavy rains and/or hail as to their ability to see the streets and traffic. When a driver feels he/she does not have adequate visibility, he/she is encouraged to pull over to the side of the road until visibility improves. The driver will notify the dispatcher immediately when this occurs. This way, the dispatcher will be able to let the passengers who are waiting for a ride know what is happening and give them an estimated pick up time.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS WHEN RIDING TRANSIT:

- Consider carrying an insulated grocery bag to place your frozen and refrigerated items into for returning from the grocery store. The bus may not be able to return for you as soon as you are done shopping.
- Check for personal items around your seat before exiting the vehicle.
- If you think you have left something in the vehicle, all lost and found items are taken to the office. Please contact the dispatcher for directions as to how to retrieve your item.
- Please carry the correct change or have a punch ticket.
- Call to schedule a ride as soon as you know you need it and schedule return rides at this time.



Southeast Public Transit Passenger Handbook Signature Page

I have received, reviewed and understand the policies and guidelines in the Southeast Public Transit Passenger Handbook. I further agree to abide by the policies and guidelines stated.

Name: _____ (print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If passenger is a minor, parents please sign.

I have received and reviewed with my child the Southeast Public Transit Passenger Handbook. I further agree that my child and I will abide by the policies and guidelines stated.

Name: _____ (print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return page to your driver.

Office use only:

Date Received: _____