



By signing below I acknowledge receipt of STAR Transit's Quick Reference Rider Guide and the Rules for Riding the Bus.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rider's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rider's Printed Name

Operated by:





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## **STAR TRANSIT**

### **Quick Reference Rider Guide**

STAR Transit is a Non-Emergency Demand Response Transportation that is open to the general public of St Tammany Parish to meet the transportation needs of its residents. This includes but is not limited to Medical, Employment, Recreation, Social Activities, and shopping. Our goal is friendly customer service, experienced safe drivers and reliable transportation to the general public.

STAR Transit will not directly or through contractual or other arrangements, discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, or disability in the provision of services, program benefits, or employment. The system provides fully accessible transportation for persons with disabilities and will abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

#### **Contact Information:**

(985) 327-0185

#### **Ridership Eligibility:**

STAR Transit services are available to any person throughout the geographic area of St Tammany Parish. All children under the age of twelve (12) must be escorted by a person at least eighteen (18) years or older.

#### **STAR Transit URBAN:**

Urban areas are typically comprised of the cities of Slidell, Covington, Mandeville and parts of Lacombe.

#### **STAR Transit RURAL:**

Rural areas are typically comprised of the town of Pearl River, Folsom, Bush and parts of Lacombe. Rural areas are determined by the 2010 census map.

#### **Service Hours:**

Urban STAR Transit ride service hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00AM-5:00PM.

Rural STAR Transit ride service hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00AM-4:00PM.

**No service will be available for the following observed holidays:** New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday; Mardi Gras Day; Good Friday; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and Friday after; Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

#### **Office Hours:**

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30AM – 5PM. Monitored voice mail is available after hours, on weekends, and on holidays.

#### **Scheduling:**

All reservations are made on a first come, first served basis and are taken Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM - 2:00PM. **Drivers are not allowed to take reservations for passengers.** To assure a ride, it is advisable to book your ride, make changes or cancellations at least 7 days in advance.

#### **Please have the following information available when calling in a reservation:**

- Name of the passenger(s);
- Home address and phone number of passenger
- Telephone number and complete address of where passenger needs to go
- Date of the requested trip

- Time the passenger needs to arrive (appointment time)
- Time passenger needs to be picked up for the return trip home
- If applicable, type of assistance needs (mobility aids, impairments, etc.)
- Will there be a guest; child or Personal Care Attendant (PCA) accompanying the passenger

**Making Changes:**

Due to scheduling limitations, riders are not allowed to change ride destination the day of the ride. All requests for a reservation and scheduling decisions are made at the call center by calling 985-327-0185. You may not board the bus and ask the driver to change your booked destination.

**Fares:**

STAR Transit fares are based upon the distance of the trips and will be told to the persons scheduling the trips at the time they schedule the trip. The fare applies to all persons, except a personal care attendant (PCA) accompanying an eligible rider, and children under the age of five (5). **Exact fares must be paid prior to boarding the vehicle (cross the white line).** Service will be refused or denied if the fare is not paid before boarding. Fares cannot be prepaid. Drivers cannot provide change at any time. One guest is allowed per rider at the same mileage rate as the passenger. Guests must be identified at the time the rider makes their reservation.

**RIDERS WITHOUT PROPER FARE WILL NOT BE TRANSPORTED**  
**Current fare schedule:**

Distance in Miles	Cost One-Way	Cost Round-Trip
0 – 10 miles	\$1.50	\$3.00
11-25 miles	\$2.50	\$5.00
26+ miles	\$4.00	\$8.00

Drivers do not make unscheduled stops. Trips of 26 miles or greater are only reserved if the schedule permits. Passengers age sixty (60) and older are considered seniors and if they register as a COAST client, will be eligible for free fare. Disabled, Medicare cardholders and children between the ages of 6-11 will be eligible for half-fare if they apply. Children under 5 years of age are allowed to ride free. Passengers under the age of twelve (12) must be escorted by a person at least eighteen (18) years or older.

**Pickup Times/Wait Policy:**

Riders need to be ready for pickup at the beginning of the 30 minute pick-up window. Pick-up windows are planned to ensure clients arrive at their appointments on-time. The driver will wait for **FIVE** minutes after arrival. Upon arrival the driver will toot the horn to immediately notify the rider he/she is there. STAR Transit will also attempt to reach you by telephone. If the dispatcher cannot make contact with you, they will assume you are not taking your ride and you will be considered a no-show for that ride. Your return ride will be cancelled unless you notify us.

**Delays:**

Due to the number of rides we provide, it is not always possible for buses to run exactly on schedule. It is important for you to allow **extra time** to assure your scheduling needs can be met. Drivers may be as late as 20 minutes past your scheduled pick-up window. **We do not offer ‘will call’ service.** If you are ready for pick-up more than 60 minutes earlier than your scheduled pick-up window, you can call to ask for your pick-up time to be moved. Original scheduled fares still apply and will not be waived. We will try to accommodate, but consideration will first be provided to other scheduled riders’ pick-up windows.

### **Cancellations:**

If a passenger is unable to make a scheduled trip, he/she must call the scheduling office no later than one (1) hour prior to scheduled pick up time to cancel. STAR Transit office hours are 7:30AM to 5:00PM. Cancellations may be left on the monitored voice mail after hours, on weekends and on holidays. A passenger is allowed to have four (4) cancellations during a calendar month (1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>). After the 4<sup>th</sup> is issued, it will be considered a “No-Show” and will follow the No-Show policy listed below.

### **“No-Shows”:**

A “No-Show” is when a vehicle arrives at a pick up location, waits the allotted time, and the passenger does not get on the vehicle. Drivers may arrive at a passenger’s pick up location within a one half (1/2) hour window. The driver is to wait no longer than five (5) minutes beyond the vehicle arrival time. STAR Transit will try to reach the rider by telephone within the 5 minutes to notify them the bus is outside. If the passenger is not at the pickup location in that time frame, it will be considered a “No-Show”.

Each “No-Show” will be recorded. A notification will be sent to passengers by mail after each “No-Show”. After three (3) “No-Shows” in a six (6) month period, the passenger will receive a notice by mail of a suspension and when the passenger is eligible to return to the service. Excessive cancellations and “no-Shows” may result in the cancellation of ridership for an extended period of time to be determined by STAR Transit.

Excessive cancellations – Excessive cancellations are more than 4 cancellations in one month, unless there are extenuating circumstances (family member could not call STAR Transit). Four (4) on-time cancellations in one month will equal one ‘no show’. STAR Transit will then follow the “No show” policy.

### **Service Animals:**

Only certified service animals will be permitted to ride on the STAR Transit system. Service animals include guide dogs used by persons with vision or hearing impairments, as well as dogs or other animals that provide aid to riders with mobility impairments. The rider must inform the scheduler that they are traveling with a service animal when they make their ride reservation.

### **Mobility Devices:**

STAR Transit complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by accommodating all wheelchairs and mobility aids in use. Passengers may use wheelchairs, canes, walkers and other mobility devices on vehicles.

Wheelchairs must meet the ADA definition of a wheelchair. Wheelchair means a mobility aid belonging to any class of three-or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. Some large, powered mobility devices do not fit in our buses. If you have a concern, please mention it at time of making a request for a reservation.

Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying customers. For safety reasons, passengers using three-wheel scooters will transfer out of their scooter into the seat of the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to lift individuals required or wanting to transfer from a scooter or wheelchair to regular vehicle seating. Such riders must provide their own personal care attendant to assist in their transfer. (Such attendants will be permitted to ride without charge). Transportation will not be provided to passengers who refuse or otherwise neglect to furnish a needed PCA.

All mobility devices are required to be secured within the vehicles at all times. Drivers do not assist riders beyond the street curb.

### **Medical Equipment:**

Passengers may travel with portable oxygen or other equipment provided that the equipment does not violate rules concerning transportation of hazardous materials. For safety reasons, oxygen tanks and other equipment must be positively controlled/secured by the rider to prevent them from falling or becoming dislodged and striking other objects or passengers in the vehicle.

#### **Seat Belt Policy:**

Seat belts or securement devices must be worn at all times and until the vehicle comes to a complete stop to ensure the safety of all riders and compliance with state laws. Passengers transported in wheelchairs must use lap and shoulder belts. Refusal to wear seat belts or the appropriate securement system will result in suspension of service. However, if a particular mobility device cannot be secured by the existing securement system, service will not be suspended and all accommodations will be attempted.

#### **Personal Assistance to Riders:**

Due to scheduling demands, drivers must limit personal assistance to riders. Drivers will be responsible for passengers entering and exiting the bus safely. Drivers are permitted to assist riders with activities directly related to boarding and disembarking the vehicle. Drivers will not perform any task which may cause injury to him/herself or the passenger. Drivers will not leave the bus unattended or unlocked, and will not leave the bus when other riders are on board except to operate the wheelchair lift. STAR Transit provides curb to curb service only.

**Passengers are responsible for all packages they bring on to the vehicle and are limited to the packages that they can carry and hold in their seat.** Riders may bring grocery or personal items purchased at stores on the vehicle, limited to what the rider can carry when boarding the bus (in one trip). Riders may not expect STAR Transit to transport furniture items, including televisions, cases of water, computers, equipment with gasoline, gardening items such as potting soil, or any items of weight exceeding 10 pounds.

#### **Conduct on the Bus:**

Passengers who use STAR Transit must be courteous and considerate both to drivers and other passengers. Drivers are responsible for the welfare and behavior of all passengers while on board the agency's vehicles. Likewise, passengers are expected to follow the driver's instructions regarding the same. Inappropriate conduct including behaviors which present a danger to other riders will not be tolerated.

The following behavior is inappropriate and will not be tolerated on agency vehicles.

### **Category 1 Violations:**

1. Carrying of Weapons
2. Fighting
3. Possession of Illegal Drugs
4. Having Open Containers of Alcohol on Vehicle
5. Destroying/vandalizing STAR Transit property

### **Category 2 Violations:**

1. Drinking non-alcoholic and/or eating (unless medically required)
2. Use of tobacco products
3. Foul and/or unacceptable language
4. Lack of good personal hygiene
5. Horseplay
6. Bothering other passengers
7. Listening to electronic devices without headphones
8. Disrespect for STAR Transit employees
9. Refusal to pay fares
10. Boards with more packages than can be secured in seat

STAR Transit will not tolerate a rider who violates any or all of the above. Riders committing Category 1 violations will be permanently terminated from the STAR Transit bus system. The rider may appeal this refusal of service according to the guidelines outlined below. In the interim, the rider will be suspended from utilizing the STAR Transit system until the decision of the appeal process.

Violation of Category 2 will result in a verbal warning for the first incident. Incident #2 will result in a written warning. Three incidents will result in a one week suspension of that rider. A fourth incident will result in termination of service. The rider may appeal this refusal of service according to the guidelines outlined below. In either instance, the rider will receive written notification from the STAR Transit Coordinator of the suspension. If his or her appeal fails, they will be refused service.

### **Appeals Process For Suspension of Services:**

A rider who wishes to appeal a decision to suspend services has sixty (60) calendar days to file a written appeal with STAR Transit. The rider will be notified by the STAR Transit Coordinator within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the appeal or after the hearing in person. The STAR Transit Coordinator will also notify the St Tammany Parish Department of Grants of the appeal for suspended services. The individual making the appeal has the right to be heard in person and may be represented by an individual of his or her choice.

The St Tammany Parish Department of Grants staff will complete an investigation of the reasons for the suspension. The written notification will include the procedures which may be utilized to appeal the decision if unfavorable to the rider. The St Tammany Parish Department of Grants will make a decision within ten (10) business days after the hearing date and inform the individual of the decision in writing. Those who are denied service will be provided with the reasons the denial was upheld.

## **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance.

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

If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination under Title VI, you may file a complaint. For information on our nondiscrimination obligations or how to file a complaint, please contact COAST by any of the methods listed below.

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

St Tammany Council on Aging, Inc. – COAST  
72060 Ramos Ave  
Covington, LA 70433

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

[coast@coastseniors.org](mailto:coast@coastseniors.org)

**BUSINESS PHONE:**

(985) 892-0377

**FAX NUMBER:**

(985) 892-2014

**HOW TO FILE A WRITTEN COMPLAINT:**

- Complaints should be submitted in writing within 180 calendar days of the alleged incident. The complaint should include the following information:
  1. Your name, mailing address, and how to contact you (i.e., telephone number or email address)
  2. How, when, where and why you believe you were discriminated against. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses
  3. Other information that you deem significant
- Within fifteen working days, STAR Transit shall confirm receipt of the complaint and inform the complainant of the investigation process.
- Within sixty (60) days, should the complaint have merit, St Tammany Parish Government/STAR Transit shall commence an investigation of the allegation(s). If the complaint is regarding discrimination, an investigation will determine whether there is a reason to believe that a failure to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has occurred. In addition, the St Tammany Parish Transportation Administrator will render a recommendation for action in a report of findings or resolution.
- Within ninety (90) days, St Tammany Parish Government/STAR Transit Transportation Administrator will notify the Complainant in writing of the final decision reached, including the proposed disposition of the matter. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the final decision rendered by the Grants Project Manager for Transit, he/she may file an appeal within ten (10) working days with the St. Tammany Parish Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO shall have thirty (30) days to review and render a written decision either to concur or deny the appeal.



## **RULES OF THE ROAD**

### **PASSENGERS SHALL:**

1. Buckle up or be buckled up if in a wheelchair and remain seated and buckled up until vehicle stops
2. No eating or drinking
3. Be ready on time for scheduled pick up
4. Inform the driver of special health problems if applicable; use lift if bus steps are difficult
5. Comply with fare policy, overpayment is a donation to COAST
6. Secure carry-on items, medical equipment and packages at your seat
7. Allow driver to open and close doors
8. Abide by driver's instructions
9. Board and de-board bus in one trip

### **THE DRIVER:**

1. Will assist a rider into and out of the van/bus (Origin to Destination) at the curb; drivers will not enter residences or places of business.
2. Will not wait longer than five (5) minutes for any rider to appear for scheduled pick-up.
3. Will not take articles into a rider's residence or help carry items on and off the bus.
4. Will not leave the van unattended or leave other passengers on the bus to assist a rider past the curb.
5. Will not transport any rider who is too ill to sit up and be secured in seat, or is vomiting, or bleeding, or recovering from anesthetics.
  - a. Will notify the dispatcher of the rider's condition and then, if necessary, advise medical authorities whether the rider needs medical attention. If the rider requires medical attention, STAR Transit will be unable to continue transport.
6. Will limit conversation with riders to ensure safety requirements are met.
7. Will refuse ride if the rider does not pay fare upon entering the bus.
8. Will not pull into residential driveways.



**Be advised that STAR Transit is not responsible for passengers' items left on the vehicles.**