

# Hyde County Transit

## Passenger Guide

## **Hyde County Transit Passenger Bill of Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Service Statement :**

The mission of Hyde County Transit (HCT) is to provide quality mobility opportunities in a safe, ethical, and financially sound manner.

HCT believes that passengers have certain rights and responsibilities and that they should have full knowledge of those rights and responsibilities.

### **As our riders, you have the right to:**

- A safe and reliable bus ride
- Professional and courteous service
- A clean and comfortable bus
- Accurate information on routes, schedules, fares, and other mobility options
- Report problems with your vehicle operator or route
- Rider-to-rider courtesy as encouraged by the vehicle operator
- Tell us about the quality of our service
- Tell us how we can make your transit system better

### **For your comfort and safety:**

- Have your fare in exact change ready when boarding the bus
- Allow seniors and disabled persons to occupy priority seating
- Please do not occupy more than one seat when others need seating
- Close your strollers and have children seated for their own safety
- Please maintain packages in your seating area
- Refrain from smoking, eating, drinking, or spitting
- Use headphones when playing audio devices at low volume
- Illegal drugs are prohibited. Alcohol consumption is also not permitted on the vehicle.
- All passengers must wear seat belts, unless a physician's statement can be provided to exclude such use. All children must be secured in proper seating requirements in accordance with North Carolina State Law.

Allow the operator to drive the bus safely by not speaking with the operator while the bus is moving.

### **Description of Services**

- 1) Passengers may utilize public transit services to serve a variety of daily needs such as medical appointments, grocery or other general shopping, go to work, or many other social and recreational needs. HCT transportation schedules are published and mailed to your home every four months. Please call our office if you did not receive one or you need additional copies, and we will promptly mail you one. If you need to schedule transportation, please call HCT by noon the day prior of the requested service. HCT reserves the right to deny transit request made after 12:00pm the day prior of the requested service.
- 2) Transportation Service is provided curb to curb, and will not be provided for passengers from their door to the vehicle. All passengers must arrange for assistance, if needed, to vehicle.
- 3) HCT provides non-emergency transportation only.
- 4) HCT has handicap accessible vehicles available. Please let us know if you need this service when you schedule your transit service.

### **Service and Service Area**

- 1) Our service area includes Hyde, Pitt, Dare, Beaufort, and Tyrrell County. HCT serves the Hyde County area Monday through Friday. Please refer to our service schedules to see when out-of-county trips are available. HCT occasionally schedules trips to Washington, Greenville, and the Outer Banks during the evening hours for your convenience. Please let us know if you are interested in those trips.
- 2) Our Hyde County Service is provided daily Monday – Friday from 6:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M unless stated otherwise in our service calendar.
- 3) Transit Services will be not provided on days of severe inclement weather such as snowy or icy conditions.
- 4) Transit Services will be unavailable on the following Holiday schedule: January 1, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> .

### **Reservations, Scheduling and Cancellations**

- 1) Office hours are 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday.  
**Transit services can be scheduled during these hours.**
  
- 2) The telephone number for reservations is 926-1637. The hearing impaired may call the Telecommunications Relay Service TDD 1-800-735-2962 or Voice 1-877-735-8200 . If you need to call after hours, passengers may leave a message on the answering service. HCT will get back to you regarding scheduling your trip at the earliest possible time.
  
- 3) HCT requests that passengers be ready at least 20 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time. In order for HCT services to remain on schedule, the vehicle operator will only allow 3 minutes waiting time for you to **appear** at your place of pick-up.
  
- 4) For the safety of our passengers, HCT may adjust scheduled transit services based on pending weather conditions such as snow storms.
  
- 5) Passengers discharged by a medical facility must call Hyde County Transit prior to the discharged day and time. Passengers are to call by noon the day prior for your return trip home. If a passenger becomes ill during while riding HCT, the vehicle operators will call 911 for an ambulance.
  
- 6) Rural General Public funds cannot be used for Medicaid eligible services. Passengers must contact Hyde County Social Services for Medicaid transit services.
  
- 7) Cash payment for General Public trips must be made upon boarding the vehicle. Please have correct change. Driver will not issue change.

### Passenger Assistance

- 1) It is the policy of this agency that passengers unable to access the system on their own be accompanied by an escort. The passenger is responsible for furnishing his or her own escort. An escort must be physically able to provide assistance to the passenger. An escort must be physically able to assist the escorted passenger on and off the vehicle.
- 2) This agency does not transport children unaccompanied under the age of 16 to medical appointment.
- 3) Passengers must provide their own mobility aids (Ex. Walkers, Infant Car Seats)
- 4) This agency only allows service animals on the vehicle.
- 5) Passengers and or escorts must be able to handle all equipment, carry on bags and shopping bags.
- 6) Passengers scheduled for appointments will not be transported if the following symptoms are evident:
  - Chest pains
  - Shortness of breath
  - Severe nausea
  - Vomiting or diarrhea
  - Abdominal pain
  - Labor painIf the driver finds the passenger in distress upon arriving at the passenger's home, the driver will notify HCT, and HCT will recommend transport by the Hyde County Emergency Medical Services .
- 7) Drivers will assist passengers in boarding and exiting from the vehicle only.
- 8) For return trips, HCT will pick the passenger up from the same location that the passenger was dropped off at. You will not be picked up from the new location unless prior arrangements have been made.

### **Passenger Conduct and Responsibilities**

Hyde County Transit requests that all passengers conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration to the vehicle operator and other passengers. The HCT Vehicle Operator is responsible for enforcing HCT policies and procedures on HCT vehicles. Passengers should follow instructions from the Vehicle Operator.

HCT reserves the right to refuse service based on violation of our policies and procedures. A passenger's right to transportation can be terminated by the transportation system due to misconduct of the passenger. Disruptive or abusive behavior to other passengers or the driver will not be tolerated.

- 1) No tobacco products are to be used in the vehicle. This includes smoking, chewing, or dipping.
- 2) Passengers are permitted to eat, or drink in vehicles; however, passengers are responsible for taking all items off the vehicle upon their departure. If a passenger leaves trash or exhibits an inability to control the spillage of beverages, the vehicle operator may not allow the passenger to have food or beverages on the vehicle.
- 3) No abusive or foul language. No profanity or vulgarity is allowed while on board the transit vehicle.
- 4) Lack of personal hygiene is offensive to others. Passengers should be clean before boarding the vehicle.
- 5) No horseplay of any kind will be allowed.
- 6) Possessions of alcohol and/or illegal drugs are not allowed. Prior use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs before boarding the vehicle will result in denial of transportation.
- 7) Passengers must secure any carry-on or personal items.

- 8) No weapons (knives or firearms) will be allowed on a system vehicle.
- 9) All passengers must wear seat belts to insure the safety of all individuals in the vehicle. Passengers will be denied transportation services if they choose not to abide by the seat belt policy. In the event that a passenger is unable to wear a seatbelt for medical reasons, the passenger must provide such notice from their physician in order to be excluded from the seat belt policy.
- 10) No inappropriate display of affection or sexual activity to the Vehicle Operator or another passenger.

Conditions and restrictions may be placed on certain passengers based on their conduct and how it may affect other passengers. The following requirements and regulations apply to conditional and restrictive service:

- Passengers having a history of violent or disruptive behavior that may be harmful to other passengers may be refused service or service may be conditional or restrictive.
- Attendants may be required for passengers with mental conditions that may cause them to be disruptive or to accost other passengers.
- Passengers with excessive no-shows as defined in the passenger no-show procedure may be denied service after appropriate notification.
- Passengers who participate in inappropriate behavior on transportation vehicles may be immediately denied service or have service restricted. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to the prohibited behaviors described in the previous section .

HCT will notify passengers in writing via the US Postal Service of any conditions or restrictions placed of their transportation service.

Passengers placed on conditional or restrictive service must be given an opportunity for a hearing before an Appeals Committee consisting of the HCT Board Chairman, HCT Board Vice-Chairman, and the Transit System Director. Written and oral testimony will be accepted from any persons wishing to give such testimony, and all relevant records concerning the matter will be made available to

the passengers. A request for an appeal must be filed in writing within 60 days of the notification by HCT to the passenger of the conditional and/or restrictive service decision. The Appeals Committee must review the appeal and issue a decision within 30 days. If a decision on the appeal is not made by the Appeals Committee within 30 days of the completion of the process, the passenger's conditional and/or restrictive status will be lifted until such time as a decision by the Appeals Committee is made.

### **Cancellation Procedure**

Passengers are encouraged to cancel scheduled pick-ups in a timely manner. Cancellations can be made by calling the Hyde County Transit office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Cancellations should be made by 5:00pm the day prior of scheduled pick-up. Any cancellation received later than 5:00pm the day prior of scheduled pick-up, will be considered a late cancellation and will be noted as such by the dispatcher. Three or more late cancellations in a 90-day period will be considered excessive and the passenger will receive written notification of such via the U.S. Postal Service. Passengers having an additional late cancellation during the next 90-day period will be assessed at \$5.00 late cancellation fee payable at the next boarding call.

### **No-Show Procedure**

Passengers are expected to be present and ready for transportation vehicles upon their arrival. Passengers who are not present for scheduled pick-up within five minutes of the arrival of the transportation vehicle are considered no-shows. All no-shows will be noted by dispatch. No-shows will be assessed a \$5.00 charge payable upon the next boarding call. Three or more no-shows in a 90-day period will be considered excessive and the passenger will receive written notification of such via the U.S. Postal Service. An additional no-show during the next 90-day period will result in the passenger being denied service for a 15-day period following the additional no show.

No-shows that occur because of an emergency situation beyond the passenger's control will be considered a non-chargeable no-show provided the passenger can provide a documented explanation.

**Service Animal Transportation Policy:**

HCT only allows for the transportation of service animals. At no time will any animal, other than a service animal, be transported in a HCT vehicle. A service animal is defined as any animal described as a guide animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals are allowed in transit vehicles without muzzles. Service animals will be required to remain on the floor and out of the aisle area of the transit vehicle. Passengers utilizing service animals will be responsible for the conduct of the service animals. Service animals that are disruptive and uncontrollable will not be allowed to ride.

## **Passenger Service Complaint Procedure**

Customer satisfaction is a priority for Hyde County Transit. Passenger complaints are a significant tool for improving performance and customer satisfaction.

### Submitting Complaints

Hyde County Transit staff who encounter persons wishing to make a complaint (either in speaking with them in person or on the telephone) shall provide them with a Complaint Report and the procedure for which the complain will be addressed. Passengers are encouraged to submit written complaints or service suggestions to administrative staff. However, passengers that are unable to submit a written complaint may call the Hyde County Transit office . Under these circumstances, the complainant will be interviewed and the staff person receiving the complaint will convert the complaint to writing. The staff person recording the complaint will sign and date the Hyde County Transit Complaint Form.

### Complaints:

1) Should be in writing (using the HCT complaint form) or complainant may call and have staff convert the complaint in writing.

2) Must be signed and dated;

3) Must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the date of offense;

and

4) Must be submitted to:

Hyde County Transit

P.O. Box 205

Swan Quarter, N.C. 27885

## Complaint Review and Response

1. The Administrative Staff will review and investigate all Complaint Reports received.
2. Administrative Staff will respond to all protests in writing (certified mail), addressing each substantive issue raised in the protest. Response will be made by Administrative Staff within fifteen calendar days after receiving the complaint. A copy of the response will be forwarded to the Municipal Administrator. The written response will advise the Complainant that she/he has the ability to submit a written request for second review of the matter.

## Second Review

In the event the Complainant believes that the situation has not been resolved satisfactorily, she/he may submit a written request for second review of the matter. This written request must be received by the Transportation Director within fifteen calendar days of the date noted on the HCT's response letter. The request for second review must be addressed to Hyde County Transit , P.O. Box 205, Swan Quarter, N.C. 27885

Once received, the Transportation Director will forward the written request to the HCT Board Chairman, who will render a written response to the Complainant. The written response will be sent via certified mail to the Complainant within 15 calendar days after being received by HCT.

## **Complaint Procedures Alleging Discrimination**

It is the policy of Hyde County Non-Profit Private Transportation Corporation to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR, Part 21; related statutes and regulations that ensure no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.

Any person alleging discrimination based on race, color, or national origin has a right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discrimination. At the discretion of the complainant, the complaint may be filed with the federal department, the state recipient, or Hyde County Transit. The complaint may be filed through a legal representative. The identity of the complainant is not necessary, provided the information is sufficient to determine the identity of the recipient and indicates the possibility of a violation. Should the complaint be submitted to HCT, the following procedures will be followed:

**A.** All complaints, written or verbal, made to HCT shall be accepted. In the event a complainant sets forth the allegations verbally and refuses to reduce such allegations to writing, the person to whom the complaint is made shall reduce the elements of the complaint to writing.

**B.** Discrimination Complaints, whether written or verbal, should contain the following information:

- a. Name, address and telephone number of the complainant if available.
- b. Name and location of the entity delivering the service.
- c. Nature of the incident that led the complainant to believe discrimination was a factor.
- d. Basis of the complaint, I.E., race, color or national origin.
- e. Names, addresses and phone numbers of people who may have knowledge of the event.
- f. Date or dates on which the alleged discriminatory event or events occurred.
- g. A complaint log shall be kept by HCT to the proper state authorities.

### **C. Discrimination Complaints:**

- a. Complaints shall be handled within 90 days of their receipt by HCT, depending on the nature of the complaint and the complexity of the investigation.
- b. A certified letter shall be sent by HCT acknowledging receipt of the complaint to the complainant and NCDOT/PTD.
- c. A preliminary inquiry shall be conducted by HCT on all complaints to substantiate or refute the allegations.
- d. If the preliminary inquiry by HCT indicates that the complaint is valid, then a full complaint investigation shall be initiated. A certified letter shall be sent by HCT to the complainant and any persons of interest notifying them that an investigation has begun and they should contact HCT to schedule a date, time and place for their statement to be taken. The complainant, along with any additional persons of interest, shall be notified at this time that no discussion should take place regarding this complaint other than with the investigator without prior approval and knowledge from the investigator.
- e. If the allegations are not substantiated, a certified letter shall be sent by HCT to the complainant and NCDOT/PTD that contains a description of the allegations investigated, the scope of the investigation, the facts learned and closing statement summarizing the basis on which the determination was made.
- f. If the allegations are found to have merit, a certified letter shall be sent by HCT to the Complainant and NCDOT/PTD that contains the results of the investigation, recommendations and a detailed plan of action as well as a means and time frame for follow-up to the recommendations. The complainant or his/her representative and NCDOT/PTD will be advised of each step of the process by HCT.

## Other Information

### Alternative Formats

*“Upon request, this document may be made available in Braille, large print, audiocassette, or electronic form. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write:*

*Hyde County Transit*

*P.O. Box 205*

*Swan Quarter, N.C. 27885*

*Phone Number (voice) 926-1637*

*Fax: 926-0032*

*Email: [hydetransit@lycos.com](mailto:hydetransit@lycos.com)*

*Telecommunications Relay Services Phone number (TDD) 1-800-735-2962*

*Telecommunications Relay Services Phone number (Voice) 1-877-735-8200*

Although material will generally be provided in the requested format, Hyde County Transit reserves the right to provide material in another format if: (1) time does not allow for provision of the requested format, or; (2) the requested format would involve an unreasonable cost compared with providing material in another suitable format.

## **Guidance for the Safe transportation of Medical Oxygen Tanks**

The Department of transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) recommends that bus and train operators take the following precautions to assure that medical oxygen being transported for passengers' personal use is handled and transported safely:

For Transportation in the Passenger Area:

- Oxygen should be transported on a bus only when medically necessary.
- Oxygen should be transported in a cylinder maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The manufacturer's instructions and precautions are usually printed on a label attached to the cylinder.
- Before boarding, inspect each cylinder to assure that it is free of cracks or leaks, including around the valve area and pressure relief device. Listen for leaks; do not load leaking cylinders on the bus. Visually inspect the cylinders for dents, gouges or pits. A cylinder that is dented, gouged, or pitted should not be transported.
- Limit the number of cylinders to be transported on board the vehicle to the extent practical. If possible, transportation in the passenger compartment should be limited to one cylinder per person.
- Cylinders used for medical oxygen are susceptible to valve damage if dropped. Handle these cylinders with care during loading and unloading operations. Never drag or roll a cylinder. Never carry a cylinder by the valve or regulator. Carry the cylinder carefully using both hands.
- Do not handle oxygen cylinders or apparatus with hands or gloves contaminated with oil or grease.
- Each cylinder should be secured to prevent movement and leakage. Each cylinder should be loaded and secured in an upright position. "Secured" means that the cylinder is not free to move when the vehicle is in motion.
- Oxygen cylinders or other medical support equipment should never be stored or secured in the aisle. Make sure that the seating of the passenger requiring oxygen does not restrict access to exits or use of the aisle.
- Since the release of oxygen from a cylinder could accelerate a fire, each cylinder should be secured away from sources of heat or potential sparks.
- When you reach your destination, immediately remove all cylinders from the vehicle.
- Do not allow passengers to leave oxygen tanks on the vehicle when the passenger is not on board.