

## Seniors' Community Bus Protocols:

November 21, 2023

**Definitions: Seniors' Bus Operating Committee** – members include representatives from Community Services, Ridge Meadows Seniors Society, Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Katzie Seniors Network and one 55+ member at large.

**User Group** - any seniors' group that is eligible to book the bus for a bus trip

**User Group Leader**- The person who booked the trip and researched the location details. This person leads the group and is responsible for the passengers at each location.

**Transportation Coordinator** - the staff person designated by Ridge Meadows Seniors Society (RMSS) to take lead responsibility for bookings, driving, upkeep, maintenance, and overall cleanliness of the bus.

**Driver** - any driver employed by RMSS and the Transportation Coordinator to take user groups on bus trips.

**Passenger** - any individual that is a member of a user group on a bus trip

**Attendant** - any person accompanying passengers for the purpose of support, wheelchair pushing, etc.

**Community Bus Rental Form**- The bus request form completed with details for trip, completed by user groups to reserve the bus.

### Bookings:

User groups can book the bus by submitting a Community Bus Rental Form to the Transportation Coordinator at RMSS by e-mail. preferably made four (4) weeks or more in advance. The specific location of the trip can be determined a minimum of two weeks prior to the trip date.

The rate for non profit senior serving agencies:  
cost of the bus is \$2 per kilometer and \$35 an hour for the driver and will be responsible for any parking charges

The rate for non profit youth groups:  
Cost of the bus is \$3 per kilometer and \$40 an hour for the driver and will be responsible for any parking charges

All other groups will be charged \$4 a kilometer and \$50 per hour for the driver and will be responsible for any parking charges

**Kilometers include the time from where the bus is stored to pick up location, then to the trip destination. Then from the trip destination, with a stop at the drop off location and back to the bus storage location.**

**Drivers time is calculated from the pick up of the bus (inclusive of a 30 minute pre-trip inspection time) to the drop off of the bus (inclusive of a 30 post trip inspection time and re-fueling)**

## **Billings:**

The Transportation Coordinator will submit the Booking Form, with mileage details and time sheet, to the Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper will invoice user groups monthly.

### **1. Expectation of Transportation Coordinator**

- 1.1 all drivers must have a Class 4 license, a Driver's Abstract, and a Criminal Record Check (RMSS will reimburse the cost of the Criminal Record Check). All drivers must submit a Driver's Abstract annually
- 1.2 ensure the bus is insured annually, regular maintenance is completed (oil and lube, etc.), and other logistics related to the overall running of the vehicle are completed
- 1.3 ensure the bus is kept clean inside and out
- 1.4 all drivers sweep out the bus after each trip
- 1.5 all drivers clean with disinfectant any area that has had a bodily fluid spill – incontinence, emesis, etc.
- 1.6 all drivers will ensure the bus is ready for the next trip by gassing up prior to parking for the evening or as part of the return of the current user group so it is ready for the next user group pickup – all gas fills will be reconciled with the license number of the vehicle involved by the source
- 1.7 all drivers have responsibility for ensuring any occupied wheelchairs are tied down and belted in correctly, and any folded chairs or walkers are secured
- 1.8 all drivers drive within the speed limit and use defensive driving including anticipatory braking except in an emergency
- 1.9 all drivers are first responsible for the safety and security of the vehicle and secondarily responsible for the safety of the passengers – therefore, the drivers need to be able to off-load the passengers and go off to park the vehicle, and to leave the passengers at the end of a bus trip to go off and retrieve the vehicle to the loading area. The driver is not responsible for the user group participants at the drop off location.
- 1.10 all drivers must not leave keys in an unattended bus
- 1.11 the driver is expected to stay with the bus at the venue

### **2. Expectations of User Groups:**

- 2.1 the group must have a leader/attendant to be of assistance should a person become unwell, fall, etc. and need attention or cause the group to have to leave earlier than planned
- 2.2 User groups who are booking a trip to a place they have not been to before by bus are to contact the venue to determine that it is accessible for bus loading and unloading and to determine where a bus is to park if the bus is staying at the venue

- 2.3 if the user's passengers are wheelchair or walker-dependent, the user is responsible for determining that the selected venue is wheelchair or walker accessible before the trip is booked
- 2.4 If the user's passengers are wheelchair dependent, and unable to maneuver on their own, there must be one attendant dedicated to the W/C dependent passenger.
- 2.5 User groups must notify the Transportation Coordinator two days in advance, the number of passengers inclusive of the number of people utilizing walkers and wheelchairs
- 2.6 RMSS will require user groups to name us on their liability insurance
3. **Expectations of Passengers:**
  - 3.1 passengers are ready to leave 10 minutes prior to departure time so the driver can plan appropriate boarding
  - 3.2 passengers take direction from the driver as to the order they should board – wheelchairs and walkers being a major factor
  - 3.3 passengers use seatbelts at all times as directed
  - 3.4 passengers identify concerns to their attendants if there is a problem they experience on the bus – they do not distract the driver
4. **Expectations of Attendants (paid staff &/or volunteers):**
  - 4.1 attendants have the passengers ready 10 minutes ahead of departure time so the driver can review the size of the wheelchairs, the number of wheelchairs and walkers, and develop a loading plan
  - 4.2 attendants are responsible for supervising the passengers so as not to distract the driver
  - 4.3 attendants will take direction from the driver regarding order of loading passengers once the number of wheelchair and walker users is identified
  - 4.4 attendants will let the driver know if there is a problem during a trip that needs to be addressed prior to reaching the destination
  - 4.5 an attendant will be provided by the booking organization for every wheelchair rider
5. **Equipment on Board:**
  - 5.1 appropriate first aid supplies need to be on the bus – replaced by the driver at the cost of the user group that used the supplies
  - 5.2 fire extinguisher
  - 5.3 driver must have a cell phone on board for emergency use or calling for help
  - 5.4 lap blankets for use both during trips and if there were an incident in which a passenger(s) needed to be kept warm and comfortable until an ambulance arrived

- 5.5 cleaning supplies – broom, dustpan, Lysol wet wipes, hand sanitizer container attached to wall of bus by doorway and replaced as needed, access to disinfecting equipment after a trip if required – use of bleach and water preferred and guidance from housekeeping re current practice; large garbage bags for trash after an outing (picnic, drive-through) or to protect a seat from incontinent accident; small garbage bags for car sickness or episode of emesis
- 5.6 jumper cables on board for use by drivers
- 5.7 driver to ensure supplies are replaced if used or lost; lap blankets to be laundered monthly by the driver.
- 5.8 any supplies needed for personal care will be supplied by the user group

6. **Locations for which the Seniors' Bus can be booked:**

- 6.1 User groups can request access on the Seniors' Bus for outings to any location within the lower mainland based on availability. Priority is given to non-profit senior serving organizations
- 6.2 User groups who wish to go further than these communities need to clarify with drivers that one is available to go further since the time commitment will be longer than the usual outing
- 6.3 any location being requested has to have an area that can accommodate the bus to safely drop passengers off and be able to be parked safely and securely while at the location
- 6.4 if the bus arrives to a location and the driver is unable to find a safe location to off-load passengers, an alternative plan will be negotiated between the driver, and the attendant(s) regarding another option than the one originally arranged – this may mean a different restaurant, a different entrance to a park, etc.
- 6.5 drivers have the right to review a requested trip location and identify that because of knowledge they have of the inability of the location to accommodate the bus that they cannot go there and to suggest an acceptable alternative to the user group – the driver who is assigned to the trip is expected to notify the user group of this problem and recommended change as soon as they are aware so the user group is able to plan accordingly

7. **Length of Trips:**

- 7.1 common trip lengths are half days (minimum 3 hours charge time) – morning, afternoon, or evening
- 7.2 if a user group wishes to request a trip for a whole day or longer, the request should ideally be made 4 weeks in advance to allow time to review availability of drivers and whether any other users need to be asked to reschedule due to their expected regular bookings

## 8. Cancellations:

- 8.1 If a user group has to cancel a trip, 48 hours notice is requested. If less than 48 hours notice is provided, a cancellation fee of two hours driver time will be charged to the user group because the driver and other user groups will have been inconvenienced
- 8.2 If a user group has to cancel due to an infectious disease outbreak or inclement weather, no cancellation fee will be charged within 24 hours.
- 8.3 If a driver has to cancel due to unsafe weather driving conditions (eg. snow or ice) or because the bus is not roadworthy, the driver is to notify the user group as soon as such a cancellation is being made
- 8.4 If a driver has to cancel due to illness, the driver is to contact the Transportation Coordinator or ED as quickly as possible so an alternate driver can be arranged if at all possible. The Transportation Coordinator or ED is to notify the user group if the trip cannot go ahead
- 8.5 *RMSS is not responsible for loss of ticket expenses due to a cancellation.*

## 9. Conflict Resolution Between the Parties:

- 9.1 If there is a disagreement between the attendants and the driver about some aspect of the participants, the outing, or the driving of the driver, the first step is to refer to protocols and identify whether that can resolve the question
- 9.2 The next step is to contact the Transportation Coordinator. (in most cases the transportation coordinator is the driver) or the E.D
- 9.3 If there is a need for further protocol development to prevent such disagreements, the **Seniors' Bus Operating Committee** should be consulted
- 9.4 If the parties involved are unable to resolve the issue, the party that remains concerned needs to identify to the other that a solution is not satisfactory or is not obvious, and they will be seeking assistance to help resolve it. The appropriate person to approach for assistance in this conflict resolution would be Maria Perretta, Executive Director, RMSS, who will keep the **Seniors' Bus Operating Committee** apprised.

## Useful Information:

1. Bus seating capacity is the driver and
  - 20 seats for walk-on passengers, plus 1 wheelchair (one group leader, one wheelchair attendant) or
  - 16 seats, plus 2 wheelchairs (two wheelchair attendants, one group leader) or
2. There is storage space for folded up wheelchairs and walkers inside the rear entrance door. This will accommodate up to 6 folded walkers or up to 4 folded wheelchairs depending on their size.
3. Passengers should stay in their wheelchairs on the bus unless there is a need to accommodate many passengers at once for a short time.
4. There is an overhead rack to accommodate lap blankets, etc