



Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area

POLICY 301: PASSENGER RULES

Effective Date: 8/21/2025

Cancels: Rider Rules dated 1/15/2025, Exclusion Policy dated 4/21/23 and Passenger Weapon Policy dated 10/1/2024

PURPOSE

This policy applies to all passenger rules on fixed route, paratransit, and dial-a-ride (DAR) services.

GENERAL PASSENGER RULES

- 1) **Operators provide a limited amount of assistance such as:**
 - a. Kneeling the bus and/or deploying the ramp to allow safe boarding and alighting
 - b. Securement of mobility devices
 - c. Preparing the seatbelt for a passenger seated in a priority seating area
 - d. Stowing of strollers, carts, or mobility devices
 - e. Demonstrating how to use the bike rack
 - f. Requesting medical assistance if needed by following PRO-308B: Responding to a Passenger Related Injury.

- 2) **Operators are not required or expected to offer assistance that could be considered personal servitude. Examples include:**
 - a. Pushing passengers in mobility devices up/down the ramp while boarding and alighting
 - b. Carrying bags or other personal items
 - c. Lifting items to stow in overhead storage
 - d. Escorting passengers across a street
 - e. Handling of children, pets, or service animals

- 3) **Driver/Passenger conversations are to be limited**
 - a. Operators are to remain focused on safely operating the vehicle and should limit conversations with any persons on board to briefly answer questions about Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area service;
 - b. Engaging in a lengthy conversation while operating the vehicle is discouraged.

- 4) All passengers may request the Operator deploy the hydraulic ramp or lift in order to ease boarding/alighting the bus**
 - a. Ambulatory passengers may request use of the lift as a standee with or without a mobility device. Operators may not refuse or question when a passenger requests the ramp or lift to board or alight.
 - b. Upon request, the Operator will lower the lift/ramp of the vehicle in a safe location that allows for proper functioning.
 - c. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area vehicle lifts are rated to lift up to 600 pounds, which includes the passenger, mobility device, and any baggage. Oversized wheelchairs and scooters risk denial of service if the device is too large or heavy to be transported. Reasonable accommodations will be considered prior to denial of service.

- 5) Passengers travelling with a walker are entitled to the same experience as passengers traveling with a wheelchair.**
 - a. Passengers traveling with a walker may sit in designated priority seating areas.
 - b. The brakes on the walker must be set and the passenger must maintain control of the walker throughout the duration of the trip.
 - c. If necessary or requested by the Operator, walkers must be capable of being collapsed and held by the passenger or secured in the priority seating area. The passenger must be capable of managing any extra carry-on items on their lap or beneath their feet.

- 6) Passengers are limited to the number of personal items allowed on transit vehicles.**
 - a. All passengers must be capable of managing their carry-on items on their lap or beneath their feet.
 - b. All passengers must be able to carry possessions on board with a single trip.
 - c. Overly large or cumbersome items that occupy multiple seats or encroach into the aisle are considered hazardous and will not be permitted.
 - d. Passengers with oversized items will be asked to consolidate items in order to ride in the vehicle.

- 7) Carts and Rolling Baskets are permissible**
 - a. All carts allowed on the bus must be capable of being collapsed and secured between the seats if necessary.
 - i. Non collapsible grocery carts are prohibited due to size.
 - b. A cart may occupy an unused priority seating area but relinquish the space if needed by a passenger.
 - c. A wheelchair or stroller that is being used to transport personal items only must be capable of being collapsed and secured by the passenger. The passenger must be capable of managing any extra carry-on items on their lap or beneath their feet.

8) Consuming food while on the bus is prohibited.

- a. Food items may be transported on the bus so long as they are contained, not consumed, and do not present a threat of spilling.

9) Beverages with lids are permitted on vehicles.

- a. Non-alcoholic beverages may be consumed while on the bus, however, all containers must have a lid or cap.
- b. Consuming alcoholic beverages on the vehicle are not permitted; alcoholic beverage containers may not be open while on the bus.

10) Smoking (Including e-cigarettes or vape pens) or chewing tobacco products are prohibited while on the vehicle or within 25 feet of a Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area vehicle or bus stop.

11) Passengers must dress appropriately and display acceptable hygiene.

- a. Passengers are required to wear a shirt, shoes, and clothing that covers the body appropriately. Passengers not adequately or appropriately dressed will not be permitted on the vehicle.
- b. Poor or offensive hygiene, or soiled clothing may be grounds for dismissal (see section 21).
 - i. Bringing onto transit property odors which unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system are prohibited, whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source.
- c. Vulgar language or images on clothing, such as cursing, inflammatory remarks, or nudity is not permitted
- d. Passengers with open wounds, soiled bandages, or other biohazards that pose a threat to Operators or other passengers may be asked to leave the vehicle.

12) Hazardous materials are not permitted on the bus

- a. Examples of hazardous materials may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. flammable liquids or gases (including vehicle batteries, lithium batteries, and gas-powered tools)
 - ii. sharp objects or tools
 - iii. large and cumbersome items
- b. Operators may choose to keep the potentially hazardous object or material in the front of the vehicle out of reach of other passengers on board.

13) Illegal firearms and other illegal weapons are not permitted on the transit vehicle.

- a. Unloaded firearms, weapons, and ammunition may be carried in a form or manner that is not otherwise prohibited by law or ordinance.

- b. Illegal firearms are defined in RCW 9.41.190 as any machine gun, bump-fire stock, undetectable firearm, short-barreled shotgun, or short-barreled rifle.
- c. Per RCW 9.41.270, it shall be unlawful for any person to carry, exhibit, display, or draw any weapon including a dagger, sword, knife or other cutting or stabbing instrument, club, or any other weapon apparently capable of producing bodily harm, in a manner, under circumstances, and at a time and place that either manifests an intent to intimidate another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons.

14) All individuals are prohibited from carrying a firearm in transit facilities, unless they possess a valid concealed pistol license (CPL)

- a. A transit facility is defined in RCW 9.91.025 as all passenger facilities, structure, stops, shelters, bus zones, properties, and rights-of-way of all kinds that are owned, leased, held or used by a transit authority for the purpose of providing public transportation services.
- b. A person with a CPL may not openly carry a firearm per Washington Law.

15) Pets must be contained.

- a. All conventional pets must be in an escape proof container unless a declared service animal (refer to POL-118: ADA Compliance).
- b. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area does not permit travel with reptiles, spiders or other animals that are considered threatening or distracting.
- c. Passengers must be capable of cleaning up after their pet and disposing of all pet waste that occurs in the transit vehicle or transit facility.

16) Traveling with a Service Animal

- i. A declared service animal, defined as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, will be permitted to accompany a passenger on the bus.
- ii. The animal must be on a leash or in a container, remain under control of the owner, and behave appropriately. Service animals that are unruly, disturbing or aggressive are subject to dismissal from the bus at the discretion of the Operator.
- iii. The animal must remain at the feet or on the lap of the passenger and may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- iv. The animal must not be aggressive toward people or other animals. (49 CFR 37.167(d))

17) Children age 11 and older are permitted to ride unaccompanied

- a. Children 10 or younger must be accompanied by someone 16 or older.
- b. Infants and small children under the age of two are to be under the care and supervision of a parent/guardian while on the bus; infants and small children may ride on the lap of a parent/guardian or be transported in a carrier.
- c. The securement of children is the responsibility of the parent/guardian;

- d. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area employees are prohibited from assisting with the securement of infants or small children being transported in a child seat or baby carrier.

18) Only children may travel in strollers.

- a. Passengers may choose to remove the child and collapse the stroller prior to boarding, or they may board with the child remaining in the stroller.
- b. The child may remain in the stroller provided the passenger maintains control of the stroller at all times and the stroller is not blocking the aisle. If strollers are equipped with brakes, they must be locked. The parent must control the stroller at all times if the stroller is not folded and stowed.
- c. The parent or guardian is responsible at all times for the stroller and the child during the trip.
- d. Passengers may utilize priority seating areas for strollers if they are available, however a passenger with a stroller shall not displace any other passenger who is rightfully occupying a priority seating area unless the stroller is being used as a mobility device for the transportation of a special needs child. A stroller used for transportation of a special needs child shall be treated as a mobility device and have equal priority in the use of the mobility device stations.
- e. A stroller will not be allowed to block the aisles, doors, steps, or emergency exits of the bus. If a stroller is blocking the aisle, it must be collapsed and stowed. The aisle is defined as the width of the distance between the normal, forward-facing seats.
- f. The Operator shall assist passengers with placing strollers in the appropriate position on a bus. Parents are responsible for loading and handling the stroller.

19) Soliciting & Panhandling are prohibited.

- a. A passenger may not ask or beg for money, food or any other item of value from another passenger while on the transit vehicle or at a bus stop (panhandling).
- b. A passenger may not engage in the act of forcibly selling, peddling or preaching to others while on the bus or at a bus stop (soliciting).
- c. Under the law, it is a serious felony to recruit, harbor, transport or obtain any person for labor or services using force, fraud or coercion. That includes sex trafficking and other forms of forced labor, from domestic servitude to sweatshop work. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Operators are trained to recognize and report signs of human trafficking.

20) Operators are authorized to Maintain Order on a transit vehicle.

- a. Operators are the designated authority on the vehicle while in service and are expected to enforce all Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area rules or policies, Washington state law, and all federal statutes applicable to the operations of a transit vehicle.

- b. Operators are authorized to dismiss or excuse from their assigned vehicle any passenger who is momentarily unfit to ride for reasons related to behavior, conduct, unsafe carry-on items, or poor and offensive hygiene (See Section 19 for detail).
- c. Operators are expected to contact Dispatch or a supervisor for assistance with enforcement of laws and policies.

21) Passengers may be refused service or suspended from service.

- a. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area follows RCW 9.91.025, Unlawful Transit Conduct, when evaluating denial of service.
- b. If a person is violent, seriously disruptive, or engaging in illegal conduct Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area may, consistent with established procedures for all riders, refuse to carry the passenger.
- c. A person who poses a significant risk to others may be excluded from service if reasonable modifications to the public accommodation's policies, practices, or procedures will not eliminate that risk. (49CFR 37.5 App. D/ 29 CFR 36.208)
- d. Behaviors that may cause immediate exclusion from the system include:
 - i. Violations of Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Passenger Rules.
 - ii. Possessing an invalid bus pass or fare.
 - iii. Disobeying a directive given by the bus driver or Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area staff member.
 - iv. Destruction of Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area property (the vehicle and facilities including stops, shelters and/or its furnishings).
 - v. Doing violence to others or to oneself.
 - vi. Behavior that is unruly, disruptive, harassing, threatening, or frightening to others.
 - vii. Behavior that interferes with the safe operation of the vehicle.
 - viii. Violations of service animal policy by failing to control one's service animal.
 - ix. Engaging in illegal conduct.
 - x. Other conduct judged by Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area to represent an actual or potential threat to the health, safety or wellbeing of oneself, the operator, other passengers, and/or transit personnel.
- e. Periods of Exclusions will be determined using Operator input but the decision will reside with Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Management, depending on the situation and severity.
 - 1. Day Suspension: Day Suspensions are used in the event inappropriate or unacceptable behavior is demonstrated.
 - a. Operators have the discretion to administer a day suspension on their assigned vehicle.

- b. Day Suspensions have potential to move to a temporary system-wide suspension or criminal trespass after management review.
- 2. Criminal Trespass: Criminal trespass occurs with severe behavior and events.
 - a. Criminal trespasses are considered indefinite and/or permanent.
 - b. Criminal trespasses are subject to Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area management decisions.
- 3. Temporary Suspension: Temporary suspensions are administered as an alternative to criminal trespass and is based on severity.
 - a. Suspensions are subject to Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area management decisions.
 - b. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area management has the authority to select an appropriate amount of time for a suspension, based on the severity of the offense as described in PRO-301A: Excluding Passengers from Transit Service.
 - c. If a passenger receives 3 temporary suspensions in the course of a 12-month period, they may be trespassed indefinitely.
- 4. Passengers who are excluded from the system due to suspension have the ability to request an administrative appeal by contacting Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area at 360-875-9418.

PASSENGER RULES SPECIFIC TO FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

- 1) Seatbelts are encouraged but not required (on applicable Fixed Route vehicles).**
 - A. Use of the seatbelt is strongly encouraged for passengers with small children or those whose balance or strength may be lessened due to the movement of the bus while in motion.
 - B. Passengers who choose to remain in a secured wheelchair may ask the driver to install the lap and/or shoulder belt but the passenger will not be required to use the seatbelt as a condition of riding the bus.

- 2) **Sitting is encouraged when the bus is in motion but is not required.**
 - A. Standing is permitted when seating is limited; standees are encouraged to use handrails for balance.
 - B. Priority Seating areas are reserved for elderly passengers or securement of a mobility device; ambulatory passengers are expected to relinquish priority seating upon request.

- 3) **All Passengers boarding and alighting (getting on and off the vehicle) will be done at Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area bus stops and shelters unless otherwise directed.**
 - A. Passengers may not attempt to get on or off the vehicle when it is in motion or stopped in traffic.
 - i. If all seats and standing room are occupied, then an Operator may defer passengers to the next available vehicle.

- 4) **Bike racks are available on a first come first serve basis**
 - A. Passengers must indicate to the Operator their intent to secure their bike on the rack and are to ensure that the Operator sees them before stepping in front of the vehicle.
 - B. Passengers are responsible for lowering the rack, placing their bike on an available slot that is closest to the vehicle, and positioning the securement arm over the bike. Passengers are responsible for removing their bike and stowing the bike rack (if no other bikes are being transported).
 - C. Operators will provide assistance with the bike rack on an as needed or requested basis.

- 5) **Joy Riding is prohibited; Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area passengers must have a genuine destination in order to utilize the vehicle.**
 - A. Passengers will be permitted to make one complete loop on the vehicle but will be asked to disclose their destination upon arriving back at the stop of origin; passengers without genuine destinations will be excused from the vehicle.

PASSENGER RULES SPECIFIC TO PARATRANSIT SERVICES

- 1) **Seatbelts are required for all passengers (including companions and personal care attendants) when available.**

Passengers must present their current ADA pass when boarding a Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area vehicle.

- A. An ADA monthly pass is allowable fare for fixed route service, while fixed route fare is not recognized on paratransit service.

2) Passengers requiring extra help are encouraged to travel with a PCA or companion.

- A. Approved ADA passengers may travel with one (1) Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or one (1) Companion.
 - a. PCAs or Companions travelling with the eligible passenger must get on/off the bus at the same location
 - b. Additional companions are subject to available seating
- B. Passengers who are too weak, frail or otherwise unfit to use public transportation without reasonable assistance will be denied service and referred to a local medical transportation service provider.
- C. Wheelchairs/scooters in excess of 30 inches wide, 48 inches long and 600 pounds are subject to vehicle accessibility and interior space; passengers traveling with an oversized mobility device risk service denial. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area will not transport any of the following:
 - i. Hospital beds
 - ii. Stretchers
 - iii. Hoyer lifts
 - iv. Large shopping carts
 - v. Large/cumbersome items

3) ADA passengers may establish “subscription service” for regular reservations that do not require contacting the Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Dispatch office.

- A. Subscription time slots are on a *first come, first serve basis* and are subject to availability. Subscriptions will be forfeited when:
 - i. Excessive no-shows or late cancelations are occurring
 - ii. The passenger has been suspended from Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area bus service
 - iii. Subscription trips are not available on any Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area observed holiday.

4) Only the eligible passenger or authorized caregiver may make ADA reservations. Eligible passengers may designate individuals or entities to make reservations on their behalf.

5) Trip reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance of travel before 5:30 pm; Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area does not accept same-day requests for ADA service.

- A. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area will attempt to accommodate same-day changes to the schedule for medical appointments.

- B. Same-day changes to the destination must be arranged through Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Dispatch; Vehicle Operators are not allowed to change a passenger's scheduled destination.
- C. Passengers may not request a specific Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area vehicle or vehicle operator.
- D. Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area will accept ADA Paratransit trip reservations up to 21 days in advance.
- E. Passengers who acquire a new or different mobility device are encouraged to advise Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Dispatch prior to making a reservation.

6) Passengers are required to be picked-up and dropped off at the curb of the Main Entrance

- A. Unless designated "door-to-door" passengers must be capable of meeting the vehicle at the street curb of the pick-up location. Passengers must be capable of meeting the Operator at the main entrance of the pick-up location unless otherwise specified through Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area Dispatch.
- B. Operators are not permitted to enter a home to assist passengers to the bus.

7) Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area recognizes a 20-minute pick-up window

- A. Passengers may be picked up 10 minutes before or after their scheduled pick-up time.
- B. Passengers must be ready to board the vehicle within 5 minutes of the vehicle's arrival

8) Passengers who repeatedly fail to fulfill trip reservations will be suspended

- A. Passengers who cancel a trip less than 60 minutes prior to pick-up are subject to a "late cancelation" violation.
- B. Passengers who receive 5 no show violations in a 30-day period may be suspended based on management discretion.

PASSENGER RULES SPECIFIC TO DIAL-A-RIDE (DAR) SERVICES

1) Seatbelts are required for all passengers. Car seats are required for children who meet the following characteristics:

- A. Children up to age 2 must be properly secured in a rear-facing car seat.

- B. Children ages 2-4 years must ride in a car seat with a harness (rear or forward facing).
 - C. Children 4 and older must ride in a car or booster seat until they are 4' 9" tall.
 - D. Children over height 4' 9" must be secured by a properly fitted seat belt (usually starting at 8-12 years old).
- 2) Pacific County Public Transportation Benefit Area recognizes a 20-minute pick-up window**
- A. Passengers may be picked up 10 minutes before or after their scheduled pick-up time.
- 3) Passengers must be ready to board the bus within 5 minutes of the vehicle's arrival.**
- 4) Reservations must be made by 5:30 p.m. the previous day (although more advance notice is appreciated).**
- 5) Pickup and drop off points must be located within the DAR service area.**
- A. Exceptions may be requested and reviewed by the Operations Manager.
- 6) At least one hour of notice must be given for any cancelations or rescheduling of appointments for a full refund.**
- A. Passengers who repeatedly fail to fulfill trip reservations will be suspended
 - B. Passengers who cancel a trip less than 60 minutes prior to pick-up are subject to a "late cancelation" violation.
 - C. Passengers who receive 5 no show violations in a 30-day period may be suspended based on management discretion.