



# Dial-A-Ride

## OFFICIAL POLICIES

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### **MOBILITY DEVICES**

Mobility devices are designed to help support an individual's ability to carry out activities of daily life. The driver must secure these devices on the vehicle prior to disembarking. Mobility devices must be free from backpacks, grocery bags, and any other items that could prevent the driver from securing them properly.

### **PASSENGER CARRY-ON ITEMS**

Dial-A-Ride drivers will assist all eligible Dial-A-Ride passengers with their carry-on items. Out of consideration for safety, space, and time, passengers cannot bring more than four bags or packages on the vehicle per trip. These items should not weigh more than 10 pounds each and should not exceed 40 pounds combined.

Oversized items such as large bicycles, home appliances, or furniture are not allowed on the vehicle. A Personal Care Attendant is not allowed to bring on additional bags or packages.



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## ANIMALS

### Service Animals

Service animals are welcome on all BFT vehicles. The driver may ask only two specific questions: (1) Is the dog a service animal required because of disability? and (2) What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

#### *Guidelines*

- Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered. If these devices interfere with the service animal's work or your disability prevents using these devices, you must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.
- You are responsible for the care and supervision of your service animal while on board and may be held liable for the behavior and actions of the animal.
- Regardless of training or certification, service animals may be denied transportation if the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

### Non-Service Animals

Other animals are allowed on BFT vehicles with the following guidelines:

- Small animals (such as dogs under 25 pounds, reptiles, birds, cats, etc.) must be in a confined carrying container and held on your lap or at your feet.
- Non-service animal dogs over 25 pounds are not allowed on the buses.
- Animals cannot occupy a seat, block the aisle, or annoy other passengers.
- You must have complete control of your animal at all times.

Questions? Call 509.735.5100.



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## NO-SHOW AND LATE CANCELLATION

### General Policy Statement

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidance permits transit agencies to suspend ADA riders who “establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips” after providing a rider due process. A “pattern or practice” involves “intentional, repeated or regular actions, not isolated, accidental, or singular incidents.” The purpose of a suspension process would be to prevent chronic “no-show” occurrences, which is costly to the Agency and taxpayers, and prevents others from benefiting from these rides.

Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) records each customer’s no-shows and late cancellations and applies appropriate sanctions when customers establish a pattern or practice of no-shows. The No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy defines no-shows and late cancellations and sets rules for suspension of service to BFT’s Dial-A-Ride (DAR) riders who miss scheduled rides. BFT’s policy directs riders’ attention to their own no-show and late cancellation incidents to minimize the overall number of no-shows and late cancellations. This is important because no-shows and late cancellations affect the cost and quality of DAR service provided to all riders.

### Procedures, Wait Time, & Pick-up Window

DAR schedules pick up and return trips separately. If a rider is a no-show for one trip for the day, all other same-day scheduled trips remain as scheduled. Federal ADA paratransit regulation does not allow service providers to cancel trips without notification from riders or their representatives. Failure to take or cancel remaining scheduled trips will result in additional no-shows.

When DAR reservations are made, the rider will be given a 30-minute pick-up window. The driver can wait no more than five minutes after arriving at the pick-up location. The DAR vehicle will leave if the rider is not ready on time, and the rider will be recorded as a no-show.

DAR will not strand riders who have been transported to their destinations. If a rider is not ready at the time of their scheduled return trip, a vehicle will be sent as soon as possible upon notification that the rider is ready; however, no pick-up window will be guaranteed.

## About No-Shows

A no-show is a trip that is not taken and has not been canceled prior to the scheduled pick-up time. If a rider is not ready within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival, as long as the driver arrives within the pick-up window, the rider will be charged with a no-show. A no-show occurs when:

- There has been no call by the rider (or the rider's representative) to cancel the scheduled trip time, AND
- The vehicle arrives at the scheduled location within the 30-minute window, AND
- The driver cannot reasonably see the customer approaching the vehicle after waiting five minutes, AND
- The BFT Dispatch office is contacted to verify that the driver is at the correct location.

A no-show may also be charged when:

- The driver arrives and the rider cancels his/her ride at that time.

FTA permits transit agencies to count late cancellations as no-shows for trips canceled less than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

No-shows for reasons that are beyond the rider's control will not be counted. Examples of excused no-shows may include, but are not limited to:

- Family emergency
- Illness that prevents the rider from calling to cancel
- Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or another party who didn't arrive on time to assist the rider
- Rider was inside calling to check the ride status and was on hold for an extended time
- Rider's appointment ran long and did not provide opportunity to cancel in a timely manner
- Rider's mobility aid failed
- Appointment canceled or delayed for reasons that are not the rider's fault
- Natural disasters (e.g., flood, earthquake, etc.)
- BFT error; staff did not note the cancellation request or rider just realized that staff scheduled the trip inconsistently with the rider's request
- Vehicle arrival past the scheduled pick-up window.

Repeated failures to take scheduled trips, regardless of the reason, are subject to review.

Trips can be canceled daily until 9:30 p.m. with the BFT Dispatch office, or a message can be left at any time on the dispatch line if a representative is not available.

No-shows and/or late cancellations are not excused when the trip is not canceled at least one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time and is missed for one of the following reasons:

- Rider didn't want to travel today
- Rider changed their mind about using the ride reserved
- Rider didn't know that he/she had a ride scheduled or was supposed to call to cancel
- Rider got another ride
- Rider told someone else that he/she was not planning to travel (driver, facility, etc.) or someone else booked the ride for him/her
- Rider does not want to ride with a specific driver or rider, or on a specific vehicle.

## **Pattern & Practice of Excessive No-Shows**

To establish whether a rider has established a "pattern or practice" of missing scheduled trips, BFT must consider the rider's frequency of use of the paratransit service. Three no-shows in 30 days for a rider who uses the service daily to commute to and from work as well as for other purposes, for example, is very different from three no-shows by a customer who schedules only five trips per month. BFT will not use "no-shows beyond a rider's control" as a basis for determining a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips.

## **No-Show Point System**

### **Point Assessment**

If a rider incurs a no-show, the rider will be notified by letter sent to the mailing address on file. The letter will notify the rider how many no-shows have occurred in the last 30 days. If the rider feels the no-show should be excused, they should contact DAR at the reservations phone number as soon as possible.

DAR tracks trip status for every trip booked. Penalty points are assigned as follows:

1. No-Show or Cancel at Door = 2 points
2. Late Cancellation = 1 point

### **Penalty Assessment**

DAR identifies riders who have met the following criteria within a 30-day period:

1. No-shows/Late Cancellations at 10% or more of their scheduled trips
2. Six or more no-show or late cancellation penalty points.

Riders incurring the penalty assessment, as defined above, are subject to suspension for a reasonable period of time. Repeated violations of this policy will cause the length of suspensions to increase. The following suspension periods shall apply to violations of this policy that occur within a 30-day period.

<u>Points</u>	<u>Minimum % of Trips</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
6	10	7-Day Suspension
12	10	14-Day Suspension

In any 30-day continuous period, if a rider who has scheduled trips exhibits a pattern or practice of no-shows and/or late cancellations for at least 10% of those trips, and has six or more no-show and/or late cancellation penalty points, the rider will receive a written Notice of Suspension, citing which trips were no-shows and/or late cancellations and the proposed date of suspended service.

**No-shows or late cancellations that occur due to circumstances beyond the control of the customer, as reported to DAR, will not be considered a violation.**

## **APPEALING A NO-SHOW PENALTY/SUSPENSION**

### **APPEAL RIGHTS**

You have the right to appeal the notice of no-show or suspension. Appeals must be sent in writing to the **ADA Eligibility Coordinator** at **1000 Columbia Park Trail, Richland, WA 99352** within 14 days of the notice date.

#### **Step 1:**

Please provide your response in writing, including a copy of the notice submitted to you. The appeal should state the reason you believe the no-show/late cancellation notice or suspension is invalid.

#### **Step 2:**

Upon receipt of the request for appeal, the ADA Eligibility Coordinator will determine whether the no-show/late cancellation penalty or suspension should be withdrawn. The coordinator's investigation and decision will consider:

- The rider's trends and patterns
- Medical emergencies or situations outside the rider's or caregiver's control.

#### **Step 3:**

If you are not satisfied with the ADA Eligibility Coordinator's investigation or decision, you may request a meeting with BFT's Assistant Director of Transit Operations or their designee to review your concerns.

A suspension will not occur until all appeal remedies that you have requested have been exhausted.