

UCT

Union County Transportation Passenger Policies and Procedures



Union County Transportation
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<http://www.co.union.nc.us/departments/transportation>

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UCT Passenger Policies and Procedures Guide

General Information

About this Guide

Union County Transportation (UCT) wants to make your riding experience a pleasurable one. This guide was prepared to help you understand UCT's policies and procedures. UCT has the right to refuse service to anyone not complying with the UCT passengers guide to policy and procedure or safety instructions given by an UCT driver. Enforcement of these policies will provide a safe and enjoyable trip for all passengers and a good work environment for drivers. Passengers suspended from UCT services have the right to appeal the suspension decision. Please visit UCT's website for the latest copy of this manual.

About Transportation Service

Union County Transportation services are provided to the clients of local human service agencies such as the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, ARC of Union County, Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans. Limited transportation is also available to residents of Union County who are not eligible for transportation service through a human service agency.

How do I ride?

First of all, in order to use UCT's services, you will need to register by either calling 704-292-2511, filling in the registration form found on UCT's website, or by visiting UCT's main office. Once you have registered and approved to ride, you will need to make an appointment 48 business hours in advance, during the hours of 8 to 5 pm. See "Making Reservations/Scheduling" section for more detailed information.

Eligibility Requirements for Transportation Service

Eligibility requirements for these services include but are not limited to:

- Senior citizens at least 60 years of age;
- Developmentally disabled adults;
- Medicaid clients;
- Veterans eligible for medical treatment at a VA Hospital or clinic; and
- Physically disabled persons.



A parent of guardian must accompany children under the age of sixteen unless the following occur: 1) the funding agency makes a request based on extenuating circumstances, and 2) justification for the request is provided and approved prior to the scheduling of the trip, or the person in question is the parent of a minor child.

Passenger Requirements

- **Rules of Safety** must be adhered to. Passengers, who do not follow the rules, will be reported to Dispatch with the possibility of being asked to de-board the vehicle.
- **Fare payment** for those passengers required to pay fares, must be received in advance of the trip being provided. Passengers who do not meet these requirements will not be transported and will be charged for the “no show”.
- **Payment for the No Show** will be arranged with the Billing Representative before additional appointment(s) will be scheduled. **Note:** If you transport a fare passenger without receiving the fare, you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- **The Union County Holiday Schedule** will be observed by all UCT employees. Transportation services will not be provided on those days.
- **Additional passenger stops** not shown on the Driver Manifest may be approved by Dispatch based on available time to perform additional trips

Hours of Operations

UCT hours of operations are typically Monday through Friday 6 am to 5 pm. The Union County Holiday Schedule will be observed by all UCT employees. This schedule could be viewed by visiting the Union County Government website.

Safety Instructions

Drivers must respond in the event of an emergency or risk to their passengers or vehicle. The driver may ask for your physical assistance in the response to an emergency or help in reducing or eliminating the potential for injury or harm. Anyone incapable of performing the requested task due to a disability must notify the driver immediately.



Passenger Guidelines

Making Reservations/Scheduling

- Transportation appointments will be scheduled by calling 704-292-2511
- UCT requires that a minimum of 36-48 hour notice of appointment be given. Correct destination, address and appointment time will be collected by the Scheduler or Dispatcher. Same day service is not guaranteed, but may be based on availability of time in the schedule to perform the requested trip based on information provided to the dispatcher.
- Clients will provide the following information, which will be communicated to the drivers when schedules are given to driver:
 - Name, address and phone number
 - Appointment date and time
 - Destination address, phone number, clinic, or physician name
 - Mobility needs/Personal Care Attendant
 - In addition to the above information, the Scheduler will provide the Program funding source, for the driver, under which client receives transportation. The driver will collect any money at the time of the ride.
- Scheduler will ensure passengers have notified the UCT office of any changes in address and/or telephone numbers to assure Drivers receive the correct information. Scheduler will verify this information at the time the trip is being requested as well as verification of the funding source to be used.
- Passengers should not give the driver appointment requests. The passenger is responsible for calling the office and scheduling transportation for themselves.
- All passenger trips will be entered into the scheduling system in the order agreed upon at the time the appointment is made. Passengers will not be allowed to change the destination order on the day that the trips are provided.

Passenger Pick-Up Procedures

- Pick-up times are established by the UCT Scheduler to ensure clients arrive to their destination at or before the appointment time.
- Actual pick up times of passengers will be adjusted throughout the day to efficiently make use of each driver's time and according to the UCT system needs.
- Passengers are advised to be ready one hour before their scheduled appointment, unless otherwise notified by their scheduled driver.
- UCT drivers will provide "curb to curb" service to its passengers. Should a passenger require "door to door" service, these request will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Director.
- UCT drivers are to wait only three minutes beyond scheduled pick-up time. Wheelchair passengers and frail elderly passengers are given 5-7 minutes as a courtesy of the system. Drivers will notify Dispatch if their passenger is a "no-show".



- Passengers will be picked up after their appointment at the place they were dropped off. Passengers who have contacted the transportation office that they are finished with their appointment must be at this drop off point when the driver arrives.
- Drivers will not wait and will not go into medical facilities to look for passengers unless it was predetermined that the passenger needs assistance.
- UCT will not be responsible for returning for passengers who missed their transportation home. Passengers should not leave the destination that they requested and ask the driver to pick them up at a different location. UCT may contact the location of the scheduled appointment to verify passenger check out time.

Curb-to-curb Service

- Clients should be aware that Union County Transportation is a curb-to-curb transportation system. Drivers are not to cross over the threshold of a dwelling to bring clients out to the van. First floor door-to-door assistance may be provided if requested at time of registration and deemed necessary. Unless scheduled in advance, clients will be picked up at their place of residence for transportation services.
- Passengers who are granted door-to-door service are expected to have the ability to enter their home upon drop off. If the passenger is unable to enter their home, the UCT driver is instructed to contact the Dispatcher, who would attempt to call the emergency contact. If after no later than 15 minutes the passenger is unable to enter the home, the driver will offer to take the passenger to the local police station. If the passenger accepts the offer to be taken to the police station, UCT will not be responsible for taking the passenger back home from the police station. If the passenger rejects the offer, the driver will notify dispatch and note that the passenger was dropped off but had no access to enter the home.
- Passengers who are granted door-to-door service should ensure that their property is cleared of any hazards before they are picked up (e.g. loose or aggressive dogs, unsafe stairways, etc...). If drivers feel that picking the passenger up at their door poses a safety concern they will notify their supervisor. The supervisor will instruct the driver on what to do and on a later time will either call or visit the passenger's home to evaluate the situation and make a final decision (Supervisor might choose to delegate this to the division's Safety Officer). If the determination is made that there is a legitimate safety concern and the issue is not corrected, the passenger will be denied door-to-door service, expected to use the service as a curb-to-curb, and a note will be made on the customer's file.

Fares and Fees

- Those passengers who are required to pay a fare must have the correct change and must pay the driver when boarding the vehicle. Those persons who ride at least two days per week must purchase a prepaid card each week in lieu of paying in cash per trip.
- Fare passengers who fall behind in payment will not be allowed to schedule appointments until such time that the balance is paid. If a fare passenger "no shows", they will be charged for the "no show" and the fare must be paid before scheduling appointments.



Continued failure to follow the policy for paying fares will result in suspension or possible termination from utilizing the funding source that helps fund your transport.

- Passengers must pay any late cancellation fee before or on the day of their next scheduled appointment. Failure to do so could result in suspension or termination of service.

Cancellation and “No Show”

- Passengers cancelling are expected to cancel before 12:00 p.m. on the business day preceding the scheduled trip by calling the transportation office.
- Cancellations may also be made during office hours or left on voice mail during periods when UCT is closed or the staff is on another call. Messages will be retrieved and communicated during office hours, by office staff.
- Rider cancelling after the designated time will be considered a late cancel and passengers will pay a \$2.00 late cancel fee collected by the Billing Representative, or experience possible termination of transportation.
- A trip is considered a “no show” when the driver has made every reasonable effort to locate the passenger for a period of five minutes.
- The following policy applies to passengers whose trips are RGP or EDTAP funded:
 - 3 “no shows” within any 90 day period (first offense) will result in a 30 day suspension.
 - 3 additional “no shows” within any 90 day period (second offense) will result in a 60 day suspension.
 - 3 additional “no shows” within any 90 day period (third offense) will result in a 90 day suspension.
 - 3 additional “no shows” within any 90 day period (fourth offense) will result in permanent suspension from utilizing RGP/EDTAP Grant funding.

Termination of Service

Termination of service will result if:

1. The passenger does not comply with the rules as set forth in the “Union County Passenger Guidelines”.
2. The passenger “No Shows” three times under the Rural General Public (RGP) Program as well as the department of Social Services (DSS) Work First Program. Three “No Shows” under the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) will result in a one month suspension with termination should three additional “No Shows” occur.
3. Passenger request to be removed from the program.
4. Passenger moves out of the service area.
5. Passenger fails to pay for services.
6. For other appropriate reasons.



Note: The judgment of passenger termination for failure to comply with passenger guidelines, no show policy and fare will be made by the Transportation Director and the Assistant Director with the right to appeal to three UCT Advisory Committee representative within (10) days. The appeal will be reviewed and the passenger will be notified of the decision.

Personal Care Attendants

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) may ride with those persons requiring such assistance. The request by the passenger to have a PCA will be established when the appointment is scheduled and will be documented at base.

- The PCA must ride with the client at all times and must not have a different pick-up point or destination than the client.
- If a PCA will not be allowed on the vehicle until UCT has established the validity of the PCA.

Service Animals

- **Provision/Definition**
 - All service animals, individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability, may accompany a passenger with a disability (or the trainer) in facilities or on vehicles operated by Union County Transportation with no charge.
 - According to US DOT ADA regulations, a service animal is “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform task for an individual with a disability.
 - When riding on UCT vehicles with service animals, riders will follow any pertinent UCT policies or directives herein.
 - Animals that are pets are not allowed.
- **Owner/Rider Responsibility**
 - Must notify transit system, at the time a reservation is made, that there will be a service animal riding with the client.
 - Animal must be restrained by a harness, leash, or some form of lead, unless owner/rider is in full control of the animal at all times.
 - Service animal may be refused if the animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
 - Animal must travel on the floor or in owner’s lap.
 - Animal may not travel in vehicle seat or block aisle.
 - Owner is responsible for the cost to repair any damage to property caused by animal [Ref: NC G.S. 1684.4]



Note: UCT reserves the right to deny transportation of passenger with service animal if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others until the problem is rectified.

Seatbelts and Child Restraint Requirements (Ref: NC GS 20-137.1)

- **Adults**
 - It is the policy of Union County Transportation that all passengers use seat belts.
 - A waiver will only be granted if a letter is on file at the transportation office from the passenger's physician stating that the passenger is unable to use a seat belt for medical reasons. It is the responsibility of the passenger to provide this documentation.
 - Each passenger is required to use a seatbelt while the vehicle is in motion. If a driver suspects that a passenger does not have a seatbelt, he/she should stop the vehicle until the every passenger is secured. Failure to follow this procedure could result in disciplinary action.
 - Passengers should not stand, move about the vehicle or remove seatbelt until he/she reaches their destination.
 - Passengers on wheelchairs who are secured on a wheelchair securement station, are required to use the vehicle seat belt system.

- **Children**
 - A child less than eight years of age and less than 80 pounds in weight shall be properly secured in a weight-appropriate child passenger restraint system. In vehicles equipped with an active passenger-side front air bag, if the vehicle has a rear seat, a child less than five years of age and less than 40 pounds in weight shall be properly secured in a rear seat, unless the child restraint system is designed for use with air bags. If no seating position equipped with a lap and shoulder belt to properly secure the weight-appropriate child passenger restraint system is available, a child less than eight years of age and between 40 and 80 pounds may be restrained by a properly fitted lap belt only. Vehicle and child restraint system manufacturer instructions must be followed with regards to seating position and child restraint system installation.
 - At the time of making an appointment for a child, the age and weight of the child must be given. This will determine if a child restraint seat is required.
 - UCT requires that parents/guardians of the child needing transportation provide the necessary child restraint system.
 - UCT will not transport any child less than 80 pounds in weight or 8 years old unless they are properly secured in a weight appropriate child passenger restraint system by a parent or guardian.
 - At the end of the trip, it's the parent/guardian's responsibility to remove the child and child restraint system from the vehicle.



Wheelchair and Other Mobility Devices Securement

For the safety of all passengers, wheelchairs and other mobility devices must be secured in the vehicle securement stations. UCT drivers shall utilize manufacturer suggested procedures for proper securement of wheelchairs whenever possible. UCT drivers will make the best use of securement technology based upon the nature of the wheelchair to ensure the safety of seated passengers. If a driver cannot secure a wheelchair, the passenger will not be denied service. It is the policy of UCT that wheelchair securement is required and thereby creates a safer transport for all riders including those using wheelchairs. Anyone refuses to have their wheelchair secured will be denied transportation on UCT vehicles.

On-Board Behavior

- UCT passengers are expected to conduct themselves with good citizenship, decorum, and respect for others. Unruly behavior is unfair to other passengers and to the driver. Disruptive passengers will not be tolerated on UCT vehicles.
- Passengers who cause any form of damage to UCT vehicles will be held responsible for the cost of the repairs and be subject to other consequences such as suspension or termination.
- Profanity or vulgarity of any kind among passengers or directed towards any member of the UCT staff will be tolerated.
- Passengers who at any time behave in a threatening manner or verbally threaten other passengers or any member of the transit staff will have transportation services terminated immediately and could be reported to the local law enforcement agency.
- No inappropriate display of affection or sexual activity towards the driver or other passenger is allowed.
- UCT reserves the right to deny service to anyone who appears to be under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.
- No release of human waste on vehicles. This includes spitting. Any passenger who has problems with incontinence must be properly clothed before leaving home and before re-boarding the vehicle.
- No open flames on transportation vehicles.
- To safeguard the health of all passengers and drivers smoking of any kind or chewing tobacco products is strictly prohibited while riding with UCT or on UCT property.

Carry-on Items, Food, Packages, and Oxygen Tanks

- For safety and liability reasons, passengers must limit the number of packages of shopping bags or carry-on items to 3. Passengers are responsible for loading and unloading any carry-on item and shall always be in control of the items while on board. Passengers should not expect the driver to help carry their bags on or off the vehicle. Some consideration will be given to those passengers who are elderly or disabled.
- No weapons of any kind, concealed or otherwise are allowed on transportation vehicles unless the person carrying the weapon is a law enforcement official.



- Passengers needing the use of oxygen tanks must notify UCT at the time they schedule their transportation. UCT recommends passengers to take the smallest tank possible for the expected time away from home. Oxygen supplies must not obstruct the aisle. (49 CFR 37.167(h))
- Open containers of food and/or drinks are prohibited on the transit vehicles. Only passengers with a medical need are allowed to eat and drink while on board.

Inclement Weather

UCT drivers will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exist which makes travel unsafe, UCT reserves the right to discontinue service until conditions are favorable. We do not consider routine medical appointment or hair appointments a necessary ride based on weather. If service is temporarily discontinued, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

Camera System

Passengers should be aware that all UCT vehicles are equipped with camera systems that are recording during all times that the vehicles are in operation.

Passenger Complaints, Complements, and Suggestions

In providing a public service to the community, it is possible that some members of the public or a passenger will wish to complain about the quality of service offered or the manner in which service is delivered. Every effort will be made to handle these issues quickly, courteously and fairly. Everyone in the County community has the right to express their concerns about UCT operations. The allegation of impropriety, however, does not establish proof that a violation has occurred. Every effort will be made to address complaints as quickly as possible using the resolution mechanisms provided by both common sense and the law.

Complaints could be made by filling the complaint form found on the UCT website, in person at the UCT office or over the phone by speaking to the Associate Director.

Title VI Policy

It is the policy of Union County Transportation that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, income status, national origin or disabilities be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or service for which UCT receives Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been mistreated by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a complaint in writing with Union County



Transportation at 610 Patton Avenue, Monroe, NC 28110 within 180 days following the date of the alleged discrimination occurrence. Complaint forms may be obtained from the UCT office by calling 704-292-2598. For information regarding opportunities to participate on the Transportation Advisory Board contact the office of Union County Transportation.

To obtain additional information on Title VI contact:
NC Department of Transportation
Civil Rights and Business Development
1511 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1511
919-733-2300

ADA Reasonable Modification Policy

Requests for modifications of Union County Division of Transportation's (UCT) policies, practices, or procedures to accommodate an individual with a disability may be made either in advance or at the time of the transportation service. UCT is best able to address and accommodate a request when customers make their requests for modifications in advance. The process for making a request is as follows:

- **Advance Requests:**
 - When making a request, the passenger must thoroughly describe what is needed in order to use the service, and why this assistance is necessary.
 - Whenever feasible, a request for modification to UCT's service should be made in advance before UCT is expected to provide the service. UCT will review the request, and will make every effort to communicate in advance whether or not the requested modification can be made.
 - If the modification is not made, UCT will provide the reason for the denial of the request. Requests may be denied on one or more of the following grounds:
 - Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of UCT's service, programs, or activities;
 - Granting the request could create a direct threat to the health or safety of the requestor or others;
 - Granting the request would create an undue financial or administrative burden for the Agency; or
 - Without such modification, the individual with a disability is otherwise able to fully use UCT's services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose.
 - Requests may be made through the following means:
 - Calling or emailing UCT's Safety Officer
 - Mailing the written request:

UCT- Modification Request- 610 Patton Ave, Monroe, NC 28110



- **Same Day Requests:**
 - When a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance, the passenger may make a request on the same day, at the time of, or during service.
 - The passenger should make the request to the UCT driver.
 - The passenger must describe in detail what accommodation is required and why it is necessary in order to use the service.
 - Driver may grant a request if such request is reasonable and meets the requirements of the UCT's policy.
 - If a driver is unsure if the request can be granted or declined, she/he is required to consult with dispatch to receive instructions, who in turn will communicate with management and/or UCT Safety Officer.
 - Requests may be denied on the following grounds:
 - Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of UCT's service, programs, or activities;
 - Granting the request could create a direct threat to the health or safety of the requestor or others;
 - Granting the request would create an undue financial or administrative burden for the Agency; or
 - Without such modification, the individual with a disability is otherwise able to fully use UCT's services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose
 - Availability may be very limited when providing service and/or if the request would require extended consideration, UCT may not be able to grant the passenger's request immediately. In that case, the passenger may be encouraged to submit a written request for further consideration for future trips.
 - UCT's ability to grant the requested modifications may vary by day of travel, time of day, or other circumstances. For example, while a request may be able to be granted in one instance, that same request may be denied in another instance if granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, create a safety threat, or if the request is not a functional necessity.
 - In the case of a denial of a modification request, UCT will take, to the maximum extent possible and in compliance with its policies, any other appropriate actions to ensure you receive service.