



Rider's Guide

connecting you to the community you love





ucgov.info/horizon





Jan. 20, 2023

Stay Connected

Sign Up for Newsletters

Horizon

A weekly newsletter delivered on Fridays that shares community news, healthy living tips, and upcoming community events.

Employment Opportunities

Receive weekly emails about open positions available with Union County Government.

Board Agendas, Press Releases & Public Notices

Receive emails with Board Agenda notices, press releases and public notices.

Be Prepared with UC Alerts



This service allows you to opt-in to receive notifications via phone calls, text messaging, email and more based on locations you care about.

You can choose to receive notifications about events that may affect your home, workplace, family's schools and more.

Community Events

Calendar of Events

Visit our website for a list of upcoming events, classes and workshops offered by Union County Library and Parks & Recreation, as well as clinics offered by Human Services, and more.

Follow Union County on Social Media

Stay connected and follow us on any of our social media channels:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Nextdoor
- YouTube

Healthy Living

Spreading awareness and educating residents with weekly health-related tips and safety messages.

Visit the Union County website.



About

Union County Transportation (UCT) services are available to all Union County residents, ages 16 and over, through limited grant funded programs or through sponsorship of a local human service agency.

Some grant-funded trips require the passenger to pay a fare to share in the cost of the service. Cost depends on time of registration and type of trip scheduled.

Contact the Transportation Office

1407 Airport Road Monroe, NC 28110

- т 704.292.2511
- т 800.735.2962 (TDD/TTY)
- transportation@unioncountync.gov

Transportation Appointment Line: 704.292.2511

- Option 1 Español
- Option 2 Appointments
- Option 3 Registration
- Option 5 Call to Return Home

Veterans Transportation Services: 704.283.3807

Limited English Proficiency

Translation service provided, free of charge, for customers who do not speak English.

Non-Discrimination Policy

We do not discriminate transportation services because of sex, race, color, national origin, age or handicap.

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Office Hours

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Transportation services will not be provided on the following observed holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas



- Senior citizens, at least 60 years of age.
- Developmentally disabled adults.
- Physically disabled adults.
- Medicaid passengers (at any age).
- Veterans eligible for medical treatment at a VA Hospital or clinic.

Medicaid Transportation is available for eligible residents of any age. A parent or guardian must accompany children under the age of 16.

For riders under 18, a parent or guardian must sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the Rider Guide on their behalf.

ADA Reasonable Modification Policy

Union County Transportation (UCT) is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities. Requests for modifications of UCT policies, practices or procedures to accommodate an individual with a disability should be made in advance of a trip.

How to make an ADA modification request:

- Visiting unioncountync.gov/transportation and filling out the online request form.
- Mailing a written modification request to 1407 Airport Road, Monroe, NC 28110

Compliments, Suggestions and Concerns

Communication with customers is essential in our ability to provide safe, reliable and responsive transportation to residents. Please provide your feedback by filling out the comment form found on **unioncountync.gov/transportation**, in person at the UCT office, or over the phone.

Every effort will be made to address complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner.

Passenger Requirements and Expectations

The requirements, rules, expectations and guidelines in this Rider's Guide apply to all registered customers/passengers. They apply to all interactions and communications with UCT staff and other customers while in person loading/unloading, on board a vehicle or in a County facility, as well as on the phone and in writing via email or text, etc.

By completing a registration, either directly or through a submitter on your behalf, you become a registered passenger and agree that you have received, reviewed and understand all UCT policies and guidelines, and agree to comply with all information/expectations included herein.

Failure to adhere to any components will result in suspension or termination of service.



How to Make a Reservation

- Call 704.292.2511, select option 2.
- Trip reservations must be made 48 business hours
- Trips may be scheduled up to a year in advance

Provide the following information:

- Passenger name, address and phone number.
- Appointment date and time.
- Destination address, phone number, clinic or
- Mobility needs/personal care attendant information.

Transportation will call to confirm the reservation.

Passengers should not give the driver appointment requests, as they will not be processed.

Each passenger is responsible for calling the office and scheduling transportation for themselves.

Enjoy a safe trip by following these rules and tips:



Wear a seat belt



No tobacco products



No open containers of food/drinks



No profanity



No standing/moving



No weapons



Plan ahead for carry on items



Be ready to board when the vehicle arrives



Provide accurate pick-up and dropoff addresses when making your reservation

Appointment Types

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- Transportation within Union County Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., as schedule allows.
- Transportation to Matthews Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments should be complete by 2 p.m.
- ▼ Transportation to Salisbury
 Select prescheduled days, no earlier than 9:30 a.m. Appointments should be complete by 1:30 p.m.
- Transportation to Charlotte Select prescheduled days, 8 a.m. to noon. Appointments should be complete by 1 p.m.

Visit unioncountync.gov/transportation for available dates to travel to Charlotte before making an appointment.

We provide transport to Charlotte for medical, Social Security or Disability determination appointments only.

All passengers remain in Charlotte until everyone's appointment is completed. The length of time you will be in Charlotte will vary depending on how many people are riding and the type of appointments they have scheduled. Please plan appropriately by bringing something to read or listen to using headphones.

Trips to Charlotte may involve a relay in which we partner with Anson County to transport you on days we do not go. UCT will pick you up and transport you to a designated area to meet the relay van which will transport you to your Charlotte appointment. Once everyone is finished, the relay driver will bring you back to the relay area, and UCT will pick you up and take you home.



Need a ride to run a few errands, or enjoy some leisure activities?

NON-MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 11:30 a.m. drop-off and 1:30 p.m. pick up.

Trips are limited to two hours and start from the time you are scheduled to be dropped off. If you are not ready within the two-hour window, UCT will not be responsible for your return home.

Drivers have planned their schedules in advance to ensure that everyone reaches their appointment on time.

When one person is late or requests to change their destination, it can create late arrival times for everyone, therefore same day modifications may not be approved. For more details, see page 10. All reservations must be made at least two business days in advance of your appointment. We recognize that occasional emergencies may arise and will do our best to accommodate same day appointments when possible.

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR TRIP

Passengers will receive an automated reminder for scheduled trips. You may cancel your trip during this call if needed.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

- Be ready one hour before your scheduled appointment if the appointment is located in Union County, unless otherwise notified by your driver.
- Trips out of Union County may require a pickup of more than two hours in advance of your scheduled appointment.
- Board promptly when the vehicle arrives.
 Drivers may only wait three minutes for ambulatory riders or five minutes for wheelchair or limited mobility passengers.
- Passengers who use wheelchairs/scooters must have a ramp if steps are present. Drivers will not "bump" passengers up/down stairs or in/out of houses.
- If you are approved for door-to-door service, drivers may not cross over the threshold of a dwelling to bring passengers to the van.

RETURN TRIP PROCEDURES CONTACT 704.292.2511, OPTION 5

- You will be picked up at the same place you were dropped off. Do not leave the destination, drivers will not pick you up from a different location.
- Drivers will not enter a facility to look for passengers, unless a passenger has a preapproved modification for assistance. Drivers will only wait three minutes for ambulatory riders or five minutes for wheelchair or limited mobility passengers.
- If you are unable to enter your home, Union County Transportation will attempt to call your emergency contact. If 15 minutes have passed, you will be offered to be dropped off at your previous destination, or, as a last resort, to the local police station. If you accept this offer, Transportation will not be responsible for taking you back home.
- If you reject the offer, the driver will notify dispatch that the passenger was dropped off but had no access to enter the home.

Curb-to-Curb Service

Union County Transportation is a curb-to-curb transportation system. Special exceptions may be made to allow for door-to-door assistance.

Door-to-Door Service

First floor, door-to-door assistance may be provided if requested at the time of registration and deemed necessary. Passengers approved for door-to-door service should ensure their property is cleared of any hazards (e.g. loose aggressive dogs, unsafe stairways, etc.) and has appropriate access for their mobility needs (e.g. no stairs, or a ramp for those using a wheelchair). If UCT identifies a safety concern, the issue must be corrected or the passenger will be depied door-to-door service.

For passengers approved for door-to-door service, drivers may not cross over the threshold of a dwelling to bring passengers out to the van.

Fares & Fees

Passengers may pay \$2 for a one-way trip within Union County. Costs may vary depending on grant funding allocated for various types.

Destinations outside Union County could incur additional costs.

Passengers will be charged a \$2 fee for each late cancellation. A cancellation must occur before noon the business day before the scheduled trip.

Passengers required to pay fares or who have late cancellation fees, must pay prior to their next scheduled trip, either at the UCT office or when they board the vehicle.

Passengers who pay when boarding must have the correct change to pay the driver.

Payment for fares and late cancellation fees must be received in advance of scheduled trips. Passengers who do not meet this requirement will not be transported and will be charged as a No Show.

Passengers who fall behind more than \$10 in payment of fares and late cancels will not be allowed to schedule appointments until the balance is paid.

Continued failure to follow the policy for paying fares and fees will result in suspension or possible termination of service.

Cancellation

Cancellation must occur before noon on the business day preceding the scheduled trip by calling the Transportation office or responding to the automated trip reminder call indicating a cancellation. Cancellations can be made by leaving a voicemail 24 hours a day at 704.292.2511, option 2.

Cancellations after the deadline will be considered a "late cancellation" and the passenger will be charged a \$2 fee. A notice will be mailed to the address on file. Failure to pay the late cancellation fee prior to or on the day of the next scheduled appointment could result in suspension or termination of service if fees reach \$10.

No Show

If UCT arrives and the client does not ride it will be considered a No Show. Drivers will wait three (3) minutes for ambulatory passengers and five (5) minutes for wheelchair passengers.

After the alloted time, the passenger will be considered a "no show" and will be charged a \$10 fee.

A no show warning notice will be mailed to the address on file. Failure to pay the no show fee prior to or on the day of the next scheduled appointment could result in suspension or termination of service if fees reach \$20.

If the No Show occurs on the first leg of a trip, the return/home trip will be canceled.

The following No Show policy applies to all passengers regardless of funding source:

- Three No Shows in any 90-day period (first offense) results in a 30-day suspension.
- Three additional No Shows in any 90-day period (second offense) results in a 60-day suspension.
- Three additional No Shows in any 90-day period (third offense) results in a 90-day suspension.
- Three additional No Shows in any 90-day period (fourth offense) results in a permanent suspension.

Termination of Service

Termination of service for passengers who fail to comply with passenger guidelines and expectations, no show policy, and fare policy as outlined in this Rider's Guide or other applicable Passenger Policy documents will be made by the Transportation Director. Passengers have the right to appeal in writing within 10 days to the Transportation office. The appeal will be reviewed by three UCT Advisory Committee representatives and the passenger will be notified of the decision

Termination of service will result for reasons deemed appropriate, including but not limited to the passenger:

- Failure to comply with the rules and expectations as set forth in this "Union County Rider's Guide."
- Having three No Shows three times after their third temporary suspension.
- Requesting to be removed from the program or moving out of the service area.
- Failure to pay for services.

Accompanying Riders

Personal Care Attendants

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) may ride with individuals requiring personal or medical assistance. A PCA will be established and noted in our system upon scheduling your appointment.

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

Children

A parent or guardian must accompany children under the age of 16.

The age and weight must be given when an appointment is made for a child. 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 weighing less than 80 pounds or younger than 8 years old unless they are properly secured in a weight appropriate child passenger restraint system by a parent or guardian.
- If no seating position equipped with a lap and shoulder belt to properly secure the weightappropriate child passenger restraint system is available, a child less than eight years of age and between 40 and 80 pounds must 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 end of the trip, it's the parent/guardian's responsibility to remove the child and child restraint system from the vehicle.

Service Animals

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 at no charge.

According to USDOT 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 on UCT vehicles.

OWNER/RIDER RESPONSIBILITY

UCT must be notified at the time a reservation is made, that there will be a service animal riding with the client. Animals must be restrained by a harness, leash or some form of lead, unless the owner/rider is in full control of the animal at all times.

Animals must travel on the floor or in the owner's lap. Animals may not travel in vehicle seats or block aisle.

Owner is responsible for the cost to repair any damage to property caused by the animal [Ref: NC G.S. 1684.4]. UCT reserves the right to deny transportation of passengers with service animals if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others until the problem is rectified.



Wheelchairs and Other Mobility Devices

For the safety of all passengers, wheelchairs and other mobility devices must be secured in the vehicle securement stations.

UCT drivers shall utilize manufacturer's 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 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 who refuses to have their wheelchair secured will be denied transportation on UCT vehicles.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a wheelchair as "a manually operated or power- driven device designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of indoor, or of both indoor and outdoor, locomotion. Individuals with mobility disabilities must be permitted to use wheelchairs and manually powered mobility aids, i.e., walkers, crutches, canes, braces, or other similar devices designed for use by individuals with mobility

disabilities, in any areas open to pedestrian traffic." (Ref.: APPENDIX 3, Americans with Disabilities Act – 49 CFR Parts 27, 37 & 38).

In accordance with ADA, UCT is required to accommodate all "wheelchairs" unless lift or vehicle cannot accommodate or there are legitimate safety issues. For example, if the lift has a maximum weight limit of 1000 lbs. set by the manufacturer, the passenger and his/her device must not exceed 1000 lbs. Due to the equipment that UCT uses, passengers that have devices that are longer than 48 inches or wider than 30 inches may not be accommodated; the same is true if the total weight of the passenger and his/her device exceeds 1000 lbs.

If the passenger's home is not equipped with a ramp and the home has stairs, the driver will meet the passenger at the bottom of the stairs. The same is true in homes equipped with a door frame threshold with a ledge, drivers may not "bump" a passenger up or down to get over the ledge or move up or down stairs.

If a driver is assisting a passenger who uses a wheelchair, all wheels should be on the ground at all times. If a passenger needs assistance to get over a threshold ledge or stairs, the passenger is to request assistance from an attendant, caregiver or family member. For safety and liability reasons, UCT drivers may not provide this type of assistance. Drivers are not permitted to assume the controls of power wheelchairs to assist riders with boarding.



Seat Belt Policy

Seat belts must be worn while the vehicle is in motion to ensure the safety of all passengers and compliance with state laws.

Passengers should not remove their seat belt until they have reached their destination. Transportation services may be immediately terminated if a passenger refuses to be properly secured.

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.

Passengers in wheelchairs are required to use the vehicle seat belt system and also be secured on a wheelchair securement station

Seating

No passenger is allowed to sit in the front seat of any UCT vehicle.

Carry-on Items, Food & Weapons

For safety and liability reasons, passengers are limited to three packages of shopping bags or carry-on items.

Carry-on items must fit under the seat or in the lap of the passenger, and may not take up any additional seating in the vehicle.

Passengers are responsible for loading and unloading any carry-on item and shall always be in control of 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 passengers who are elderly or disabled.

Passengers needing the use of oxygen tanks must notify UCT at the time transportation is scheduled. UCT recommends passengers take the smallest tank possible for the expected time away from home. Oxygen supplies must not obstruct the aisle (49 CFR 37.167(h)).

No weapons of any kind, concealed or otherwise are allowed on UCT vehicles unless the person carrying the weapon is a law enforcement official.

Open containers of food and/or drinks are prohibited on UCT vehicles. Only passengers with a documented medical need are allowed to eat and drink while on board.

Safety Instructions - In Case of an Emergency

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 response to an emergency or to help reduce or eliminate the potential for injury or harm. Anyone incapable of performing the requested task due to a disability must notify the driver immediately.

Conduct Expectations

UCT passengers are expected to conduct themselves with good citizenship, decorum, and respect for others.

The following are <u>strictly prohibited</u> while onboard any UCT vehicle, on UCT property, or interacting with UCT staff in any manner. These behaviors <u>will not be</u> <u>tolerated</u> and may result in suspension or termination of transportation services:

- Unruly or disruptive behavior.
- Profanity or vulgarity.
- Behaving in a threatening manner or threatening other passengers or UCT staff verbally or in writing.
- Inappropriate display of affection or sexual activity towards the driver or other passengers.
- Release of human waste. This includes spitting. Any passenger who has problems with incontinence must be properly clothed before boarding the vehicle.
- Use of lighters or any sort of open flame.
- Use of tobacco products of any kind (e.g. smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco).
- Use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol. UCT reserves the right to deny service to anyone who appears to be under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.

Passengers who cause any form of damage to UCT vehicles or other property will be held responsible for the cost of the repairs and be subject to other consequences such as suspension or termination of transportation services.

Passengers who do not follow these rules or any other rules in this Rider's Guide will be reported to dispatch with the possibility of being asked to deboard the vehicle.

Bedbugs

Passengers who have been identified as having

bedbugs, based on either physical observation of a bedbug on their person or clothing, or notification from a service provider to whom the passenger is being transported, will not be eligible for transportation by UCT until written (electronic or hardcopy) proof is provided to UCT of a bedbug inspection by a licensed pest control professional verifying that the passenger's living quarters do not have an infestation or source present.

Body Odor/Personal Hygiene

A passenger may not be allowed on a vehicle if his or her body odor or personal hygiene will disturb the reasonable comfort of other passengers or UCT Staff. Odors may include but are not limited to scents related to unlaundered clothing, lack of bathing, animal related odors, and excessive perfumes.

A passenger will be given notice and an opportunity to correct the odor or hygiene problem prior to temporary suspension of riding privileges, unless in the judgment of UCT staff, that person places existing passengers in extreme discomfort or is considered a health risk to others.

If the body odor or personal hygiene issue is a result of an underlying medical condition, the passenger could present UCT a doctor's note acknowledging that there is a condition, without disclosing the condition.

Passengers with mobility devices must maintain such devices in a state of cleanliness.

Inclement Weather

In the event extreme weather conditions exist which makes travel unsafe, UCT reserves the right to discontinue service until conditions are favorable.

If service is temporarily discontinued, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be canceled.

Camera System

All UCT vehicles are equipped with camera systems that are recording at all times while the vehicles are in operation.



Requests

Same day modifications to change and/or add to your schedule are not typically permitted.

practices, or procedures to accommodate an individual with a disability should be made in advance of a trip when possible.

In an emergency situation, when a request for a service modification cannot practically be made in same day or during service.

- The passenger should make the request to the required and why it is necessary in order to use the service.
- Drivers may grant a request for an additional passenger stop not shown on the driver

granting the request:

- Fundamentally alters the nature of UCT's service, programs or activities;
- Creates a direct threat to the health or safety of the requester or others;
- Creates an undue financial or administrative burden for UCT: or
- Without such modification, an individual with a disability would still otherwise be able to fully use UCT's services, programs or activities for their intended purpose

For modification requests that require extended consideration and are not able to be granted immediately, the passenger is encouraged to submit a written request for further consideration for future trips.

UCT's ability to grant 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 a different instance if it 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.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

U.S. Department of Justice regulations, 28 code of the Federal Regulations, Section 42.405, Public Dissemination of Title VI Information, requires recipients of Federal financial assistance to publish or broadcast program information in the news media. Advertisements must state that the program is an equal opportunity program and/or indicate that Federal law prohibits discrimination. Additionally, reasonable steps shall be taken to publish information in languages understood by the population eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by transportation projects.

UCT hereby gives notice that it is the policy of the Department to assure compliance with the Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and related nondiscrimination statues and regulations in all programs and services. It is the Department's policy that no person 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 otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, activities, or services for which UCT receives Federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been mistreated by an unlawful practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with UCT*, North Carolina Department of Transportation, United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and United States Department of Justice.

For more information on UCT's Title VI program or how to file a discrimination complaint contact:

Union County Transportation

- т 704.283.3598
- transportation@unioncountync.gov

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

т 919.733.2300

*Any such complaint must be in writing or in person with the UCT office within 180 days following the date of the alleged discrimination occurence.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable federal and state laws and their implementing regulations with respect to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on the ground of race, color or national origin by any entity receiving federal financial assistance. Administrative methods or procedures, which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination or defeating the objectives of these regulations, are prohibited.

In order to avoid discrimination on the grounds of national origin, Union County Transportation (UCT) must take adequate steps to ensure that their policies and procedures do not deny or have the effect of denying LEP individuals with equal access to benefits and services for which such persons qualify.

PROVIDING SERVICE TO LEP INDIVIDUALS

UCT posts and maintains brochures and stickers in regularly encountered languages other than English at UCT's office, on the website, and on vehicles. UCT also offers LEP individuals the option to speak through a telephone interpreter, which is provided at no cost.

ENFORCEMENT

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 or in person with Union County Transportation at 610 Patton Avenue, Monroe, NC 28110 within 180 days following the date of the alleged discrimination occurrence.

For information regarding opportunities to participate on the Transportation Advisory Board, contact the office of Union County Transportation: Transportation@unioncountync.gov



