



Oceana County
Council on Aging

PASSENGER POLICY

Board Adopted 4/23/24

*I acknowledge by receiving this policy
that I am held responsible to read,
understand and abide by the rules within.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Business Hours:

Monday through Friday	8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

Holidays that we are closed:

New Year's Day, President's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, ½ day Christmas Eve (if Christmas Eve falls on a regularly scheduled workday), and Christmas Day.

If the holiday falls on a:

- Saturday then OCCOA will be closed the preceding Friday.
- Sunday then OCCOA will be closed the following Monday.

Contact Information:

Telephone	231-873-4461
FAX	231-873-5645
Webpage	www.oceanacoa.com
Address	4250 W Tyler Rd. Hart, MI 49420

It shall be the policy of OCCOA Transportation to provide transportation as available, for all persons in the service area, giving priority to seniors (age 60 and older) and physically handicapped individuals.

Customers will receive Door-to-Door (Demand-Response) service. Unlike a taxi service, Demand-Response service works in time ranges by grouping rides within the same area utilizing one vehicle. Passenger assistance is available when requested.

OCCOA buses are lift-equipped to assist passengers with special mobility needs. The OCCOA bus drivers are trained in Passenger Assistance Techniques to better serve customers.

Customers can make reservations on a long-term basis when their travel requests remain consistent. Contact the OCCOA Transportation office for details.

It shall be the policy of OCCOA to work closely with other agencies and schools to provide quality transportation. In the event that a third party is sponsoring transportation and or other services being provided by the OCCOA it shall be the responsibility of said third party to pay the established costs for the transport and/or services of the customer.

OCCOA BUS RULES

1. OCCOA requires exact fare or tickets when boarding the bus. The bus drivers do not keep cash on hand, therefore, cannot make change. Bus tickets may be purchased at OCCOA or from a bus driver.
2. Passengers must be prepared to board the bus at the designated pick-up time and location.
3. Passengers should be ready for the bus 15 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. The bus drivers are allowed leeway of 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time for a passenger's pick up. The bus driver will sound the horn and will wait no more than five (5) minutes.
4. Passengers who temporarily de-board the bus or change destinations will be charged another fare.
5. It may be necessary to make several stops before your destination to accommodate other passengers. Please plan to accommodate for these possible delays.
6. No eating, drinking, smoking (including e-cigarettes and vape pens), loud music, vulgar language, horseplay, weapons, illegal drugs, hazardous materials or other dangerously deemed items on the bus.
7. Loud, unruly behavior and unwelcome physical or verbal contact with passengers is strictly prohibited.
8. Passengers must always conduct themselves in an acceptable and respectful manner. Any type of lewd or indecent behavior, physical or verbal abuse, harassment, threats, or intimidating staff or other passengers will not be tolerated. Failure to comply will result in immediate removal.
9. OCCOA has the right to ban passengers temporarily or permanently from service when it is necessary, because of unacceptable behavior, illness or any other reason that may pose a threat to other passengers or the driver.
10. Objects blocking the aisle, stairway or occupying a seat is prohibited, except at the driver's discretion, if space allows.
11. Interfering with the provision of safe transportation services is prohibited. Please refrain from speaking to the bus driver unless providing directions.
12. Passengers are to remain seated while the bus is in motion and until the passenger reaches his or her destination for drop off.

13. Failure to follow directions from the bus driver, or other authorized personnel, may lead to disqualification of privilege(s) to ride.
14. For your safety, you are **required** to use the occupant restraint system properly (i.e. seatbelt).
15. Spitting, defecating or creating unsanitary conditions by discharge from a person of blood, urine, feces, vomit or other bodily fluids is prohibited. It is a serious health risk to all passengers to allow patrons whose bodily fluids are exposed to ride the bus or use facilities. Passengers who are experiencing this condition will be removed.
16. Cover your mouth when you sneeze and cough and reschedule your bus ride when you are contagious.
17. Littering is prohibited aboard all transit vehicles.
18. Pets are not permitted on the bus. Service animals are permitted. There is no fare for service animals. For safety reasons, drivers are not allowed to handle service animals. Please see detailed Service Animal Policy Appendix B.
19. Passengers traveling with respirators or portable oxygen must follow safety procedures that ensure the protection of passengers and transit employees. Only one (1) portable oxygen tank may be transported, and this tank cannot exceed 15 lbs. in total weight; 29 inches in height; and 4 inches in diameter. Please see detailed Portable Oxygen Tank Policy Appendix C.
20. No shirt, no shoes, no service.
21. Any damage to the bus or equipment by a passenger will result in immediate removal and prosecution for restitution of damages.

Scheduling Rides:

1. Requests for transport can be made by calling the OCCOA Transportation office. The transport request must be made 48 hours prior to when the ride is needed. The cut-off time to call is 4:00 p.m. Any transport requests made after 4:00 p.m. will not be considered as meeting the 48-hour window.
2. Same day changes to your ride time or pick-up/drop-off locations will not be allowed.
3. Bus drivers are prohibited from deviating from their schedules for transport.
4. Please have the following information available:
 - Passenger name and date of birth.
 - Exact street address of pick-up and drop-off locations
 - Time of appointment (if it is an appointment)
 - Mobility equipment such as a cane, walker, wheelchair, or no device at all.

Passengers using the lift must adhere to the following:

1. Ambulatory passengers unable to use the steps to enter the bus may use the lift. When using the lift, they must be able to stand without assistance and must hold onto the hand grips while on the lift.
2. Passengers who use a walker and ride the lift must either sit on their walker or stand. If she/he chooses to stand then the driver must put his/her walker on the bus by using the steps of the bus.
3. Passengers using a wheelchair must meet the ADA-regulated definition of a common wheelchair by not exceeding 30" in width, 48" in length and 600 pounds when occupied.
4. Scooter type devices tend to be unstable on wheelchair lifts and on the bus and may exceed allowable weight and ADA dimensions. Passengers who use scooter type mobility devices who can transfer to a seat are strongly encouraged to do so during transport.
5. Mobility devices should be backed onto the wheelchair lift as recommended by the manufacturer. This includes any passenger sitting on their walker while using the lift.
6. Scooter/electric wheelchairs must be powered down while on the lift and in transit.
7. Passengers using wheelchairs or scooters are required to be secured using a four-point tie down system while being transported by the OCCOA bus.
8. Passengers using wheelchairs are required (as are all passengers) to use the occupant restraint system properly (lap and shoulder belt).

9. Failure to cooperate with these safety policies may result in loss of service.
10. OCCOA cannot transport passengers with inoperative mobility devices.

ANY PASSENGER USING THE LIFT AND IN A SITTING POSITION ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO SIT FACING OUTWARD.

Caregiver Responsibilities:

Passengers with cognitive impairments may travel without an attendant as long as they exhibit safe behavior and are able to follow basic rules. However, an attendant or caregiver must be present at the pick-up point and drop-off locations for those who cannot be left alone. It is the responsibility of the passenger's caregiver or family member to inform the OCCOA Transportation office of any special passenger needs so that the bus driver can take appropriate actions if needed. However, bus drivers cannot serve as personal attendants for passengers or cross the threshold of any passengers' home.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA's):

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may accompany ADA passengers at no additional charge. A PCA is anyone whose purpose is to help passengers meet their disability-related personal needs. A ride for the PCA must be reserved at the time the passenger's ride is scheduled, and the PCA must have the same origin and destination as the eligible passenger. Additional travelers that accompany the passenger are considered companions and must pay the regular fare.

OCCOA bus drivers will assist passengers with boarding, de-boarding and stowing personal belongings if it is needed or requested. However, OCCOA bus drivers cannot assume the duties of a PCA.

Under certain circumstances, OCCOA management may strongly recommend a PCA for passengers with lost sensory or motor functions to such an extent that they need assistance with personal needs, behavior and/or general safety.

Medication and Transporting Life Support Equipment:

Passengers may travel with respirators, portable oxygen and other life-support equipment, provided such transport does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials. Passengers traveling with respirators, portable oxygen and other life-support equipment must follow safety procedures that ensure the protection of all passengers and transit employees.

A portable oxygen tank or intravenous stand will only be transported by the OCCOA bus when it is medically necessary for the passenger. Passengers may board the bus with no more than one (1) portable oxygen tank. The portable oxygen tank may not exceed 15 lbs. in total weight; 29 inches in height; and 4 inches in diameter. Drivers will inspect any portable oxygen tanks

before a passenger may board the vehicle. Defective, leaking or otherwise unsafe or unfit tanks will not be allowed inside the bus. Portable oxygen tanks must be turned off when not in use; and the oxygen mask must be secured to the user's face when in operation.

Bus drivers will secure oxygen tanks and intravenous stands in an upright position using a securement belt or system-approved cargo belt. Precautions will be taken to avoid pinching or kinking an oxygen line. Oxygen tanks must be secured in an unoccupied area away from the sidewall of the bus; to an aisle-side seat back; or other areas designated by management. Passengers who wear or carry portable oxygen tanks shall be required to wear the seat belt and/or shoulder harness provided.

Passengers using such equipment are strongly advised to use medical transportation and/or travel with a Personal Care Attendant and will not be allowed to carry additional oxygen tanks if transported in an unsafe manner.

Passengers requiring medication or oxygen at regular intervals should be advised that travel time on a transit bus can be lengthy. Bus transport is subject to unpredictable conditions such as traffic delays, mechanical problems and adverse weather that may result in longer than expected travel times.

OCCOA personnel may not administer or assist with the administration of any medication or oxygen. Any passenger requiring assistance with meds or oxygen while on the bus must travel with a PCA. Should the administration of medications or oxygen become necessary while a passenger is aboard a bus, OCCOA personnel will contact emergency medical services (911) for help, at the passenger's expense.

Transporting Packages, Bags and Laundry:

For safety reasons, passengers may not transport more bags/packages than they can easily handle independently **in one trip**, held on your lap or secured under your seat. All packages and bags must be carried aboard without delaying the vehicle. Aisles are not to be blocked. Passengers should make other arrangements if they have excessive bags or packages or for heavy items exceeding 60 lbs.

Drivers may assist with loading bags/packages into the bus but are not required to carry the packages/bags for passengers. If requested by the passenger the bus driver will assist with the packages/bags to the front door of the passenger's home. The bus drivers are not allowed to enter a passenger's home.

Weather Delays:

The OCCOA will make every effort to serve you during adverse weather conditions. Delays and cancellations are possible. It is the policy of the OCCOA **NOT TO** operate on roads within a school district when that school district closes due to weather, **OR** if your road/driveway has not been plowed and the driver fears getting stuck. OCCOA is closed and will not transport any

passengers if Hart Public Schools is closed due to weather. Please listen to your radio, television or Facebook for cancellation announcements and updates for Hart Public Schools.

Cancellations-No Shows:

Please be courteous and cancel your ride if you no longer need one. Passengers must cancel unwanted trips at least 2 hours prior to their pick-up time or by 9:00 a.m. if the pick-up time is before 11:00 a.m. (leave a message cancelling your morning pick-up) to avoid penalty. Failure to cancel rides in advance or if you are not ready for your pickup results in a "no show," which may result in denial of future service.

Children:

Children requiring the use of a safety seat may only ride when accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Securement of the seat and the child is the responsibility of the parent or designated responsible adult.

Complaints:

OCCOA is committed to providing excellent service. All complaints shall be accepted at any level as reported by the complaining party. Contact the Transportation office to request a Complaint Report Form and/or have one mailed. The process for complaints is as follows:

1. A complaint must be submitted within 30 days of the date when the incident in question took place.
2. A completed Complaint Report Form is to be handed in to the Transportation Director.
3. The Transportation Director will investigate the allegations made in the complaint. The investigation will include all parties involved and witnesses. It will include signed statements from those individuals.
4. Completing the investigation of the complaint shall take up to five business days.
5. The Complaining Party shall be notified by phone or written correspondence on the outcome of the investigation of the complaint.
6. The Transportation Director or Executive Director shall sign any written correspondence.

The OCCOA Executive Director will make all final decisions on denial of service or delay of services. If, in the judgment of the Director, any unique or unusual circumstances or conditions exist which would prevent providing transportation, services may not be provided or may be delayed until the circumstance or condition is corrected.

Confidentiality Policy:

All personal information obtained about customers shall be kept confidential and shall only be used by the Transportation Coordinator or Executive Director of OCCOA and his/her designee during the course of conducting OCCOA business and for the purpose of maintaining safety.

It is a very serious offense for an employee to access, release or use for personal purposes, confidential information obtained in the course of providing services. A violation of this policy is just cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. In addition, OCCOA may request criminal charges be filed against the employee which could result in a felony conviction.

Passenger Code of Conduct

To maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all OCCOA passengers, we ask that all riders adhere to OCCOA's Code of Conduct. Enjoy your ride and thank you in advance for being a respectful OCCOA rider.

Respectful Rider Code of Conduct

To ensure a safe and comfortable ride, OCCOA asks that all passengers adhere to the following:

- Help expedite the boarding process by having exact fare or ticket ready and moving quickly to your seat.
- Show consideration and respect for other passengers and their environment:
 - Limit carry-on bags to what you can carry on a single trip and store them securely at your feet.
 - Use headphones when watching/listening to an electronic device.
 - Clean up after yourself.
- Wearing appropriate clothing is necessary, including a shirt and shoes.
- Do not board the bus with strong scents, improper hygiene, perfumes, or smoke odors (refrain from smoking while waiting for the bus).
- Save your food and drink for before or after your bus trip.
- Proper use of the occupant restraint system (seatbelt) is required.

The following is not allowed on any OCCOA bus:

- Consuming or possessing opened alcohol, and/or illegal substances.
- Smoking of any substance (including marijuana), vaping (e-cigarettes), or the use of smokeless tobacco.
- Possession of hazardous or dangerous items, including weapons.
- Disruption of a safe and comfortable environment by behaving loudly, indecent exposure, using bad language, harassment, or acting offensively to fellow passengers or OCCOA staff.
- Blocking aisles with objects or activities.
- Throwing objects inside the bus or out the windows.
- Dangling body parts or other objects out of windows.

- Loitering, soliciting, or panhandling.
- Larceny, theft, or handling of other people's belongings.
- Encroaching on a passenger's personal space, including touching without consent.
- Animals, except for service animals, are not allowed. (Please see Service Animal Policy for complete details)
- Improper dress or hygiene (body odor, no shoes or shirt, etc.)
- Exposing other riders to body fluids poses a serious health risk. Those in violation will be removed or denied access to the bus. Body fluids include, but are not limited to, urine, spit, feces, vomit, blood, etc.
- More than one (1) portable oxygen tank. (Please see Portable Oxygen Tank Policy for complete details)

Violation of any of the above will result in denial of services.

Denial of Services Policy

To ensure the safety of all OCCOA passengers:

- OCCOA reserves the right to remove or deny service to any passenger who threatens the safety of themselves or others;
- OCCOA will not tolerate any type of harassment, violence, threats, intimidation, destruction of property, or insubordination; and
- OCCOA has the right to refuse service and remove passengers when appropriate.

SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY

Oceana County Council on Aging, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animal into all areas where passengers are normally allowed to go.

For the purposes of this policy, a service animal is defined as an animal that is individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks.

Oceana County Council on Aging acknowledges that we may:

- Ask if an animal is a service animal.
- Ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform.
- Charge a passenger with a disability for damage caused by his or her service animal.

Oceana County Council on Aging also acknowledges that we cannot:

- Require special ID cards for the animal.
- Ask about the person's disability.
- Charge extra fees for the service animal.
- Treat a person with a disability that uses a service animal less favorably than other passengers.
- Ask a person with a disability to remove their service animal from the bus unless the animal is out of control and the owner does not take effective action to control it OR if the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others*

*Allergies or fear of animals are generally not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to passengers with service animals.

Oceana County Council on Aging is not required to provide care of, food for a service animal or provide a location for it to relieve itself.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to:

Stephanie Moore
Oceana County Council on Aging
231.873.4461
moore@oceanacoa.com

PORTABLE OXYGEN CYLINDER AND RESPIRATOR POLICY

Oceana County Council on Aging will transport portable oxygen cylinders and respirators as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and cannot prohibit these devices on public transit vehicles. Only cylinders that are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions will be transported. Cylinders and respirators must be in good working condition and all cylinders must be secured.

Before boarding a bus with an oxygen cylinder, drivers will listen to for leaks in the cylinder and inspect the cylinder for dents, gouges, or pitting. If any of these conditions exist, the cylinder will not be transported.

Drivers will never drag or roll a cylinder or carry a cylinder by the valve or regulator. Drivers will handle the cylinder with care during passenger loading and unloading. No more than three (3) cylinders will be transported at a time on one vehicle.

Drivers will secure each cylinder to prevent movement or leakage. "Secure" means the cylinder is not free to move when the vehicle is in motion. Unsecured cylinders pose a serious threat of injury in the event of a sudden stop or collision.

Drivers will never store cylinders in the aisle of the vehicle and passengers requiring oxygen must not restrict access to exits or use of the aisle.

Upon reaching the passenger's destination, cylinders will be immediately removed from the vehicle.

Smoking and open flames are always prohibited on Oceana County Council on Aging vehicles. Because a release of oxygen from a cylinder could accelerate a fire, cylinders will be secured away from sources of heat or potential sparks.

Passengers are asked to notify Oceana County Council on Aging of oxygen cylinder and respirator use when scheduling their trip.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to:

Stephanie Moore
Oceana County Council on Aging
231.873.4461
moore@oceanacoa.com

CARRY-ON POLICY

OCCOA allows passengers carry-on packages aboard all buses. Please review our below guidelines to help ensure the comfort and safety of all riders.

What Can I Carry On The Bus?

Carry-On Packages

OCCOA's top priority is to make certain that all carry-on items are secured for the safety of *all* passengers.

Accepted Packages

- Handbags, backpacks, grocery bags, or other articles that do not inconvenience other riders.
- Able to be carried on and off the bus in one trip.
- Are of a manageable size.
- Are placed on your lap or on the floor, between your feet.
- May not block the entrance, aisle or emergency exits.
- May not take up additional passenger seats or restrict the use of aisles.
- May not in any way inhibit the safe operation of the bus.

Additional Allowed Articles

- Folded carriages/strollers.
- Personal shopping carts that can fit between seat rows.
- Folded walking aids and walkers.

ARTICLES NOT ALLOWED

- Large cumbersome bags.
- Shopping carts associated with a retailer.
- Large or leaking objects.
- Any weapons – firearms, knives, clubs, fireworks, and chemical sprayers.
- Any sharp objects.
- Gasoline or other flammable/hazardous materials.
- Vehicle batteries.

In short, anything that is dangerous or inconvenient to other riders is not allowed to board with you.

NO-SHOW & LATE CANCELLATION POLICY

OCCOA's No-Show and Excessive Cancellation policies help improve OCCOA's on-demand services by trying to limit no-shows and cancellations that can disrupt service schedules and inconvenience other passengers.

Excessive Cancellation

Definition

Excessive cancellation occurs when a passenger cancels 8 or more rides within one calendar month. This refers to cancellations made 2 or more hours before the scheduled time. Late Cancellations are documented as a No-Show. Excessive Cancellations impact other passengers who are denied rides at the times being held and later cancelled.

Procedures

Passengers are advised to reserve rides only for the days and times of the appointments or activities they are committed to attending. This policy aims to reduce the behavior of riders reserving and holding on to multiple rides in advance and then canceling them throughout the month if not needed.

Suspension of Service

A Violation = 8 or more Cancellations in a calendar month.

Suspension of ride-scheduling privileges may occur following the first violation of the policy. Longer suspensions will be applied for subsequent violations.

Violation	Suspension
1 st	30 days
2 nd	60 days
3 rd	90 days

Passengers will be sent a warning notice after the fourth cancellation in any given month.

Violations are cleared from a rider's record after 6 months if there are no further violations.

Late Cancellation & No-Show Policy

Definition

A **No-Show** occurs when a passenger with a ride reservation or a deviation request fails to be at the designated pickup location, at the appointed time, and ready to travel.

A **Late Cancellation** occurs when a passenger cancels their reservation less than 2 hours before the designated pickup time or by 9:00 a.m. if the pick-up time is before 11:00 a.m.

(leave a message cancelling your morning pick-up). A Late Cancellation is considered a No-Show.

Procedures

Passengers must be at their designated pickup location and ready to travel 15 minutes before or after the scheduled pickup time - this is known as the "Be Ready Window." Any passenger not present and ready to board the bus within 5 minutes of arrival will be considered a No-Show.

Suspension of Service

A Violation = 3 No-Shows in a calendar month.

Suspension of ride-scheduling privileges may occur following the first violation of the policy. Longer Suspensions will be applied for subsequent violations.

Violation	Suspension
1 st	30 days
2 nd	60 days
3 rd	90 days

Passengers will be sent warning notices after each documented No-Show incident.

Violations are cleared from a rider's record after 6 months if there are no further violations.