FORT BEND COUNTY
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

PASSENGER GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Passenger Guidelines is to provide our passengers a guide for accessing services and information on operating policies and procedures. Translation of these policies into different languages will be accommodated as soon as possible after a request for such translation is made. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals with vision impairments can request an audio tape of these guidelines and/or copies of the guidelines printed in larger font. Individuals with hearing impairments can request information or services via our Text Telephone (TTY) or by using other interpretive services provided by State or Local agencies.

CONTACT INFORMATION

1) The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Offices are located in Sugar Land, Texas. Deliveries and/or correspondence are received at the following address:

FORT BEND COUNTY
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
12550 EMILY COURT, SUITE 400
SUGAR LAND, TEXAS 77478

2) The following telephone numbers can be used to contact Departmental staff, schedule a ride, obtain information about services and/or provide comments concerning services:

Toll Free:	866-751-TRIP (8747)
Office Number:	281-633-RIDE (7433)
TTY Reservations:	281-243-6781
TTY Admin Office:	281-494-7160
Fax Number:	281-243-6710

Email comments, questions or concerns should be directed to the following address:

Public.Transportation@co.fort-bend.tx.us

Information regarding our services is available on the Fort Bend County website at www.co.fort-bend.tx.us . Upon reaching the County's home page, click on Quick Links, then click on Public Transportation Department.

OPERATING DAYS/HOURS - All SERVICES

1) **The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Office** is open Monday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding County Holidays. **The Reservation office** is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding County Holidays.
2) **Public Transportation Offices are closed on County Holidays with the exception of special services.** County Holidays are posted on the County website and in vehicles. Passengers may request that a list of County Holidays be mailed to them by contacting the Public Transportation Department Administrative Office.
3) Operating hours for Demand Response bus services vary according to trip requests and/or grant funding. In most cases, first drop-offs are scheduled for 8:00 a.m. and last pick-ups are scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Variances to operating hours due to grant funding and/or special services will be published on the website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.
4) Operating hours for Commuter, Park and Ride and Fixed Route bus services are provided according to published schedules. Services may begin as early as 4:30 a.m. and end as late as 9:00 p.m. Schedules for services are posted on the County website and are available in the Public Transportation Department Administrative Office. Passengers may also request that schedules be mailed to them by contacting the Public Transportation Department Administrative Office.
5) Special services, including events and/or charter services may also be provided during and after regular business hours. Information, including service type, service hours and fares will be posted on the County's website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.), when applicable.
6) Days and hours of operation may change periodically for all services. Information concerning these changes will be posted to the County's website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.
7) Fort Bend County may suspend and change all or parts of its transportation service during emergency events (weather, and other emergencies). Notification of change(s) will be made as soon as possible after the emergency occurrence via public media outlets, through the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management and any other sources deemed necessary and/or available during the event.

SERVICE AREA

1) For demand response and para-transit services, the service area is limited to Fort Bend County. Trips will be provided within Fort Bend County and/or to destinations in adjoining counties that are within one mile of the Fort Bend County line.
2) For commuter services, fixed route or point deviation services, the service area will be detailed in the route schedule. These services will be limited to routes within Fort Bend County and/or

routes beginning in Fort Bend County and traveling into selected business districts in Harris County.

3) In certain circumstances, funding may become available to provide services into other areas or counties. Information concerning these changes will be posted to the County's website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.

SERVICE TYPES

Demand Response - Bus service requiring advance reservations. Passengers share the ride with other passengers. Buses serve different locations and passengers each day dependent upon the locations requested by passengers.

Commuter/Park and Ride - Bus service designed primarily to accommodate employment trips and also open for general trip purposes. In general, buses leave from a primary parking lot and travel into a business district. There is a set schedule from and to the parking lot and set locations and timed drop-offs and pick-ups within the business district.

Point Deviation Route - Buses traveling along the same road(s) each day with timed stops at designated locations. With pre-arranged approval, buses can deviate short distances from a route to pick-up and drop-off customers requiring special assistance and/or to accommodate pick-ups and drop-offs at high demand locations.

Fixed Route - Buses traveling along the same road(s) each day with timed stops at designated locations.

Complementary Para-Transit - Bus service operating as a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act in conjunction with fixed route bus service. Service requires advance reservations and can include qualifying provisions. Passengers share the ride with other passengers. Buses serve different locations and passengers each day dependent upon the locations requested by passengers.

Curb-to-Curb Service - Buses arrive and depart from the curbside. Drivers are authorized to leave the vehicle to assist passengers to/from the area immediately adjacent to the vehicle by assisting with boarding and alighting the vehicle either in or on the wheelchair lift or stairwell. Drivers are instructed to use a curbside location that provides a safe environment for boarding and alighting the vehicle. Said location may or may not be immediately adjacent to the requested pick-up location and/or scheduled pick-up location.

Door-to-Door Service - Buses arrive and depart curbside or from designated parking areas. Drivers leave the vehicle to escort a passenger to or from a building doorway to the vehicle. Drivers are not authorized to cross the threshold of building doorways and/or to be responsible for locking building doors. Drivers are authorized to open and close building doors as a courtesy and/or to assist people with disabilities.

Hand-to-Hand Service - Buses arrive and depart curbside or from designated parking areas. Drivers are authorized to leave the vehicle to escort a passenger to or from a building doorway as necessary to "hand" over, or receive, the passenger to/from a personal escort within the building. Drivers are not authorized to cross the threshold of building doorways and/or to be responsible for locking building doors. Drivers are authorized to open and close building doors as a courtesy and/or to assist people with disabilities.

PASSENGER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

1) Transportation services are available to all Fort Bend County residents and visitors.

2) Trips must originate in Fort Bend County.

3) For Demand Response services, the service area is described as all locations within Fort Bend County and locations up to one (1) mile outside the boundaries of Fort Bend County.

4) Services to the Texas Medical Center and Veterans Hospital in Houston will be provided via transfer to the Fort Bend Commuter service into the Texas Medical Center. A transfer point to the service may be made at any of the Fort Bend County Park and Ride locations or at other transfer locations designated by Fort Bend County.

5) Transfers to Houston's Metro service or to services provided by other public operators servicing areas adjacent to Fort Bend County will also be provided by the Demand Response and Commuter services. Transfer locations will be posted on the website, listed in published schedules and/or negotiated with the service provider. As a general rule, park and ride facilities or other locations immediately adjacent to Fort Bend County or within Fort Bend County will be used.

6) Special event and charter services may be provided in other areas or from other locations.

7) Commuter, Point Deviation Routes, and Fixed Routes will have the service area defined in published schedules. Schedules will be available on the Fort Bend County website and/or in vehicles, facilities and other locations.

8) All residents and visitors of Fort Bend County are eligible for services offered by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department. In certain circumstances, statutes or funding sources may dictate passenger and scheduling limitations. This could include but not be limited to service type limits, service area limitations, scheduling limitations, rider limitations (all elderly, handicapped, etc.) and/or the service type limitations. When applicable, these restrictions will be posted on the County's website and/or in route schedules and other public documents.

RESERVATIONS – DEMAND RESPONSE AND PARA-TRANSIT SERVICES

1) Reservations are accepted via telephone Monday through Friday; excluding County Holidays, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. **To schedule a ride call 281-633-RIDE (7433).**
2) Reservations are **not** accepted by voicemail, telephone message, text, facsimile or electronic mail. Passengers must speak directly with a reservationist to schedule a ride.
3) Reservations will be accepted from one (1) business day to thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the need for transportation.
4) Passengers may reserve a ride for themselves and other traveling companions. All passengers must be listed at the time the primary reservation is made.
5) Passengers may reserve a single ride, multiple rides, and multiple destinations for one day or for multiple days.
6) Multiple rides, multiple destinations or multiple day trips require additional reservation time to process the trips. Passengers requesting these services may be referred to an alternate reservationist in order to accommodate the reservation(s) being requested.
7) All reservations are subject to space and time availability.
8) Any special needs accommodations and/or requests must be disclosed at time of reservation. Special needs accommodations include requests for assistance to/from the door, use of a wheelchair, walker, cane, hearing or vision impairment accommodations, etc. Please make note of the following:
   a) In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fort Bend County Public Transportation will allow up to two (2) Personal Care Assistants (PCA) to ride along with a passenger at no charge. Notification of assistants riding along with a passenger must be disclosed at the time the reservation is made.
   b) Service animals are permitted to ride on board subject to the Service Animal Policy.
   c) Individuals with hearing impairments can make a reservation utilizing our TTY telephone or by using other interpretive services provided by State or Local agencies.
   d) Individuals with vision impairments can request audio tapes of printed materials and or that printed materials be provided in larger fonts.
9) Passengers are required to furnish their contact information at the time a reservation is made and if and/or when their information has changed.

10) Reservation changes **will not** be accepted via voicemail, telephone message, text, facsimile or electronic mail. Passengers must speak directly with a reservationist to make any changes to scheduled rides. One attempt will be made to return voicemail and other message types, however no changes will be made until direct contact is made with the passenger or their representative to confirm the change requested.

11) No **"will call"** trips are allowed. Fort Bend County Public Transportation does not offer same day service. Passengers must schedule both the initial pick-up time and return trip pick-up time at least one business day in advance of the need for a trip.

SCHEDULING – DEMAND RESPONSE, PARA-TRANSIT AND POINT DEVIATION SERVICES

1) For Demand Response and Para-Transit services, trips are scheduled for drop-offs accommodating first appointment times no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and last pick-up times no later than 5:00 p.m.
2) Scheduling for drop-off and pick-up times for Point Deviation routes will be defined in related schedules.
3) All reservations are subject to space and time availability. Reservation and Scheduling personnel are not authorized to schedule trips that will violate on-time performance goals, ride time limitations and/or service boundaries.
4) Time needed to accommodate passengers with disabilities will be considered and allowed in all routes. Passengers should expect extended wait times to accommodate these needs when applicable. Special needs accommodations includes assistance with packages, assistance with boarding and alighting vehicles, requests for assistance to/from the door of a building, use of a wheelchair, walker, cane, and/or hearing or sight impairment.
5) Passengers must schedule a return pick-up time when the initial reservation is made, no "will call/day-of" trips are allowed.
6) Drivers are not authorized to adjust schedules on the day of service.
7) Attempts will be made to schedule requests for pick-up or drop-off times no earlier than a requested or set time or no later than a requested or set time. All attempts will be made to accommodate the request both when the trip is scheduled and on the day of service; however, passengers are advised that "day of service" conditions can affect the ability to provide this service.

On-Time Performance Definition

1) Demand Response trips will be considered "on-time" if the vehicle arrives within the on-time window. A thirty (30) minute on-time window will be used. A trip will be considered on-time if the vehicle arrives between fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time and fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

2) Commuter Park and Ride, Point Deviation Routes and/or Fixed Route Service are considered on-time when the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup on-time or within 5 (five) minutes after the scheduled time.

No-Show Trips for Demand Response

1) A "No-Show" trip occurs when a vehicle arrives at a pick-up location within the on-time window, waits five (5) minutes, and the passenger is not there or is there but refuses the trip.
2) A passenger failing to board a vehicle at the pick-up time for any reason is considered a No-Show.
   a. A notice will be sent to violators informing them of their suspension. The suspension notice will include a listing of the dates when the no-shows and/or late cancellations occurred and the dates of the pending suspension. Instructions on how to appeal the suspension will also be included in the notice. (Reference the Suspension Appeals process included in these guidelines.)
3) No more than two (2) suspensions per year are permitted; a third suspension within a one year period will result in permanent suspension from service. The one year period begins with the date of the first suspension.

Cancellation Policy

1) Passengers must notify Fort Bend County Public Transportation of all cancellations.
2) Cancellations should be called in as soon as possible. Passengers are encouraged to call in cancellations as far in advance as possible.
3) Cancellations received after 5:00 p.m. of the business day prior to the day of the scheduled trip are considered "Late Cancels."
4) Cancellations received on the day of service are considered a "Late Cancel."

Suspension Policy

1) A combined total of three (3) or more late cancellations and/or no-show trips within a ninety (90) day period will result in a thirty (30) day suspension of service.
   a. A notice will be sent to violators informing them of their suspension. The suspension notice will include a listing of the dates when the no-shows and/or late cancellations occurred and the dates of the pending suspension. Instructions on how to appeal the suspension will also be included in the notice. (Reference the Suspension Appeals process included in these guidelines.)

2) No more than two (2) suspensions per year are permitted; a third suspension within a one year period will result in permanent suspension from service. The one year period begins with the date of the first suspension.

Service Suspension Appeals

1) Passengers receiving a service suspension notice for violation of no-show, late cancellation, safety, or fare policies may appeal the decision.

2) Passengers receiving a service suspension notice for violation of security policies will not be allowed to appeal the decision.

3) Passengers must request an appeal by submitting a written request for an appeal to the Public Transportation Administrative offices that is postmarked within ten (10) days of the date of the suspension notice.

4) The Fort Bend County Public Transportation office will contact the passenger to schedule an appeal hearing. All attempts will be made to schedule the hearing within four to five (4-5) business days from the date the request for appeals was received by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation office. A written notice indicating the date, time and location of the hearing will be mailed to the address on record.

5) Passengers who choose to attend the appeal hearing should be prepared to provide a detailed description of why they believe that the violation should be excused. Supporting documentation should be included.

6) Passengers who choose not to attend the appeal hearing must submit a written statement documenting a detailed description of why they believe that the violations should be excused. Supporting documentation, if applicable, should be included. The written statement must be received at the Public Transportation Administrative offices at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled appeal hearing. Statements received less than two (2) business days prior to the appeal hearing will not be considered.

7) Appeals will be held at an accessible Fort Bend County facility. Appeals may be conducted over the phone if requested by the passenger in the appeal letter.

8) No suspension will take effect if the customer has filed an appeal in accordance with the instructions and deadlines noted in this policy and/or the Appeals Panel has not determined the outcome of the appeal. All appeals will be heard by an Appeals Panel.

9) The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Office will advise customers in writing of its decision concerning their appeal within ten (10) days of the hearing. If the decision upholds the suspension, the notice of decision will provide customers with the beginning and end date of the suspension period. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

Customer Satisfaction Policies

All Fort Bend County employees and contractors are expected to treat the public and passengers courteously. Employees and contracted staff are expected to be responsive to concerns and to use tact and diplomacy while interacting with customers. Customers are encouraged to report any instance where they feel an employee or contractor has failed to meet this policy. Reference the "Compliments and Complaints" section for further information on reporting concerns.

1) Fort Bend County Public Transportation offers "Shared Ride" services only. Scheduling staff are not authorized to schedule trips so that only one passenger is on-board the vehicle for a trip. Trips are scheduled to insure that the maximum amount of passengers can be served. Passengers should expect to ride with other passengers. Scheduling will be done to insure the maximum numbers of passengers are accommodated on each vehicle while meeting on-time performance and ride time expectations.

2) Commuter, point deviation routes and fixed routes are assigned vehicles with capacity considerations determined by pre-planning activities and/or actual boardings. Where and when possible, additional vehicles and/or vehicles with additional seating capacity will be assigned based on fleet availability and budgetary considerations. Passengers will not be allowed to stand in the aisles, sit or stand in the stairwells, nor have more passengers in a seat than the seat is designed to accommodate. Drivers do not make determinations regarding accommodation of standing passengers and should not be asked to violate capacity standards. In certain situations (emergencies, evacuations, hazardous conditions, etc.), the dispatcher and/or operations supervisor may instruct the driver to allow passengers to stand or sit in other locations in the bus to facilitate the situation.

3) Packages, bags, umbrellas, canes, walkers and all personal items must be secured so that they cannot move around the vehicle. Items should be secured in or under the seats. Passengers must remove items from vacant seats to accommodate seating other passengers whether or not all vehicle seating is occupied.

4) If a seat or wheelchair tie-down location has a seat belt that is not working, the seat or tie-down location cannot be used for seating passengers or securing passengers in wheelchairs.

5) Vehicle operating standards dictate that vehicles will not be operated without working heating and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and/or working safety features (windshield wipers, turn signals, etc.). If a HVAC or safety system failure occurs while the vehicle is in service, passengers will be required to transfer to another vehicle when another vehicle is made available at a transfer location designated by the dispatcher.

6) All reservations and rides are subject to space, availability and ride time limitations.

7) On-board time (ride time) is scheduled to be no longer than one and a half hours (1.5) per passenger. Destination travel time can and will be considered when scheduling trips. Exceptions to ride time limitations must be approved by the operations supervisor or his/her designee.

8) Passengers presenting themselves for boarding without a prior reservation may be turned away. Drivers do not make a determination on additional, unscheduled passengers boarding vehicles. Drivers are required to contact dispatch for instruction.

9) Add-on trips and/or additional passengers will not be accepted that violate customer satisfaction policies. Emergency conditions, vehicle accidents, incidents, and/or failures, as well as traffic and weather conditions, may require deviation from customer service policies.

10) All passengers must adhere to instructions and requests made by the driver and/or supervisory staff.

11) Drivers must follow designated schedules and routes. Drivers are not allowed to change the order of pick-up and drop-offs nor or they allowed to change the route taken by the vehicle without the prior approval from the dispatcher or operations supervisor.

12) Demand Response Service is curb-to-curb; however, door-to-door service for riders with disabilities will be provided *if requested*. Refer to the definitions of curb-to-curb and door-to-door service for more details.

Subscription Ride Definition & Policy for Demand Response Services

A subscription ride is a service offered as a convenience to passengers. It enables the passenger to expect service for the trip without having to phone in reservations each time the trip is needed. Subscription riders are still required to phone in cancellations according to the cancellation policy defined in these guidelines. An eligible subscription trip is defined as a "set/fixed transportation trip (trip is at the same time, same place, same day(s)) on a continuing schedule." The Americans with Disabilities Act limits subscription rides in complementary para-transit services to no more than 50% of the trips available in any given service hour. Subscription trips will be allowed based on this limitation.

1) Subscriptions will be taken on a first come, first served basis based upon availability in the requested service hour(s).

2) If there is no availability for a passenger's subscription request, the subscription trip request will be put on a waiting list for the hour(s) in which the subscription ride is being requested.

3) Fort Bend County will maintain a waiting list for subscription service. Passengers can request either verbally or in writing information concerning their place number on the waiting list.

4) Trips on the subscription trip waiting list will be processed on a first come, first served basis when space opens in any given service hour(s).

5) Passengers will be allowed to request subscription rides for one-way trips and for multiple leg trips.

6) When only one leg or only certain portions of a multiple trip subscription request is available for subscription rides, passengers will be allowed a subscription ride for only those portions of the trips requested that are available..

7) Any change to a subscription ride (time, location, day, etc.) will cancel the subscription and a new subscription will need to be requested. Subscription requests generated as a result of a

change to an existing trip will not be processed before requests on existing waiting lists. The subscription request will be treated as a new request.

8) Subscriptions may be placed on hold for a period of no more than thirty (30) calendar days without cancellation. Requests to place a subscription trip on hold must be made prior to a passenger receiving a late cancel or no-show trip.

9) Passengers must notify the reservations office of their desire to place a subscription ride on hold. The reservations desk will note in the caller's file the name of the person requesting the hold, the date of the request, the date(s) the subscription trip is not to be scheduled for service and the date the subscription trip is to resume.

10) Subscription trip requests will be denied if more than 50% of the total available trips in any given service hour are dedicated to subscription rides.

11) Subscription trips may be cancelled if the subscription rides in any given service hour exceed 50% of the available trips in the service hour.

12) Passengers receiving service suspensions will not be allowed the convenience of a subscription ride for the first twelve (12) months following a suspension.

Fare Payment Policy

All Fort Bend County Public Transportation Services require a passenger to pay a fare with either cash, a pre-purchased ticket, vouchers, or as other fare media becomes available, debit cards, fare cards, etc. From time to time Fort Bend County may offer "free fare" services in order to promote the use of transportation services and/or as part of special event or charter services.

1) All passengers are required to pay a fare.

2) Information regarding fares for all services (including discounts, if applicable) is available on the County web site at www.co.fort-bend.tx.us, and/or in brochures located on the vehicles and select locations throughout the County. Passengers can call the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department at 281-633-RIDE (7433) for more information.

3) Children and infants will be assessed the same fare as adults.

4) Purchase of tickets and other fare media, including vouchers, fare cards or other fare media by cash, check or credit card is non-refundable. Ticket books may be purchased as follows:

   a) In person at the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Office during regular business hours, excluding County Holidays. Extended hours are offered for this purpose on Mondays (excluding County Holidays).

   b) Purchases can also be made by mail. Mail request should be sent to the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Office. Payment must be included with the order. Order forms are located on our website.

   c) Ticket books and other fare media are made available for sale at other locations in Fort Bend and Harris Counties. Currently, ticket books for TREK and Fort Bend Express

commuter service are available for purchase at the Kroger Store on Sweetwater Boulevard in Sugar Land.

d) Many employers along the commuter routes provide tickets for employees. Passengers are encouraged to ask their employers about these options and to monitor our website for additional locations as they become available.

e) Internet ticket sales will be offered as well. Information will be located on the website when this service becomes available. The website address is www.co.fort-bend.tx.us. Click on the Public Transportation link and follow the directions for this payment type.

5) Exact change is required for cash fares. Drivers are not authorized to make change.

6) Tickets and/or cash must be put in fare box located at the front of the vehicle.

7) Passengers will not be immediately refused for non-payment of fares; however, service will be suspended for a minimum of 90 days upon three (3) non-payments of fares in a ninety (90) day period.

8) Patrons refusing to provide their name and contact information or providing false name and contact information for the purposes of tracking non-payments can immediately be denied service.

9) Drivers do not determine whether a passenger may board without a fare. The driver is required to have the dispatcher or operations supervisor approve the request for boarding without paying the appropriate fare.

10) Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider reserve the right to request police intervention should any type of altercation or disagreement occur regarding fares payment in or around vehicles or County facilities.

11) Fort Bend County may take legal action against passengers who refuse to pay fares, are involved in altercations or incidents regarding fares, and/or who utilize fraudulent or counterfeit fare media.

12) Passenger employers and/or service providers are allowed to purchase tickets in bulk and distribute them to their employees or patrons. Businesses or agencies wishing to provide these services can contact the Fort Bend County Public Transportation office for further information.

SAFETY

The safety of customers using the services of the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department and our employees and contractors is a primary concern of the Department. The Department's policy is to promote active participation from staff, contractors and customers to prevent accidents, injuries or incidents from occurring. Staff, contractors and customers are encouraged to report safety concerns. The Department has developed these policies to help ensure the safety of passengers, employees and contractors. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will contact appropriate law enforcement or medical services to respond to safety incidents where and when it is deemed necessary by Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s).

1) No smoking or alcohol consumption is permitted on-board vehicles or in County facilities.

2) Consumption of non-alcoholic beverages is allowed on-board vehicles providing that drinks are in covered non-spill containers, kept out of the aisle and seats and empty containers are removed from the vehicle when the passenger exits the vehicle.

3) Consumption of small snacks such as candy, chips, fruit, sandwiches, etc. is allowed on-board vehicles providing that the snacks are kept out of the aisle and seats and any trash is removed from the vehicle when the passenger exits the vehicle.

4) In order to insure the safety of all passengers, passengers are required to immediately notify the driver if a beverage or food is spilled or if any trash or personal items are dropped or not secured inside the vehicle. Passengers should not move from their seats while the vehicle is in motion to clean-up a spill or to secure loose objects. Upon notification of the hazard, the driver will notify dispatch of the need to stop the route until the spill is cleaned and/or the items secured. The driver will locate a safe location to stop the vehicle for this purpose. The route will resume as soon as the spill is cleaned and/or the items are secured.

5) Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) reserves the right to request medical attention and/or emergency medical services for passengers on-board vehicles or in County facilities.

6) All passengers must wear seat restraints including shoulder harness when available.

7) Medical equipment and supplies such as oxygen bottles, syringes, etc. will only be allowed on vehicles if they are prescribed by a physician and are properly secured or stowed while the vehicle is in motion.

8) Fort Bend County's Public Transportation service is not equipped to accommodate passengers needing specialized medical attention, monitoring, equipment or procedures while traveling. Requests for these types of services will be referred to private providers of medical transportation services.

9) All Fort Bend County employees are instructed to follow universal precautions to reduce the likelihood of exposure and spread of disease. Employees may use disposable latex gloves, disinfectants, and/or hand sanitizers and/or have them available for use by passengers.

10) Passengers twelve (12) years or under must be accompanied by a guardian or parent at least eighteen (18) years of age or older.

11) Passengers must provide approved seat restraints for children forty (40) pounds or less.

12) No standing or sitting in the aisle is permitted while the vehicle is in motion.

13) Patrons visiting facilities, waiting at bus stops, riding vehicles, etc. must be properly clothed in clothing that covers the body and wear shoes. Individuals not properly clothed will not be permitted to enter facilities or board vehicles and/or to remain in or around Fort Bend County properties.

14) Passengers are to refrain from speaking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion unless it is an emergency.

15) Passengers shall follow the driver's instructions.

16) All wheelchairs must have their wheels locked and must be properly secured while on the vehicle.

17) Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down a single-step curb.

18) Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down one single stair step. Drivers are not authorized to maneuver wheelchairs up or down multiple steps.

19) Drivers are authorized to provide necessary assistance in boarding and departing vehicles. Assistance includes opening and closing the vehicle doors, hand support on the vehicle stairwell or lift, assistance with packages meeting the package restrictions contained in these guidelines, and assistance securing seatbelts. Drivers shall secure all wheelchairs tie downs for passengers utilizing wheelchairs. Drivers may also provide assistance securing lap and shoulder belts for passengers utilizing wheelchairs.

20) Walkers, canes and other mobility devices are allowed on vehicles. Mobility devices must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways.

21) Bags (handbags, shopping bags, briefcases, backpacks, suitcases, etc.), umbrellas and other carry-on items are allowed on vehicles subject to the guidelines provided herein. All items brought on-board vehicles shall be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways or take up seating space. Items shall not be left unattended or block entrances, exits or passageways at stops or in facilities. Passengers will only be allowed to board vehicles with the number of carry-on items they can effectively handle independently.

22) Shopping bags, similar to those provided in grocery stores are limited to no more than six (6) bags per passenger with each bag weighing less than ten (10) pounds. Larger shopping bags are limited to no more than two (2) per passenger weighing less than thirty (30) pounds. Briefcases and backpacks are limited to one (1) weighing no more than 30 pounds.

23) Suitcases are limited to two (2) small suitcases weighing no more than thirty (30) pounds each and meeting the size limitations imposed by air carriers for carry-on luggage. Suitcases exceeding the quantity allowed and/or the weight and size requirements are not allowed on vehicles. Suitcases must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block aisles and walkways.

24) Individuals who are unable to travel independently, safely and securely, on their own accord, whether due to physical or cognitive disabilities, and regardless of age must be accompanied by an assistant.

25) No person shall draw, write, paint, mark upon or deface any bus or portion of a transit facility.

26) No person shall spit in or upon any bus, transit facility, passenger or transit employee.

27) Profanity, abusive or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles or within County facilities is not allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.

28) Aggressive behaviors or inappropriate physical contact or displays of body parts by a passenger to the driver or passengers at any time will result in immediate removal from the vehicle/facility and potentially permanent suspension from transportation services.

29) Any unreasonably loud, disturbing or unnecessary noise that causes material distress, discomfort, or injury to passengers and/or drivers is not allowed. This includes playing any radio, radio device, phonograph, musical instrument, portable stereo, etc. at volumes that can be heard by other passengers and/or the driver. The use of portable speakers is not allowed by passengers.

SECURITY

As with other segments of the transportation industry, Fort Bend County Public Transportation Service has developed practices designed to prevent security incidents. Employees, contractors and passengers are encouraged to increase their awareness of security concerns and to immediately report ANY concern to Department Staff or law enforcement officials. The Department has developed the following policies to help ensure the safety of our passengers, staff and contractors. Matters of security are taken seriously, and violations of security policies will result in service suspension and/or prosecution. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will contact appropriate law enforcement or medical services to respond to security incidents where and when it is deemed necessary by Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s).

1) Alcohol and firearms are strictly prohibited on-board vehicles and/or in or on County facilities in accordance with all local, state and Federal laws.

2) Threatening language or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles or within County facilities is not allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.

3) Any passenger who poses a threat to himself/herself, the driver or any other passenger will be removed from the vehicle and county facilities.

4) No person shall deliberately obstruct the entrance or exit aisle of a bus or any portion of a transit facility regardless of the means of creating the obstruction and regardless of whether the obstruction arises from the person's acts alone or in concert with the acts of others. Obstruct means to render impassable or to render passage unreasonable, inconvenient or hazardous.

5) Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will request that law enforcement or medical officials remove individuals from vehicles or facilities who are violating laws, presenting a danger to themselves or other passengers, who are disrupting services and/or who have physical or mental symptoms requiring medical attention.

6) Passengers who observe any suspicious behavior by individuals or groups, notice unattended or suspicious looking bags or packages or substances on board vehicles or at County facilities should immediately report the observance to Fort Bend County staff and appropriate law enforcement agencies.

7) All threats of bodily or physical harm to Fort Bend County employees, agents, passengers or threats regarding destruction of facilities, equipment, or vehicles are taken seriously and will not be considered a joke. Individuals posing such threats will be immediately removed from facilities and be subject to the legal consequences of such actions.

8) The transit facilities of Fort Bend County are designated for the sole and exclusive use of passengers of the transit system. Seats, benches, parking lots and other areas are provided as passenger waiting areas and no person shall sleep in these or any portion of the transit facility.

9) Loitering is not allowed in or around any Fort Bend County Public Transportation Facility or on-board vehicles. Any individual(s) seen in office areas, parking premises, bus stop areas, and/or on-board or around vehicles and equipment is subject to being stopped and questioned regarding their reasons for being in or around the facility. If the individual(s) have business reasons for being in or around Fort Bend County Public Transportation Equipment and Facilities, they will be escorted to the proper person or facility and asked to complete their business as expeditiously as possible. If no legitimate business reason is noted, the individual(s) will be escorted off Fort Bend County properties. If the individual(s) become threatening in any way, law enforcement officers will be called to the scene and asked to remove the individual(s) from Fort Bend County Properties.

10) Disturbing, threatening or prank telephone calls will be reported to law enforcement organizations for appropriate handling and follow up.

11) Passengers on-board vehicles and/or in or around facilities during threatening events must follow directions given by Fort Bend County staff and/or law enforcement officials. This includes following instructions for evacuating vehicles and facilities and/or sheltering in place.

AMBASSADOR SERVICES

As grant funding is made available, Ambassador Services may be provided by Fort Bend County. An Ambassador is an individual who works directly with passengers providing assistance from the rider's door to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the final destination. This personalized service is to assist with the safe passage for those unable to travel unescorted or alone or for those who need additional help with boarding and alighting vehicles. Ambassadors may be assigned to bus stop locations and/or transit vehicles. Ambassadors will not be drivers, will not attach passenger securements (seat belts, wheelchair tie down, etc.) or operate mechanical lifts or ramping. Their function is solely restricted to the duties stated below and assisting clients with agitation, behavioral and cognitive issues.

Ambassador assistance will consist of the following:

1) "Gentle Support," such as opening doors and providing verbal guidance.
2) If needed, physical support such as assisting passengers with balance problems, climbing steps, handling packages or performing similar functions.
3) "Hand-to-Hand" service if requested at the time a reservation is made. (Hand-to-Hand service encompasses the escort of a rider from one caregiver or representative to another caregiver or representative.)
4) Assistance at bus stops will be limited to insuring that passengers board the correct vehicles and are advised not to wander into the street or unsafe locations while waiting for vehicles or transfers.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. Service animals and service animals in training are also permitted to ride on board Fort Bend County Public Transportation vehicles.

1) Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities including assisting people who have visual or auditory impairments, assisting with wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks.
2) Employees may ask if an animal is a service animal, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal or ask about the person's disability.
3) Passengers who use service animals will not be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons.
4) A passenger who uses a service animal will not be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless:
   a. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it.
   b. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON FARE INCREASE OR SERVICE REDUCTION

Fort Bend County Commissioners have established a means of providing the public with an opportunity to express opinions and concerns about major reductions in service or fare increases. Fort Bend County continually monitors all of its transportation services for ways to improve service, maintain or reduce operating costs and determine ways to improve efficiency. In the event a major reduction in service or increase in fares is determined to be necessary, Fort Bend County has established the following procedures for public notification and comment.

1) A major service reduction occurs if the total of Federal Transit Administration funded routes currently in operation is reduced by 25% or more service hours.
2) A notice defining operational adjustments or fare increases will be posted on the County's website, in the County's current newpaper of record, inside buses servicing the affected route(s) and at all stops (if applicable). Notices(s) will be posted at least thirty (30) days prior to any change.
3) All notices will include a mailing address phone number and information on where and how comments can be received. The notice will also include information on where and when any public meetings will be held related to the proposed fare increase or service reduction.
4) Public meetings will be conducted for all major service reductions and/or fare increases.
5) Public meetings will be conducted by the Fort Bend County Director of Transportation.

6) All comments will be summarized and a recommendation provided to the Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court for review and action.

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The following defines the procedures for filing compliments or complaints regarding Fort Bend County Public Transportation Services.

1) Any Fort Bend County Public Transportation staff member can accept compliments or complaints regarding services, contract operators, employees, facilities, equipment, etc.
2) Compliments or complaints can be made via telephone, in person or in writing.
3) A record of compliments and complaints received will be maintained by the Operations Assistant.
4) All compliments or complaints will be referred to the Operations Manager for processing.
5) Processing of compliments or complaints received in writing, by telephone or in person will begin no later than the following business day after the complaint is received.
6) Compliments or Complaints shall be addressed within thirty (30) business days of receipt of the complaint by Fort Bend County.

(Signature)

Paulette Shelton
(Printed Name)

Transit Director
(Title)

January 11, 2011
(Date)

(Signature)

Robert Hebert
(Printed Name)

County Judge
(Title)

January 11, 2011
(Date)

ATTEST:

Dianne Wilson, County Clerk

COMMISSIONERS COURT
TEXAS
FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS