



**Transportation Office  
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# **ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION**

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**5311 Transportation Provider  
of the Texas Department of Transportation**

**Adopted by the Orange County Commissioners' Court**

**Revised: 11-05-2024**

## I. GENERAL

### A. Mission

It is the mission of Orange County Transportation (OCT) to design, implement and maintain an efficient and effective transportation system for residents of the Cities of Orange, West Orange, Pinehurst, Bridge City, Vidor, Pine Forest, Mauriceville, Orangefield, Little Cypress and Rose City. All rides must originate in Orange County.

### B. Policy

It is the policy of OCT, that no person shall, solely by the reason of his/her disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by OCT.

### C. Objectives

Specific objectives of OCT;

1. To provide demand response curb to curb transportation to residents of its service area.
2. To maintain a trained staff for the operation and control of the system.

## II. ADMINISTRATION

### A. General

Orange County shall maintain an adequate staff to successfully operate transportation. OCT serves the general public; and a diverse population of individuals with varying, physical challenges, economic and financial status and ethnic backgrounds.

OCT shall ensure that no person be excluded from the participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by OCT, solely by the reason of his/her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic prohibited by law. OCT assures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended (section 504), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and related statutes and regulations in all activities.

### B. Organization

The Department Director is responsible for the overall management of OCT including operations and personnel. The Assistant Director, is responsible for Dispatching/Scheduling personnel and Drivers and to assist with specific daily activities.

### C. Employees and Assignments

1. It is the responsibility of the Department Director to organize and monitor the specific daily activities necessary to achieve agency goals. The Department Director directly supervises the Assistant Director, Dispatching/Scheduling personnel, Drivers and Mechanic.
2. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director to provide administrative support to the Department Director and other duties as assigned. The Assistant Director shall oversee all operations in the absence of the Department Director.
3. It is the responsibility of the Dispatchers to provide clerical support, perform client in-take, and provide public assistance and information and other duties as assigned.
4. It is the responsibility of the Drivers to safely operate the Division vehicles according to the assigned Schedule and to report in writing, all maintenance and repairs needed to the Department Director, Assistant Director and/or Transportation Mechanic of vehicles in need of repair. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director to follow Driver's reports and Dispatcher's duties through to completion.
5. It is the responsibility of the Director to monitor driver performance and provide vehicle training. The Assistant Director should perform training duties and report all findings to the Department Director for correction in their absence.
6. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Mechanic to perform preventative maintenance to ensure Transportation fleet is in good working order. The Mechanic shall in a timely manner inspect and/or repair all concerns reported by the driver. On occasion the mechanic will be required to be on call for unforeseen emergencies. The Mechanic shall stay up to date on required training. The Mechanic shall keep written records of all repairs to each vehicle and provide monthly reports to the department Director or Assistant Director.

7. It is the responsibility of all Transportation employees to follow Orange County Policies and Procedures, state laws and TxDOT regulations. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in the following progressive disciplinary actions:
  - a. **First Infraction** – Verbal warning and extra safety training (when appropriate).
  - b. **Second Infraction** – Possible three-day suspension and depending on the severity of the infraction, possible termination.
  - c. **Third Infraction** – Termination.

#### **D. Financial Review Policy**

To ensure an independent review of daily financial activities be conducted by someone other than the person performing the daily activities, the following policy shall be established for OCT.

1. All purchase requisition shall be reviewed and approved by the Department Director.
2. The Department Director shall review and approve all payment authorizations.
3. The Department Director shall review and monitor monthly expenditure analysis reports.

The Assistant Director shall be trained in the above procedures to satisfy reporting procedures in the absence of the Department Director.

#### **E. Vehicle Use**

OCT's vehicles are owned and operated according to established OCT policy and procedure. Supplemental service may be provided by Sub-contractors.

OCT's vehicles shall be used and maintained according to standards set by OCT. They shall be operated according to traffic laws of the State of Texas and local Cities. The vehicles may not be used for purposes other than that prescribed unless approval is obtained from the Department Director prior to such use.

#### **F. Personal Appearance**

A professional and business-like appearance shall be maintained at all times. Employees must maintain good personal hygiene and grooming standards that result in a clean, neat, and professional appearance. Hair, beards, and mustaches should be kept clean, neat and trimmed.

1. Staff clothing shall be neat, clean and appropriate attire for job duties.
2. All apparel worn shall not expose to public view any advertisements, logo or remarks which may be deemed inappropriate or defamatory toward others or which may cause a breach of the peace. Apparel considered provocative is not allowed. Also considered inappropriate are midriff, tube or halter-like tops or dresses, and any low necklines.
3. Drivers shall not wear backless shoes or thongs.
4. Jewelry, if desired shall be worn so as not to pose a safety hazard or be disruptive (interferes with the performance of duty) to other employees.
5. Exceptions to the dress policy are made only if medical reasons or weather conditions warrant such and it has been approved in advance by the Department Director.

## **G. Statistical Reporting**

OCT shall collect daily operating data and compile accurate, monthly operating statistics as required by funding sources.

## **H. Training**

OCT requires each driver to receive special training during the course of employment to ensure well trained professionals. These include:

Policies and Procedures

Safety Policies/Procedures

Drug & Alcohol Abuse Testing Policies

First-aid and CPR

Vehicle Inspections/Operations

Job Descriptions

Defensive Driving

Staff safety meetings/training: Orange County Transportation will not provide regular service when staff safety/training meetings are scheduled with efforts made not to interrupt travel arrangements.

### III. Transportation Departmental Policies

To insure Orange County Transportation employees, adhere to County Policies, OCT has implemented the following as Departmental leave benefits for vacation, sick leave, compensatory time and approved holidays. These benefits apply to full-time Transportation employees only. However, part-time employees not eligible for county benefits may be granted time off if there is adequate coverage to do so. Orange County's full policy may be viewed on-line at:

<https://www.co.orange.tx.us>

#### A. Vacation

Employees eligible for County benefits will follow County policy in accordance to vacation policy, Policy No. 311. However, to maintain adequate coverage in Transportation at all time, all vacation request must be made in writing a minimum of two weeks prior to the requested time off and will be considered on a first request basis. No text messages will be considered. Multiple request for the same time off will be decided by the Department Director. In their absence, the decision could be made by the Assistant Director.

#### B. Holidays

Orange County Holidays can be viewed in Policy No. 312. Time off request grouped with holidays will be denied if not made a minimum of two weeks in advance and must be done in writing. Request will be considered on a first request basis to maintain adequate coverage in Transportation at all times. Employees that were previously denied vacation leave the day before or the day after a holiday, that calls in sick for those days will result in disciplinary action unless a Return to Work Slip from your Doctor is turned in. Continued abuse of this policy could result in time off without pay up to termination.

#### C. Sick Leave

Employees eligible for County benefits will follow County policy in accordance to sick leave policy, Policy No. 313. Any employee that misses 3 or more consecutive days must bring a Return to Work Slip from your Doctor. All Transportation employees who call in sick must notify the Director and do so by phone call. No texting to request sick time will be allowed. If you can not contact the Director, notify the Assistant Director by phone call immediately.

#### D. Other Time Off

Employees that request time off other than mentioned above will be as follows. Additional information can be viewed in the County Policy Attendance Standards policy, Policy No. 411.

- a. An employee that request to come in late or leave earlier than their regularly scheduled time must notify the Director and do so in person or by phone call. No texting will be accepted to request time off. This time will be taken from vacation leave if available. If no time is available, it will be counted as leave without pay. Employees will not be allowed to use this time as their lunch break to make up time.
- b. An employee that has 3 or more unapproved days off or is late 3 or more time in a pay period will be given 3 days off without pay. Continued abuse could result in termination. A part-time employee that is late 3 or more time in a pay period will not be allowed to make up time.

#### E. Compensatory Time

Orange County Comp Time policy can be viewed in Policy No. 250

## **F. Personal Leave**

Orange County Personal Leave policy can be viewed in Policy No. 314

## **G. Standards of Conduct**

Orange County Standards of Conduct policy can be viewed in Policy No.410.

## **H. Cell Phone Usage**

Employees shall limit personal calls, both incoming and outgoing, to emergencies or essential personal business that cannot be completed at other times. All personal calls shall be kept as brief as possible. If you must take a call please excuse yourself from the room. Otherwise, cell phone use must be limited to designated breaks and lunch. They are a distraction and should not be out during working hours unless an emergency. Excessive misuse of this policy could result in time off without pay up to termination. Policy can be viewed in Policy No. 540.

## IV. OPERATIONS

### A. General

The following operating Policies and Procedures were established for OCT.

### B. Types of Service

OCT provides a curb to curb demand response service. Door-to-door service is provided for elderly persons or persons with disabilities needing extra assistance upon request. Reservations are required. Request for service should be scheduled at least one (1) business day **prior** to the desired trip date and may be scheduled up to seven (7) business days in advance. Service will be provided when requested appointment time is available. If requested appointment time is not available, scheduler will make every effort to provide passenger with an alternate time. Same day service is subject to availability at an additional charge. Seniors 70 and older are not subject to same day fares if space is available.

OCT is not a taxi service or an emergency medical service. We are a shared ride service; you will be sharing the bus with other passengers. The bus may make a number of stops picking up and dropping off other passengers. Because your trip may not follow the most direct route to your destination, it may take longer than expected.

#### **Medical Transportation:**

OCT provides transportation service to medical facilities including Doctors', Dentist, Hospitals, etc., in a non-emergent capacity. Passengers that present with fever or are actively bleeding or display oozing bodily fluids will be refused service. Extremely ill passengers will not be transported. **Orange County Transportation is not an emergency medical transit service. If a passenger needs emergency medical service call 911.**

### C. Hours

OCT shall operate a fleet of vehicles and contracted supplemental vehicles as approved by the Commissioners' Court. Vehicles shall be operational from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Last daily pickups will be at 4:00 p.m., to ensure all employees are able to return to the bus barn to complete end of shift duties by 5:00 p.m. Service is not offered on weekends or on approved Orange County holidays.

### E. Fare Structure

#### **Payments:**

A fare will be charged to all eligible passengers and their escorts with the exception of required personal care attendants who may travel with an eligible passenger at no cost. Fares are based on a one-way trip. This means that each time the vehicle is boarded; fares must be paid with cash or with tickets, based on the fare schedule. Drivers **cannot** make change. All fares/tickets must be purchased with exact change. Otherwise, change will be given in tickets. If a passenger does not have exact change and trip availability allows, passenger may call dispatch to request an additional trip to obtain change to pay for their ride. An additional fee will be charged for the unscheduled trip. On time delivery cannot be guaranteed. Failure to pay fare will result in no service for that trip and the trip will be reported as a No Show. Children age sixteen (16) and under must be accompanied on the same bus by an adult. Any passenger regardless of age, occupying a seat must pay the applicable fare. Veterans and Seniors 70 and older, will ride at reduced fares and children 5 and under shall not be charged a fare.



**Fare Schedule within Orange County:** One-way trip fares will be charged each time the vehicle is boarded:

Veterans and Seniors 70 and older all one-way trips.....	\$1.00
General Public pre-scheduled one-way trip .....	\$2.00
Unscheduled one-way additional trip (unless for medical prescription) .....	\$3.00
Same Day one-way trip (subject to availability) .....	\$4.00
Children 5 and under (Orange County Only) .....	Free

**Fare Schedule to Jefferson County:** One-way trip fares will be charged each time the vehicle is boarded:

Veterans and Seniors 70 and older one-way trip .....	\$2.00
Travelling to Jefferson County (Beaumont and Port Arthur) pre-scheduled one-way trip .....	\$3.00
Same Day one-way Trip (subject to availability) .....	\$5.00
Additional trips within Jefferson County (unless for medical prescription) .....	\$2.00

Passengers requesting additional trips within Beaumont and/or Port Arthur are encouraged to utilize the Municipal Transit system offered in each city. It is the passengers' responsibility to notify OCT dispatch where they are when ready for their return trip on Orange County Transportation. Failure to do so will result in additional fees and/or no return service if not at original drop off location.

#### **F. Complimentary Passes/Rides**

Whenever OCT makes an error that, in the judgment of the Department Director or his/her designee, greatly inconveniences a passenger, a complimentary pass, good for one free ride may be issued to the passenger. The Department Director will determine the value of the free ride. Circumstances that may warrant the issuance of a complimentary pass include:

- Arrival more than 30 minutes later than the scheduled arrival to destination time;
- Passenger was inadvertently left off the schedule;
- Passenger was stranded on a broken vehicle; or

Other incidents as approved by the Department Director or his/her designee.

#### **G. Requesting Service**

Requests for service shall only be accepted by OCT at 409-745-9511 from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No request for next day service will be accepted after 3:30 p.m. Each original and return trip will be recorded separately and each direction shall be recorded as a one-way trip. The trip shall be scheduled to show the required time to be at destination. Same day destination changes will not be allowed. Requests are limited to three (3) destinations per day in Orange County and two (2) destinations in Jefferson County (Beaumont and Port Arthur), if time allows.

##### **1. Advance Scheduling**

A request for demand services should be made at least one (1) business day and up to seven (7) days prior to the desired trip time. Passengers are responsible to have the destination name and address readily available for the dispatcher to make scheduled ride. To schedule a trip, one must speak with the scheduling office which may require the following in scheduling a trip.

1. Passenger Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Address
4. Phone Number
5. Emergency Contact

6. Assistance Needed
7. Destination Name
8. Destination Address
9. Request Time
10. Appointment Time

## **2. Same Day Scheduling**

Request for same-day service will be accepted from 7:00 a.m to 3.:30 p.m. Monday through Friday if available. The dispatcher will attempt to schedule both the original and return trip into the existing schedule if:

1. Space is available
2. A vehicle is near or already at the requested pick up location
3. Time allows the original pick up and return service does not disrupt already scheduled rides

It is the passenger's responsibility to notify OCT dispatchers of any changes to addresses and or phone numbers. This service, like any other transportation service, cannot guarantee arrival at your destination by scheduled time due to unforeseen situations. However, it is our goal to provide on time service. Like pre-scheduled rides, passengers must adhere to time constraints.

## **G. Inclement Weather**

The dispatch office shall attempt to contact any scheduled passenger at the telephone numbers listed in the agencies client database. Orange County Transportation will attempt to inform passenger of facility closures due to inclement weather, other local emergency or hazardous situation by using local radio stations, television station etc., when able.

## V. Safety

Orange County Transportation represents the freedom to move about the city and take advantage of all it has to offer. Passenger safety is a key feature of a well-run transit system. Safety is also a key component of ensuring that transit employees can perform their duties effectively. Ensuring a safe system is imperative if we are to maintain and grow ridership.

### A. Drivers Responsibility

- Drivers may provide door to door service when requested to comply with reasonable accommodations of ADA guidelines at time of advanced scheduling, **but are not permitted to enter, lock or unlock passengers' homes.**
- Drivers have the discretion to assign seats and determine mobility device placement when necessary for efficiency and/or safety of the operation
- Drivers are **NOT** permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down steps, thresholds or along gravel areas.
- Drivers are **NOT** permitted to lift passengers or maneuver occupied mobility devices that are deemed overweight and are unsafe for the drivers to do so.
- Drivers are **NOT** allowed to assist or enter upon property (fences or porches) unless animals are restrained to avoid possibility of biting.
- Drivers are **NOT** allowed to make destination changes.
- Drivers are **NOT** responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.
- Drivers **CANNOT** schedule rides. All scheduled rides **MUST** be made through the dispatch office.
- Drivers are instructed to avoid **backing up** if at all possible and to report all backing situations for investigation purposes.
- Drivers are required to report any concerns of suspected abuse of passengers to the Director/Assistant Director to notify Adult Protective Service for assistance.

### B. Passenger Behavior

It is not discrimination under this part for Orange County Transportation to refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities because that individual engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct, or represents a direct threat to the health or safety of others (49 CFR Part 37.5(h))

- **Determining Disruptive Behavior and Threats**

In determining disruptive behavior, Orange County Transportation will assess the situation that disrupts the provision of service.

In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, Orange County Transportation will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment that relies on the best available objective evidence to ascertain the nature, duration and severity of the risk, the probability that a potential injury will actually occur.

Orange County Transportations policy is to provide the safest and most efficient service to all passengers. Passengers shall respect one another and drivers. They shall avoid any behavior that threatens the safety and comfort of others including the following:

- **Abusive Conduct:** Any abusive, offensive or threatening act or behavior that adversely impacts the safety or security of the driver and/or the passengers. Invades the privacy rights of others, such as touching another person in a rude, insolent or angry manner. Sexual harassment, verbal or physical will not be tolerated. Examples also include profanity, screaming, hitting etc. Misconduct that is not the direct and immediate result of a passenger's

disability such as abusive language that is a consequence of Tourette's syndrome or socially unacceptable behavior brought on by a mental illness shall be considered intentional misconduct. Consequences of intentional misconduct will be addressed as noted below after counseling with the passenger.

- **Direct Threat:** Any act or condition that creates a significant risk to the health and safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, procedures or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services.
- **Electronic Equipment:** Clients may only operate audio or visual equipment that is silent.

## VI. Passenger Policy

### A. Riding Orange County Transportation

OCT is a public transit system providing rides for many passengers each day. Drivers cannot be at three (3) or four (4) pick-up points at one (1) time and must allow time to ensure that the client makes it from origin to destination by scheduled appointment time. Therefore, passengers must be ready for pick-up and allow for travel time for transportation to destination. Drivers can be up to fifteen (15) minutes early or late of the scheduled pickup. Passengers should be ready at least thirty (30) minutes prior to scheduled pick up time. In the event, that the rider will be required to be ready earlier, a Dispatcher will contact passengers by telephone as to the approximate pick-up time. OCT will attempt to drop off passengers no more than one (1) hour prior to requested time. Drivers are permitted to drop off passengers regardless of inclement weather and/or entry to destination.

When the driver arrives at the pick-up location, they are not required to wait more than five (5) minutes for the passenger. Passengers may be asked to show identification at boarding for clarity, refusal could result in loss of service. Passengers, who call for "will call" transportation and are not ready when the bus arrives, will be considered a "no show". The passenger will be charged an additional fee as well as having "no show" status documented on their profile history.

Service may not be rendered if origin or destination location cannot be accessed by the vehicle or if the location does not provide safe passage for the vehicle or safe access to and/or from the vehicle by the passenger. The driver shall attempt to make reasonable accommodations and if not possible then they shall immediately call the Dispatch office for further instruction in such cases. Steep driveways, deteriorated sidewalks, narrow dead-end roads, etc., may result in denial of service. **OCT drivers are prohibited to use personal driveways unless unavoidable.**

To increase efficiency, OCT is a "**shared ride**" service; passengers must often ride while other passengers are picked up and dropped off.

**B. Rules of Conduct** on OCT Transit Vehicles are the same as the laws governing conduct in public places. No person shall, while a passenger on any vehicle that is operated by OCT as a public conveyance, do any of the following acts:

- Smoke or possess any lighted or smoldering pipe, cigar, cigarettes or e-cigarettes
- Consume an open beverage, food, or alcohol (unless medically necessary).
- Intentionally deface damage, write upon, or soil any part of the vehicle.
- Spit, urinate, or defecate in or upon any vehicle.
- Board with unreasonable personal hygiene. Passengers are required to maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- Bring any object onto vehicle, including but not limited, to mobility devices must be free of any material that may be harmful or offensive to others and must be clean of any debris.
- Throw, deposit or place paper, bottles, cans or any other garbage or solid waste in or upon a vehicle;
- Bring any pet or animal onto a vehicle other than a guide dog accompanying a person with a disability, unless an animal is in a cage or approved standard pet carrier;
- Stand or walk around in a vehicle while it is in motion;
- Possesses any explosives or carry any corrosive acid or flammable liquid or any type hazardous material. (Respirators and portable oxygen supplies are permitted to be carried and used onboard by a passengers for health reasons)
- Possess firearms, with the exception of law enforcement officers;
- Bring on board any baggage or articles which, due to their size, would restrict free movement of passengers.
- Board vehicle intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs.
- Make request for certain drivers. Refusal to ride available buses will forfeit the remainder of your schedule.

- Leave packages onboard buses when disembarking for next stop.
- Utilize the lift to load and unload packages or groceries. Passengers in a mobility device may not hang packages or groceries on the device for safety reasons. If packages exceed what a passenger can safely handle then an attendant is required.

### Consequences for violating Passenger Rules of Conduct

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Violation:

- Verbal notification, depending on severity more progressive discipline could be levied. Documentation of incident on file

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Violation:

- One (1) week suspension depending on severity more progressive discipline could be levied. Documentation of incident on file.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Violation:

- Termination of services. Re-application may be applied for and considered after 6 months.

### C. Consequences of Misconduct

The driver may refuse to transport or may remove any persons violating passenger rules of conduct. If assistance is required, the driver should contact the dispatcher. Consequences of misconduct could result in suspension of service. Repeated abuse of these rules could result in termination of service

### D. Special Circumstances

#### 1. Transportation of Children

All children who are under eight years of age are required to be restrained in an approved child passenger safety seat unless, the child is at least 4 feet, 9 inches in height as State law mandates. OCT may supply a safety seat upon request and availability. Otherwise, the passenger must provide the safety seat. Children under one (1) year of age should have a child safety restraint rear-facing seat, not available through OCT. The passenger will be responsible for placing the infant into and securing the safety seat. Safety seats not provided by OCT may not be left on the vehicle and must be carried on and off by the passenger. Passenger(s) and escort(s) must both be ready at the door when OCT arrives. An infant will not be allowed to ride up the lift with a passenger utilizing a mobility device. The safety seat will be secured by a safety belt on the vehicle during transportation.

2018 Child Passenger Safety National Best Practice Recommendations		
<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Rear-Facing Seats</b>	Rear-facing infant or rear-facing convertible safety seat as long as possible, up to the rear-facing height or weight limit of the seat. Properly install according to instructions in owner's manual, rear-facing in the back seat.
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Forward-facing Seats</b>	When children outgrow the rear-facing safety seat (minimum 2+ years), they should ride in a forward-facing safety seat as long as possible, up to the upper height or weight limit of the harnesses. Usually 4+ years old. Properly installed forward-facing in the back seat. <b>NEVER</b> turn forward-facing before child meets all: AGE/HEIGHT/WEIGHT requirements set by safety seat manufacturer for forward-facing.
<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Booster Seats</b>	After age 4 and 40+ pounds and behavior maturity*, children can ride in a booster seat with the adult lap and shoulder belt until the adult safety belt will fit them properly (usually when the child is 10 – 12 years old). <b>MUST</b> have a lap/shoulder belt to use a booster seat.

		*Behavior maturity required according to booster seat owner's manual
<b>Phase 4</b>	<b>Adult Safety Belt</b>	Once children outgrow their booster seat (usually at 10 – 12 years old) they can use the adult lap/shoulder safety belt if it fits them properly according to the vehicle manufacturer's instructions. Lap portion low over the hips/tops of thighs and shoulder belt crosses the center of the shoulder and center of the chest.
Children are better protected the longer they can stay in each phase. Keep children in each seat up to the <b>maximum</b> age/weight/height limits before moving to the next phase. <b>ALL</b> children younger than age 13 years should ride properly restrained in the back seat.		

**(Chart courtesy of Texas Department of Public Safety)**

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard OCT is seventeen (17). Children under the age of seventeen (17) must have an adult attendant accompany them during transport. Exceptions may be granted by Department Director. If an appointment necessitates that an adult attendant serve as personal care attendant such as with medical and dental appointments, then the condition will warrant a free ride for attendant. Approved Demand & Response Service form must be on file to waive attendant fees. Otherwise, adult attendant will be charged normal fares.

**2. Accommodation of Common Mobility devices**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that a transportation provider may decline to carry a mobility device/occupant if the combined weight exceeds that of the lift specifications set by the manufacturer, or if the carriage of the mobility device is demonstrated to be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements.

All of our vehicles are ADA accessible. However, Orange County Transportation may not be able to accommodate a passenger if their mobility device is longer than 48' or wider than 30', or if the total weight with the mobility device is more than 800 pounds (49 CFR 37.165).

Orange County Transportation requires all mobility devices be secured with the tie-down equipment provided on the vehicle. Tie-down equipment includes straps to secure the mobility device to the floor along with lap and shoulder belts for the passenger. Mobility devices must have working brakes engaged while aboard the bus. Service will be denied if the passenger refuses this policy.

Passengers who use mobility devices are encouraged to use a personal seat belt for their safety. Passengers are responsible for providing their own personal safety devices for the mobility devices. A seat belt is considered a personal safety device that can be utilized on transit vehicles. Orange County Transportation is not responsible for falls or injuries that may result from failure to equip or maintain the safety measures of the passenger's adaptive equipment/mobility devices.

If needed, the driver will help maneuver the passenger onto the lift. OCT is not responsible for damages to mobility devices incurred in the normal operational procedures of the bus.

**E. Reasonable Modification**

Orange County Transportation is committed to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and complies with all applicable rules and regulations issued by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). OCT provides reasonable modification to policies and procedures to passengers with disabilities to ensure they can effectively use the agency's transit services. A reasonable modification is one in which the passenger with a disability must have the modification to fully use the services provided by OCT or the purpose

intended by OCT. Each request to a modification of the service provided by OCT must depend on the facts and circumstances of each individual situation.

Passengers requesting a modification should describe what they need in order to use OCT buses and paratransit services. When feasible, please make any request for modifications in advance by contacting Orange County Transportation. OCT will honor and accommodate any reasonable modification to service as long as the request **1)** does not fundamentally alter the service; **2)** does not create a direct threat to the health and safety of others; and **3)** is not necessary to permit the passenger to use the services for their intended purpose (nondiscriminatory). Such modifications should be made in advance to properly consider and plan for such a modification but may be made to the driver at the time of boarding.

## F. Personal Care Attendant (PCS)

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone whose service or presence is medically or socially needed by a passenger to meet his/her personal needs or to assist in traveling. A passenger may be subject to any reasonable modification that will ensure the safety of all passengers and drivers. A passenger may be required to ride with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) if behavior issues improve with the presence of one. A passenger may be required to attend training or receive additional counseling in proper transit conduct. The accommodation requirement may last for a time period sufficient to allow the passenger to learn appropriate behavior. The accommodation requirement may be permanent if the conduct is beyond the passenger's control. If a passenger commits an act of misconduct that he or she has been trained to know is inappropriate, that act is considered intentional.

OCT does not provide PCA's. Passengers are required to supply an attendant at their expense. If a PCA is required, it is recommended to complete and submit the Application for Demand Response Services form. When the form has been completed and signed by a physician, there will be no charge for the PCA to ride and will be noted in the clients record. A PCA can be a caregiver, child, spouse, friend or neighbor who needs to assist the passenger. PCA's must have the same pick-up and drop-off locations as the passenger.

Personal Care Attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. OCT strongly encourages passengers who cannot perform specific duties to have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) This assistance includes, but is not limited to the following duties

- Attend to their personal needs assisting the passenger to and from their door to the bus
- Pushing mobility devices to and from the vehicle;
- Properly maintain and safely maneuver their mobility device if one is used
- Ride without the assistance of the driver
- Opening doors;
- Carrying packages; and
- Communicating with the driver (if passenger is unable)
  - **Immobility:** If a passenger is unable to provide self-mobility or if self-mobility is possible, but a great risk of falling or physical injury exists and the assistance of an attendant would provide mobility or lessen the danger of injury, a PCA is recommended.
  - **Disorientation:** If the passenger, due to a visual or mental impairment is unable to properly orient him/herself to navigate trying to reach a particular destination and a PCA would overcome the problem a PCA is recommended
  - **Non-Comprehensive:** If the passenger, due to the mental impairment is unable to adequately perform the mental processes necessary to handle common occurrences or is unable to effectively control his/her own actions and a PCA would overcome the problem a PCA is recommended



- **Communication Impairment:** If the passenger is unable to effectively transmit or receive communications due to the sensory or mental problems and if these problems would prevent the passenger from using the service then a PCA is recommended.
- **Other:** Other impaired passengers not included in these general guidelines may also be eligible if, in the opinion of a licensed physician, the passenger would be unable to use OCT without the aid of an attendant, then a PCA is recommended.

If PCA does not specifically perform some type of assistance for the passenger, then that individual is considered an escort and is charged the normal fare. Attendants are not to assist in mobility device boarding or securement; this is the driver's responsibility.

## **G. Service Animals & Accommodation of Animals**

Animals other than service animals as described below are allowed to ride an OCT vehicle in an approved secured pet travel carrier.

It is the policy of OCT to allow service animals to accompany their owner without restraint. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is required to aid the owner and that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a mobility device, or retrieving dropped items.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 allows for the imposition of legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for the safe operation of OCT. OCT can generally require use of a secured pet travel carrier for any animal that in the opinion of the Department Director or his/her designee is a health or safety hazard regardless of the kind of training it has received and what function it serves for its owner.

## **H. Carry-On Packages**

Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to not more than the equivalent of five (5) full brown paper grocery bags at one time unless they have an attendant traveling with them to load/unload the packages. No one (1) package shall weigh more than thirty (30) pounds. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. Packages must be limited to no larger than a brown paper grocery bag. Passengers must make other arrangements for delivery of any item that is larger than specified. Drivers may assist with carry-on packages but are not required to. It is recommended that request for this service be made through the dispatchers. Packages may **not** be left on the vehicle and must be carried on and off by the passenger.

## **I. Medical Oxygen**

If medically necessary, clients may travel with oxygen tanks and respirators when using Orange County Transportation service. Only one cylinder per person is allowed on the bus. Oxygen tanks are subject to inspection. Damaged or leaking cylinders will not be permitted on the bus. For safety reasons, oxygen tanks and respirators must be secured to prevent oxygen tanks from falling or becoming dislodged and striking other objects or passengers in the vehicle.

## **J. Service Suspensions and Terminations**

### **1. No Shows/Cancellation**

No Shows are very costly to Orange County Transportation. Before you make a reservation for a ride, be certain you really plan to travel.

Orange County has implemented a No Show Policy for its Public Transit System. A no show occurs when the bus arrives within the pick-up window and the passenger is not ready, declines to ride, is not at the location of the scheduled pick-up or fails to notify OCT office at least one (1) hour prior to scheduled pick up time. Implementation of this policy has become necessary due to the rapidly increasing number of no shows. No Show trips affect not only the transit system, but also other clients. Our drivers make every effort to pick up all passengers on a timely basis, and when one of our clients is not there the driver is required to spend time seeking out the person. This delay will cause the drivers to fall behind their anticipated daily schedules and has caused unnecessary delays for other passengers attempting to get to their scheduled destinations.

Drivers can be 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the passengers assigned pick-up time. Drivers will wait for five (5) minutes after they arrive within a passenger's scheduled pick-up window. If the passenger is not at the bus within the five (5) minutes, the driver must depart to serve the other passengers and the ride will be recorded as a no-show.

If a passenger is a no show at their pick-up appointment, the return trip(s) will automatically be cancelled. If a passenger misses the bus because they were not ready when the bus arrived and were marked as a no show, they can try to schedule another trip if the schedule allows. However, you will be required to pay the same day trip fare and will be charged for the no show as listed under NO SHOW Penalties. The Director reserves the right to authorize a driver to return for a pick up if circumstances warrant.

**NO SHOW:**

When a client is a no show from a scheduled trip, Orange County Transportation will verbally notify and mail a letter informing the client of the no show. The client must pay the no show penalty before they will be permitted to book/make another trip. All trips currently scheduled will be cancelled until no show fees have been paid. NO SHOW penalties will not apply to senior clients 70 years or older unless, that client becomes a habitual violator of the NO SHOW policy. Therefore, each occurrence after being deemed a habitual violator, will be penalized at the 1<sup>st</sup> NO SHOW rate. No progressive penalties will apply to veterans or seniors clients 70 and older.

Penalty for 1 <sup>st</sup> NO SHOW: .....	\$5.00
Penalty for 2 <sup>nd</sup> NO SHOW: .....	\$10.00
Penalty for 3 <sup>rd</sup> NO SHOW <b>within</b> 30 days of 1 <sup>st</sup> no show: .....	\$20.00 and 30 day suspension

After three (3) NO SHOWS within 30 days, the client will be required to pre-pay for all future trips with exact change in cash or money order before utilizing Orange County Transportation service again. They may mail a money order or bring pre-payment to our office. Passengers will not be allowed to make future reservations unless all penalties are paid. No refunds will be given on pre-paid trips.

**CANCELLATIONS:**

A cancellation is considered "late" if it is made less than one (1) hour prior to the trip (or after 7:00 a.m. for those trips scheduled before 8:00 a.m.) To encourage proper and timely cancellations, passengers who have made excessive late cancellations, will be notified of their violation of our cancellation policy verbally and written notification. Excessive cancellations could be penalized the same as NO SHOWS at the discretion of the Department Director/Assistant Director. Repeat offenses could result in termination of services.

**Payments can be mailed to:**  
Orange County Transportation  
10928 FM 1442  
Orange, Texas 77630

**NOTE:** Progressive suspension penalties apply for subsequent abuse of our no show policy is as follows: First (1<sup>st</sup>) suspension for no show is thirty (30) days, second (2<sup>nd</sup>) suspension is sixty (60) days, and the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) suspension is ninety (90) days. Suspension periods shall not be split or otherwise divided or altered without approval by the Department Director. Continued abuse of the no show/cancellation policy could result in termination of services. Re-application may be applied for and considered after 6 months.

**Other Suspensions:**

Passengers who, in the judgment of the Department Director, demonstrates tendencies toward violent or destructive behavior through threats, verbal and/or physical behavior or use profane or abusive language shall have their OCT service eligibility terminated.

**2. Appeals of Suspensions and Terminations**

Passengers may appeal their suspensions or terminations by written notifications as outlined in Section IV Complaint Procedure.

## VII. COMPLAINANT PROCEDURES

As a recipient of Title VI Public Transportation funds, administered by the Texas Department of Public Health and the Texas Department of Transportation, OCT hereby attests that it will abide by the eligibility guidelines and service priorities, as stipulated and set forth in the Agency's Contracts.

In the event of a complaint, the complainant should adhere to the complaint procedure that is listed below:

### Procedure will be as follow:

In the event of complaint, the complainant should contract the SETRPC at (409) 899-8444 ext 6604 or by mail, to Transportation Program Manager, 2210 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont TX 77703. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Transportation Program Manager will request a written detail of the complaint or take an oral statement from the complainant. The complaint should include details regarding the situation: I.E. date, time drive, problem, etc. All complaints or statements should be signed or if by telephone the actual complainant should be the person that calls. The Program Manager will investigate the complaint. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response issued to the complainant no later than ten (10) days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and action taken will be forwarded to the funding source offices as required, and a copy will be kept on file at the SETRPC office.

### **Appeal Procedure**

In the event the complainant is not satisfied with the decision and action taken by the Transportation Program Manager, the Complainant should notify the County Judge in writing at the below listed address. The County Judge will review all information regarding the complaint and shall have the discretion to form an impartial panel of reviewers to assist him – comprised of: County Commissioners, or public and private social serve representative. Following a review of the complaint, the County Judge shall inform the complainant of the findings of the review panel or his decision and action to be taken regarding complaint. A decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response issued to the complaint no later than ten (10) days after the County Judge receives the complaint.

### Contact Information:

SETRPC, Transportation Program Manager  
2210 Eastex Freeway  
Beaumont, TX 77703  
409-899-8444 ext. 6604

Orange County  
123 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Orange, TX 77630  
409-882-7070

### **APPROVED AND ADOPTED:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Gothia, Orange County Judge

11-5-2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Orange County Transportation Demand and Response Service Application

Return completed form to: Orange County Transportation, 10928 FM 1442, Orange, Tx. 77630

Demand Response is a shared curb to curb service for disabled/non-disabled persons who do not live in a location near fixed routes

Applicants Name (Last, First Middle Initial)

Applicants Address, City, and Zip Code Male  Female

Mailing Address (If Different) Date of Birth Area Code and Phone Number

If visually impaired, do you use a guide dog?  No  Yes A Cane?  No  Yes A walker?  No  Yes

Do you use a mobility device?  No  Yes If yes, your physician must complete bottom section

Do you require a Personal Care Attendant? No  Yes  If yes, Physician must complete bottom section

Personal Care Attendants Name: Type of Wheelchair:  Manual  Powerchair

Applicants Signature Date:

**If application is being completed by someone other than the applicant, please complete the line below.**

Name Relationship: Phone Number:

**Must be Completed by Physician if a Personal Care Attendant is required**

Disability/Medical Diagnosis Hospital/Facility Name

Combined Weight of Client & Mobility Device: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs. Personal Care Attendants Name?  
We cannot provide transportation if the compined weight of the client & mobility device exceeds 650 lbs.

Verifying Physician Name (Print) Verifying Physicians Signature Physician's Phone Number

**FOR ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION OFFICE USE ONLY**

Authorized by & Date:  Approved  Denied PCA:  Yes  No OCT-1