

# *West Ouachita Public Transit*

Transit Service Policy

June 20, 2023

# **West Ouachita Public Service Transportation**

## **Mission Statement**

---

West Ouachita Public Service Transportation (WOPT) was created to provide safe, courteous, clean, reliable, and cost-effective transportation service to the residents of western Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.

## **Table of Contents**

---

1. Description of Service
2. Description of Service Area/Map
3. Days and Hours of Service
4. Reservations, Scheduling, and Cancellation Policy
5. Fare Policy
6. Passenger Assistance Policy
7. Passenger Rules, Conduct, and Responsibilities
8. Comments and Complaint Procedures
9. Transit System Responsibilities
10. Safety Policy
11. Maintenance Policy
12. Emergency Procedures
13. Title VI Statement
14. Cancellation and "No-Show" Policy
15. Rider Suspension Policy
16. Closing Statement
17. Attachment 1 - Passenger Comment Form
18. Attachment 2 - Initial Passenger Intake Form
19. Attachment 3 - Charter Form
20. Attachment 4 - Wheelchair and Mobility Aid Regulations
21. Attachment 5 - Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy Statement
22. Attachment 6 - Passenger Disciplinary Form
23. Attachment 7 - West Ouachita Public Transit Vehicle Agreement
24. Attachment 8 - Emergency Vehicle Evacuation Drill
25. Attachment 9 - Safety and Drivers' Trainings

## **1. Description of Service**

---

West Ouachita Public Service Transportation (WOPT) is a demand-response, space available, origin to destination, 5311 rural transportation systems for West Ouachita residents. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis. All daily non-emergency public transportation services are booked on a first-come, first-serve basis. No fixed route service is available. The following types of services are provided:

- Subscription service: curb-to-curb service with prearranged schedules which is provided to people who have signed up for the service
- Demand-Response: curb-to-curb service which is provided per daily demand from users, including route deviation
- Medical Facility (escort entrance and exit available upon request)

West Ouachita Public Transportation operates a fleet of nine (9) wheelchair accessible vans. The wheelchair accessible vans are equipped with a fold out ramp and can accommodate two wheelchair passengers at a time. These vehicles are also equipped with the latest technology in restraints - Q Straints. Our drivers are thoroughly trained in wheelchair restraint and passenger (PASS) assistance to handle any passenger need. Wheelchair accessible vans are available Monday through Friday to provide maximum mobility, space available first-come public transportation services for all residents in western Ouachita parish. Demand is a paratransit service and uses vehicles that are specially equipped with wheelchair lifts and other accessibility features that allow for maximum mobility for customers with disabilities. Four subscription/deviated routes are operated daily. Demand/responsive trips to vital destinations are provided daily. The provisions of mobility aids are solely the responsibility of the passenger. There are no restrictions on trip purpose and all requests for trips are accepted and handled on an equal basis. The transit system will not provide any mobility aids. The WOPT complies with the Americans and Disabilities Act (ADA) by accommodating all wheelchairs and mobility aids in common use. The 5311 vehicles transfer at the Monroe City Transit terminal daily. Demand responsive calls are encouraged.

## **2. Service Area**

---

West Ouachita Service Center/5311 Public Transit offers transportation for west Ouachita Parish persons domiciled outside the City of West Monroe city limits, to vital non-emergency destinations in Ouachita Parish with Highway 165 as the eastern boundary. Businesses and medical destinations connected to the eastern boundary of Highway 165 are accessible within a one block eastern boundary of Highway 165. In eastern Ouachita Parish, the St. Francis North Medical Center serves as the northern boundary site, and Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at Monroe serves as the southern boundary site. Non-emergency and vital destinations requested in Ouachita Parish include: medical facilities, social services agencies, shopping areas, West Ouachita Senior Center, local government agencies, education sites, and employment sites, etc.

\*The 5311 vehicles transfer at the Monroe City Transit terminal daily.

\*Transit request for western Ouachita Parish residents within the city limits and metropolitan area of West Monroe are governed by the same service area as rural 5311 passengers outside the city limits of western Ouachita Parish described above.

Demand responsive calls are encouraged. Passenger requests are booked on a first call basis.

### **3. Days and Hours of Service**

---

The West Ouachita Public Transportation office hours are Monday through Friday, except holidays, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Boarding and service hours are 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Demand responsive and subscription deviated service is provided to the following destinations:

	St. Francis Medical Center
	St. Francis North Medical Center
West Ouachita Senior Center	Wal-Mart
West Monroe City Hall	Brookshires
Super 1	Glenwood Regional Medical Center
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center at Monroe	

Due to cost constraints, subscription/deviated services to the western Ouachita Parish line (Calhoun, Eros, etc.) are provided primarily on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Exceptions may be made due to unforeseen circumstances. Information about specific schedules may be obtained by calling the WOPT Dispatcher or transportation Manager at (318)397-3299.

### **4. Reservations, Scheduling, and Cancellation Policy**

---

All transportation requests should be made at least 48 hours in advance. All transportation requests must be booked through the WOPT office (318) 397-3299, and assigned by the Dispatcher, Transportation Manager, Program Manager, or Director.

If you are riding for the first time, you will need to fill out an Intake Form, so you can be entered into our scheduling system. Intake Forms can be completed over the phone or in person, and tickets can be purchased through the driver or the office. Once you are in our system, you can schedule your rides.

Transportation requests received less than 48 hours in advance will be scheduled on a space-available basis. WOPT is not responsible for calling doctors, etc. to confirm passengers' appointments.

- All passengers must be ready 15 minutes in advance of the scheduled pick-up time. A driver will wait no longer than five (5) minutes for a passenger pick-up.

- Cancellations should be made as soon as possible by calling the WOPT office. Failure to cancel in a timely manner (cancellation after the driver is already at the pick-up site) will result in a denial of future service. Passengers who make three (3) inappropriate cancellations will be refused service for two (2) weeks. If after the two (2) week suspension, the passenger continues to cancel after the driver is at the pick-up site, all future transportation service may be denied.
- Scheduling will be determined by the WOPT Dispatcher based on the system's daily demand and cost-efficiency. WOPT will make every effort to adhere to the daily schedule as closely as possible.
- There are no fixed routes or guaranteed one-on-one passenger schedules. All transit requests should be made 48 hours in advance to better ensure the availability of a driver and destination approval.

WOPT is closed for the following holidays. No transportation service is provided on these days.

New Year's Day	1 day
Martin Luther King Day	1 day
Easter	1 day
Memorial Day	1 day
Independence Day	1 day
Labor Day	1 day
Veterans Day	1 day
Thanksgiving	2 days
Christmas	2 days

## 5. Fare Policy

---

All passengers must purchase a ticket. All fares are based on one-way trips within Ouachita Parish. Fares are given to the driver prior to departure of vehicle, not after the trip. Passengers may purchase tickets only from the driver or from the WOPT office at 1800 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, West Monroe prior to departure/transport or passenger.

General Public fares are as follows:

In West Monroe City Limits (Per Person)	\$1.00
(each one-way trip)	
Outside W. M. City Limits (Per Person)	\$6.00
(each one-way trip) \$5.00 origination fee included)	

WOPT also offers easier and more economical fare-monthly passes for senior citizens and disabled.

*Senior Citizens 60 and older and disabled persons (Established boundaries or subscription-deviated routes, each one-way trip)	\$0.50
*Senior Citizen/Disabled Monthly Pass	\$7.00

- (Established boundaries or subscription-deviated routes)
- \*Senior Citizens 60 and older and disabled persons \$3.00  
(\*\*Outside established boundaries or subscription-deviated routes, or demand/ responsive one-way trips)
- \*\*Approved escorts (upon receipt of required documentation). No charge
- \*Reduced fares to vital destinations for senior citizens on fixed incomes, pre-certified disabled individuals, indigent individuals, or FIRST CALL FOR HELP referrals domiciled west of the Ouachita River may qualify for subsidized fares. (Subsidized fares are based on emergencies or circumstances for short periods of time.) Passengers must provide proof of age and/or disability upon boarding.
- \*\*Established boundaries are North of Smith Street, East of Well Road, and South of Elmwood.
- \*\*\*Fares are subject to change without notice.

## 6. Passenger Assistance

Curb-to-curb service will be based on the West Ouachita Public Transportation system's determination of considerations for safety. Drivers will assist the boarding and de-boarding of all passengers, if conditions safely permit. Drivers will also provide assistance with packages when conditions permit. Drivers are not allowed to enter passengers' homes; they may set packages just over the threshold of passengers' homes. While in route, drivers will keep the passengers informed about current locations and destinations.

Service animals may accompany a disabled rider onto WOPT vehicles. However, other pets must be in a secured unit (pet carrier/cage) to ride on the vehicle. Monroe Transit Service will not transport other animals. Note: For safety reasons, drivers are not allowed to carry cages or handle the service animals.

West Ouachita Public Transportation complies with ADA regulations by attempting to accommodate all wheelchairs and mobility aids.

All passengers are required to ride in an upright position and wear seat belts. Passengers may not ride in any seat or wheelchair in a reclined position. Sitting in a reclined position while the vehicle is moving is dangerous because the passenger does not get the full protection from seat belts. During sudden braking or a collision, a passenger can slide under the lap belt and suffer serious internal injuries. For maximum protection, all passengers must sit upright and well back in their seats.

A doctor's statement may be requested for passengers not able to access public transit buses safely. Example: driver observation or report of a passenger unable to sit upright, a passenger with a bleeding or open wound, a passenger whose wheelchair will not fit in ADA regulations designated areas in the vehicle, a passenger with weight exceeding vehicle lift restrictions, a passenger with an emergency condition, or a transit request for the emergency room transportation request. All drivers are trained and skilled but are not paramedics. Therefore, public transit vehicles are not to be used as a substitute for an ambulance or a medical emergency room visit.

## **Personal Assistance/ or Escort**

Person Care Assistant/ or Escort (PCA) on demand drivers is allowed, with proof of medical necessity, to provide origin of destination service for eligible riders. Drivers will not perform any task which may cause injury to himself/herself or the passengers.

Transportation will not be provided to passengers who refuse or otherwise neglect to furnish a needed PCA. Please note that if a passenger uses a device that does not meet the wheelchair definition in this manual and/or his/her mobility aid cannot be properly secured (tied-down), he/she must be able to transfer into a passenger seat on the van and be buckled in, if applicable. If the passenger is not able to transfer into the seat, then that passenger must provide a PCA to accommodate this transfer.

## **7. Passenger Rules, Conduct, and Responsibilities**

Passengers are requested to be courteous and considerate of others always. Passengers must abide by all rules and regulations established by West Ouachita Public Transportation. The driver is ultimately responsible for on-vehicle behavior; therefore, passengers should follow all instructions from the driver.

The following rules are in effect always:

- No eating or drinking is allowed on the van.
- No illegal drugs, use of tobacco products, open alcohol, or intoxicated riders are allowed.
- Offensive language, profanity, distractive conversation with driver, or any behavior that is disruptive or unsafe for other riders or the driver is not allowed. No intoxicated passengers or hazardous behavior/horseplay is allowed.)
- Passengers are responsible for securing all carry-on items. All carry-on items should be under the passenger's seat or in his lap. No packages can be left at the front or the back of the bus. Passenger goods will be limited.
- Transportation requests should be made at least 48 hours in advance by calling the office at 397-3299.
- Passengers should be prompt. Drivers can wait five (5) minutes at a residence and five (5) minutes at a business location. Passengers should be considerate of others and realize that passengers are waiting.
- All destinations must be preapproved through the Dispatcher prior to departure. The driver cannot add additional stops during the trip for passengers during the scheduled daily trip.
- Transit tickets:
  - Must be purchased or shown prior to departure/transport. Transit tickets are like cash. In the event transit tickets are lost or stolen, WOPT does not bear the responsibility for replacing tickets or refunding money.

- Monthly transit tickets are assigned to specific riders. Rides authorized with a monthly ticket are to be used only by the individual whose name is on the card.
- Passengers must be in compliance with the approved fare policy.
- Passengers are expected to maintain an acceptable level of personal hygiene.
- No weapons are allowed.
- No fighting, annoying other passengers, or arguing with driver is allowed.
- No driver will provide personal errand service while leaving the passengers in the van.
- All passengers must wear seat belts or use approved child safety devices and be able to sit erect. Drivers will not move the vehicle until everyone is safely secured. WOPT vehicles may offer a child seat, if requested, but it is strongly recommended that you bring your own. The driver is required to ensure that child restraints are secured and will be glad to assist you with installation.
- Mobility devices:
  - All electric scooter passengers will be asked to transfer to a seat if a 5-point tie-down will not accommodate the safety requirements.
  - However, if a mobility device cannot be secured by the existing securement system, the rider will not be suspended, but must be able to transfer to a seat and be buckled.
  - All common wheelchairs and their users can be transported by WOPT. A common wheelchair is a wheelchair that does not exceed thirty (30) inches in width, forty-eight (48) inches in length, and does not weigh more than six hundred (600) pounds when occupied. All wheelchair users must ride in designated securement areas only. Persons who are not wheelchair users, but use other mobility aids, will be allowed to use the lift mechanism if the mobility aid can be physically accommodated by the vehicle and its equipment. See Attachment 3.
  - Customers may also travel with portable oxygen or other equipment, if the equipment does not violate rules concerning transportation of hazardous materials.
- Rider must provide a safe, age appropriate child seat. A "child restraint seat" means a lap belt, a shoulder harness, or an age- or size-appropriate child safety seat.
  - A child who is younger than one year of age or weighs less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child safety seat.
  - A child who is at least one year of age, but younger than four years of age, or who weighs at least twenty pounds, but less than forty pounds, must be restrained in a forward-facing child safety seat.
  - A child who is at least four years of age, but younger than six years of age, or who weighs at least forty pounds, but not more than sixty pounds, must be restrained in a child booster seat. The requirements of this subparagraph shall not apply to any seating position where there is only a lap belt available and the child weighs more than forty pounds.



- A child who is at least six years of age, or weighs more than sixty pounds, must be restrained with the motor vehicle's safety belt adjusted and fastened around the child's booster seat or in an appropriately fitting child booster seat in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety belt or child booster seat.
- Inform the driver of special health problems, if applicable.
- Passengers are to remain seated until vehicle stops.
- Passengers must allow driver to open and close doors, and assist rider with boarding and debarking.
- No passenger requiring emergency medical transportation or paramedic assistance may board a general public vehicle.
- WOPT will not transport any rider who is vomiting or bleeding, or who is too ill to sit up and be secured in his/her seat.
- WOPT is not responsible for lost items. When exiting the vehicle, please be sure, to check around your seat to make sure you have all your belongings. If you do leave something in the vehicle, please call the office as soon as possible.
- You are required to inform the scheduler of any personal care attendant (PCA), guest(s), or service animal accompanying you.

### **Other Passenger Responsibilities**

Passengers are requested to be courteous and considerate of others always. Passengers must abide by all rules and regulations established by West Ouachita Public Transportation. The driver is ultimately responsible for on-vehicle behavior; therefore, passengers should follow all instructions from the driver. WOPT can deny passage to any passenger that is identified as being disturbed or a threat to other passengers. If the passenger refuses to comply with the van driver's request, the van driver will call Dispatch. The Dispatcher or the Transit Manager will assist by calling the appropriate agency to have the passenger removed.

- The use of cell phone or other electronic device is prohibited for all passengers to avoid distractions to the drivers and avoid invasion of other passengers' privacy. All cell phones must be silenced or muted, during the entire time that the passenger is on the van. Passengers should refrain from videotaping or taking photographs on any of the buses.
- Passengers should refrain from playing personal radios and other musical devices, except with ear phones. The volume on the ear phones should be kept at a level that is inaudible to other passengers or driver.
- Passengers should avoid unnecessary conversations of a personal nature that could be viewed as offensive, a form of harassment, or distracting to driver.
- Abide by all WOPT transit policy rules for passengers.
- A passenger with disciplinary incidents will receive verbal or written safety reprimands or consequences for any violation depending on severity or frequency of incidents. (WOPT Passenger Disciplinary Form attached.)

West Ouachita Public Transportation reserves the right to refuse service to anyone who is in violation of the above rules. The drivers will document all transit incidents and report them to the Transit Manager.

After consultation with the Transit Manager, the Director may deny transit service to violators of these Passenger Rules, Conduct and Responsibilities, either placing them on a probationary period or suspending or cancelling their transit privileges, all based on the severity or repetitive nature of the violations and all in accordance with the Rider's Suspension Policy provided in Section 15 below.

## **8. Comments and Complaint Procedures**

The West Ouachita Public Transportation system is responsive to the inputs and perceptions of its passengers. WOPT solicits positive as well as negative input from passengers. Comment/evaluation cards (attachment 2) are available in all vehicles and in the WOPT office upon request. Comment/evaluation cards or other written comments should be turned in to the WOPT transportation Manager or mailed to:

Transportation Manager  
West Ouachita Public Transit  
1702 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
West Monroe, LA 71291

Passengers may also call the WOPT office, 397-3299, and make comments directly to the Transportation Manager.

The Transportation Manager will review all comments/evaluation cards daily. Suggestions for improvement will be discussed with the Dispatcher and Executive Director and implemented if feasible. All grievances must be submitted in writing within 10 days of the underlying dispute.

WOPT's transportation service complaints will be handled in the following manner:

- The Transportation Manager will review all complaints daily and attempt to resolve the problem.
- If the Transportation Manager is unable to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint, the Executive Director will review the problem within one week and attempt to find an acceptable resolution. The complaint must be submitted in writing within five (5) days of alleged incident.
- If the person making the complaint is still not satisfied, the complaint will be brought before City Hall for resolution. The recommendations of City Hall are final.

## **9. Transit System Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the West Ouachita Public Transportation system to provide safe, courteous, clean, on-time, reliable, and cost-effective transportation service. WOPT is responsible for the licensing and training of drivers, proper maintenance of vehicles, and compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. WOPT is responsible for abiding by the policies detailed in other sections of this service policy. WOPT maintains insurance coverage exceeding the legally mandated minimums.

The WOPT system will make every effort to honor the transportation schedule and will provide notification of any unavoidable interruptions of service. WOPT is a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace. WOPT is not responsible for passengers' items left in vehicles.

### **Driver Responsibilities**

Please remember, drivers cannot make, change, or cancel your reservations. To change your reservation, you need to contact a WOPT Dispatcher or Manager.

WOPT drivers cannot enter an establishment or facility to look for passengers. The rider should be visible at the entrance of the facility.

Drivers are expected to obey the same rules as our customers. The following additional rules also apply:

- Drivers will provide assistance to customers only in boarding and deboarding the vehicle or to/from the curb at their point of origin/destination.
- Drivers can assist with no more than three packages per customer, or 25 pounds of cargo or what fits under the passenger's seat safely.
- Drivers do not accept tips or gratuities or act in a manner that would suggest that tipping is appropriate.
- Drivers are responsible for the operation of the hydraulic lift ramp, and for securing mobility devices safely in the vehicle.
- Customers requiring physical assistance outside the vehicle (e.g., to or from their door, or assistance up stairways or difficult grades) must have a PCA or a guest accompany them on the vehicle. The PCA will be responsible for providing the physical assistance the customer boarding or deboarding requires. (Paratransit Operators will assist you on or off the bus; however, WOPT drivers are not allowed to leave their vehicles unattended. It is the responsibility of the customer to watch for the bus.
- WOPT and drivers are not responsible for going inside of establishments to look for passengers.
- Drivers must require that passengers be seated and wear seat belts when the vehicle is in motion.
- Drivers must require that all passengers in wheelchairs be safely secured when the vehicle is in motion. (Passenger Service and Safety 5.1 -5.2, PASS rules)

- Drivers will perform daily pre-trip inspections on vehicles to ensure that both the vehicle and safety equipment are in working order.
- Drivers will report demand responsibly any vehicle maintenance problem as soon as the problem is discovered, acquire another "back-up vehicle" and assume his daily route schedule.

### **Emergency Procedures**

WOPT on demand will not provide service on days when the agency is closed due to weather or other disaster related events.

If an accident or on-vehicle emergency occurs, the driver will:

- Remain calm.
- Come to a complete stop in a safe location.
- Orderly evacuate the vehicle if warranted, assisting passengers who are mobility limited.
- Maintain control of the passengers.
- Notify the Dispatcher of incident/accident, as soon as possible.
- Call for emergency response assistance, if necessary.
- Have the Dispatcher notify WOPT Manager and Director?

If an accident or on-vehicle emergency occurs, the passengers will:

- Remain calm.
- Follow the driver's instructions.
- Maintain proper vehicle conduct during the incident.
- Inform the driver if they or another passenger becomes ill, is injured, or is in distress while on the vehicle.

### **Reservation Information**

Please have the following information available when making a reservation:

- Customer name.
- The exact street address of the origin and the destination.
- Names of complexes or subdivisions, as well as building, apartment, or suite numbers.
- Easily identified pick-up points should be communicated, where applicable, such as a hospital, shopping mall, or doctor's office.
- The appointment or the pick-up time.
- The return trip information.
- Indicate if the customer is traveling with a personal care attendance (PCA) or any companions.

Note: For safety reasons, drivers are not allowed to carry cages or handle the service animals.

## 10. Safety Policy

West Ouachita Public Transportation operates a strict preventative maintenance program to help ensure the safety of all passengers. In addition, the drivers are required to conduct a pre-trip inspection daily. Wheelchair lifts are checked daily to make sure they are in proper working order. All mobile wheelchairs should meet ADA regulations. If the mobile unit cannot be secured, the passenger will be asked to transfer to a regular wheelchair that may be secured.

All vehicles are equipped with seat belts, as well as wheelchair restraints in wheelchair equipped vans. Passengers are required to be seated and wear seat belts, and all passengers in wheelchairs are to be safely secured whenever the vehicles are moving. (PASS 5.1 -5.2 seat belt regulations) Children under four years of age must be secured in the appropriate size infant seat, to be furnished by the passenger. Drivers are not allowed to provide service unless all passengers are buckled up.

Passengers are responsible for securing all carry-on items. Goods must not block aisle and inhibit the safety of boarding passengers. Service animals may accompany a disabled rider onto WOPT vehicles with doctor prescription. However, other pets must be in a secured unit to ride on the vehicle.

The following safety equipment is carried in each vehicle always:

- Fire Extinguisher
- Reflective Warning Signs
- Umbrella
- Flashlight
- List of emergency numbers
- Operable CB radio in each vehicle.
- First Aid Kit properly equipped
- Sanitation Supply Box
- Radio/dispatch or phone - GPS/cameras – Panic Button

All drivers are required to obtain a CDL license as well as to receive PASS certification, First Aid training, CPR training, and Defensive Driver training.

WOPT is committed to the safe operation of its vehicles, including the safe boarding and deboarding/unloading of passengers.

## 11. Maintenance Policy

All vehicles are under a daily, monthly, and demand-responsive maintenance contract by a professional maintenance facility. All maintenance necessary to ensure safe operation of the vehicle is performed in a timely manner.

## 12. Emergency Procedures

---

These established procedures should be followed in an emergency:

- Passengers should follow the driver's instructions.
- Remain calm.
- Evacuate the vehicle in an orderly manner, if the circumstances dictate.
- Once the passenger debarks, he should stay off the highway in a safe location until help arrives.
- No smoking around the vehicle in emergency situations.
- Driver should inform the Public Transit authorities of incident/accident and request a 911 medical call, if deemed necessary. Driver should take photos of accident/incident on the scene ASAP.
- Passengers should notify the driver if they are injured on the van.
- Passengers should inform the driver immediately if another passenger is in distress.
- Driver must acquire and complete a Witness Information Form for each incident or accident.
- Public Transit staff will assist by phoning the emergency contact for all riders. (complaints, injuries, or medical emergencies must be documented by Manager and driver).
- Public Transit administrative or staff members should be dispatched to the scene. An alternate driver/vehicle may be dispatched to transport all other passengers to booked destinations in a timely fashion. Transit Manager must complete an incident/accident form including pictures, obtain police report, witness information, etc.
- Drug tests are required post accidents.
- In an emergency, the Public Transit Dispatcher will contact the rider's emergency contact person.

It is the policy of West Ouachita Public Transportation to close when the Ouachita Parish schools close due to inclement weather. WOPT will notify scheduled passengers when this occurs.

In a disaster situation, the WOPT vehicles will be made available to the West Monroe Police Department to be used as necessary.

**\*All Drivers must participate in a mandatory annual vehicle evacuation drill. See Attachment 8.**

## 13. Non-Discrimination Statement

---

It is the policy of West Ouachita Public Transportation to ensure that no person in the United States shall, on basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from

## Title VI Policy Statement

The West Ouachita Public Transit assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, or national Origin as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any programs or activities. West Ouachita Public Transit assures every effort will be made to ensure nondiscrimination in all its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally assisted or not (inclusive of additional Title VI Authorities and citations)

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, broadened the scope of Title VI coverage by expanding the definition of terms 'programs or activities' to include all programs or activities of Federal Aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractor/consultants, whether such programs and activities are federally assisted or not (Public Law 100259 {\$.557} March 22, 1988).

West Ouachita Public Transit will be responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports and other responsibilities as required by 23 Code of Federal Regulations, (CFR) 200 and 49 Code of Federal Regulation 21.

Darlyn Jones  
Manager

6/6/23  
Date

Any individual, group of individuals or any that believes they have been discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin by the West Ouachita Public Transit may file a Title VI complaint by submitting the agency's Title VI complaint form.

For all Title VI matters, please contact:

West Ouachita Public Transit  
1702 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
West Monroe, LA 71291

Phone (318) 397-3299



participation in, be denied benefits, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

#### **14. Cancellation and "No-Show" Policy**

---

A "no-show" occurs when a rider who has a confirmed ride schedule does not use the transportation within five (5) minutes of the vehicles arrival.

If you reserve a ride and decide not to travel, you must call to cancel at least two hours before your requested travel time. Any cancellation received less than two hours before the scheduled pick up time will be considered a "no-show." If the first scheduled trip is logged as a "no-show," the return trip is automatically cancelled.

"No-Shows" are very costly to WOPT. Before you place a ride reservation, be certain that you plan to travel. Excessive "No-Shows" are considered an abuse of the system and will result in penalties and/or suspension of services. The following is WOPT "No-Show" Policy:

Your transportation is scheduled in the WOPT system to meet your specific needs. You will not be able to make last minute pick-up or return time changes. If you absolutely need to make a change, please call 397-3299 immediately. You will only be allowed two (2) "No-Shows." After this point, a review will be done regarding your excuse for missing rides. WOPT transportation has the right to decline your transportation rides. The Transit Manager will be informed and responsible for documenting all issues regarding "no shows" or last-minute cancellations.

One "No-Show" results in a Serious Warning

Two "No-Shows" will result in a one-week Suspension from WOPT

Six "No-Shows" will result in a two-week Suspension from WOPT

Any missed trip will be regarded as a "no-show", unless there are documented extenuating circumstances.

#### **15. Rider Suspension Policy (Other than "No-Shows")**

---

WOPT has made a commitment to provide quality public transportation services to anyone in the West Ouachita Parish who needs a ride. WOPT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate riders' various conditions. However, there are rare occasions where the service is abused by individual riders. When this occurs on a repeated basis, it may be necessary to deny service to those individuals.

**Inappropriate Behavior or Criteria for Suspension of Service Include:**

- Verbal or physical abuse or threats towards a WOPT employee or passenger.
- Behavior which represents a clear and present danger to an individual's health or safety or to others within the vehicle. Such behavior includes conduct



which is violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal. (Examples: Possession of illegal drugs; intoxication, or having an open container of alcohol on vehicle, unbuckling seatbelt during ride, causing driver distraction.)

- Rules require passengers to be ready 15 minutes before the scheduled pick up time as the vehicle has a 15-minute pick up window on either side of your scheduled time. Be prepared to leave when the vehicle arrives. Drivers are required to wait only five (5) minutes upon arrival. If you have not boarded within the five (5) minutes arrival time, you will be assessed a “no-show”.
- Trips, which are repeatedly cancelled less than two hours before the scheduled pick up time, may result in those trips being considered a “no-show”.
- Carrying of weapons
- Lacking good personal hygiene
- Annoying/harassment of other passengers or vehicle driver (verbal or behavioral)
- Listening to electronic devices without headphones
- Other violations of passenger rules, conduct, or responsibilities individually or in the aggregate, determined by the Director, as affecting the health or safety of passengers or WOPT employees, or determined to be unduly disruptive or otherwise of nature determined to be unacceptable.

The following procedure will be followed before denying any transportation for any individual. All communications to the individual will be in an appropriate accessible format.

- WOPT staff may immediately refuse service to an individual when necessary to protect the health and safety of other passengers or WOPT employees.
- The rider’s verbal notice will include an explanation of the policy rules, which the passenger has failed to follow. The WOPT staff will report each transit infraction to the Dispatcher or Manager. If the drivers’ verbal warning fails, the passenger will receive written details of the infraction and a written notice will be provided of any proposed action or suspension of service resulting from the infraction.
- Incidents, such as cursing, intoxication, restraint compliance, etc. will be documented.
- Except for an infraction involving behavior which presents a danger to the individual or others using WOPT, passengers who receive three (3) reported infractions and verbal warnings from drivers will be subject to suspension from transit service. The fourth notice will be a verbal or written warning of impending suspension of service following the next occurrence of the infraction by the Transit Manager.
- A passenger with more than three (3) reported infractions will receive a one (1) week suspension from service from the Transit Manager.
- If corrective action does not occur, final notice or other suspension of transit service details will be given by the Director to officially notify the individual of the suspension of service, and the date and duration of the suspension of service.

## Appeals

Customers have the right to appeal any written notification they receive from WOPT relating to their eligibility. The customer must appeal the notification within 60 days of receipt of the notification. Appeals must be in writing and mailed to:

West Ouachita Public Transportation  
Attn: Appeal  
1702 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
West Monroe, LA 71291

WOPT will respond to all customers' appeals in writing within seven (7) days of the receipt of the appeal. If a customer chooses not to appeal the warning or the suspension notification letter, then sanctions will occur and become effective on the date stated in the notification letter.

A customer returning to service after a suspension will be placed on probation for six (6) months. During the probation period, sanctions are continued if necessary. Suspended customers completing a six-month probation period without subsequent suspension will have their record cleared of all previous "no-show" violations.

## 16. Closing Statement

---

The West Ouachita Public Transportation endeavors to serve the residents of Ouachita Parish by providing much needed transportation services. WOPT welcomes community support. We welcome questions and suggestions. All passengers are encouraged to complete an Annual Needs Assessment Survey available from any driver.

For WOPT to serve the community better, we work to constantly upgrade and improve our services. The public is always invited to call us to inquire about any of our services. We are here to serve the public, and no question is too big or too small!

WOPT would like to thank everyone that uses public transportation and encourage your continued support. Only by keeping transportation in the public eye can we hope to insure the future of public transit in our area.

WOPT would also like to acknowledge the donations given by stakeholders and local organizations to help us in our endeavor to provide mobility options for western Ouachita Parish residents.

For further information contact \_\_\_\_\_ West Ouachita Public Transportation, 1702 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, West Monroe, LA 71291, 318-397-3299.

# **Attachment 1**

## **Passenger Comment Form**

# WEST OUACHITA PUBLIC TRANSIT CUSTOMER SURVEY FORM

*Please help us to serve you better!  
Fill out this card and return it to your driver.*

1. How often do you use our service every month? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do you use public transit? (Please check all that apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't or don't know how to drive  | <input type="checkbox"/> I save money         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a car or access to one | <input type="checkbox"/> I save time          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer public transit             | <input type="checkbox"/> I have special needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |   |

3. Where do you take the bus? (Please check all that apply.)

- |                                      |                                 |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping    | <input type="checkbox"/> Work   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |

4. How satisfied are you with each of these factors when riding the bus?

Not Satisfied      Satisfied      Very Satisfied

- | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drivers know the transit system procedures                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Friendly, courteous assistance / service from the drivers  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drivers wear professional WOPT shirt and ID tag            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Safe and competent drivers                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reliable buses that arrive as scheduled                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clean, comfortable buses or vans                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Special needs equipment / accessibility / wheelchair       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Calling for transit scheduling- courteous customer service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Acceptable service hours                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Affordable fares   |

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Rider's Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Attachment 2**

# **Initial Passenger Intake Form**

**West Ouachita Public Transportation and  
Passenger Emergency Contact Information**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First: \_\_\_\_\_ M. \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt/Lot #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O. B: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Medicare: \_\_\_\_\_ Medicaid: \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

Next of Kin:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment 3 Charter Form



## WOPT Special Transit Services Charter Policy

Requests for charter services are directed to the Transit Manager in the WOPT office for coordination and referral. Requests MAY BE referred to private charter operators in the geographic service area. Requests for transportation using unique equipment (handicapped-accessible) buses or vans are filled only if the equipment is not available from a private source and only if the requester's equipment is essential to the purpose of the charter trip. WOPT will also provide all requesters with a list of Transit operators and phone numbers in the parish. WOPT will provide the service only if the customer has determined that there is a driver who is willing and able to provide the service. Once the driver makes this commitment, a Special Services Charter Form is completed and signed by the customer and kept on file at WOPT. The form includes a statement that "there are no private charter operators willing and able to provide a handicapped-accessible buses or vans." A survey will be conducted annually with local charter operators to confirm the availability of accessible buses and vans.

The following guidelines apply to all charter or after-hours vehicle requests.

1. All requests for charter must be in writing and turned in two weeks prior to event.
2. Services for accessible vehicle requests will be provided in Ouachita Parish. Service is provided based on availability of drivers and/or vehicles. Vehicles are operated only by WOPT driver. The service area is limited to geographical boundaries. Special services are coordinated by the WOPT Transit managers upon approval by the Director of WOPT. Specifies about delivery of the special service are sent by operations to assign drivers.
3. Vehicles maybe provided seven days a week, but not to interfere with WOPT's service hours. WOPT's Special Service fare structure, will be as follows:

---

Standard Rate - \$25.00 per hour.

Longer routes and longer hours will follow cost allocation formula plus origination fee.

---

The hours of operation begin when the vehicle pull out of the garage and end when it returns. After normal operating hours (5:00 p.m.), and during large events, an additional fee may be added per person, per hour to cover staff (dispatch and/ or road supervisor) salary. Any parking costs, admission charges (for the driver or bus) are the responsibility of and are to be paid by the group requesting the service. Payment must be no later than one week after the event. Payment shall be forwarded to the WOPT Accounting Department. A copy of the check will be put in the customer file.

On occasion, due to capacity constraints during normal working hours, WOPT may contract. Rates are determined per DOTD annual cost allocations rates created for the event.

(d) Due to occasional equipment failure and the limited number of drivers and vans, WOPT maintains the option of substituting vehicles or drivers.

(e) Standees are not allowed. Smoking and alcohol consumption is not permitted on the bus. Damage to the bus caused by passengers, whether intended or accidental, will be billed to the group chartering the vehicle.

(f) A point of contact name and contact number shall be provided by the group requesting the service. The point of contact must be available on the day the service is provided. A sign with the group name should be provided by the group requesting the service and is put in the window each day of service by the point of contact.

(g) Special services data is documented by the driver and turned into WOPT manager the following day.

Name of individual or business: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Charter: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Charter (description or details of charter including number of riders, size of fleet, number of drivers, and length of trip, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

West Ouachita Senior Center/ Public Transit Director:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Charter group or individual:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment 4

# Wheelchair and Mobility Aid Regulations Form

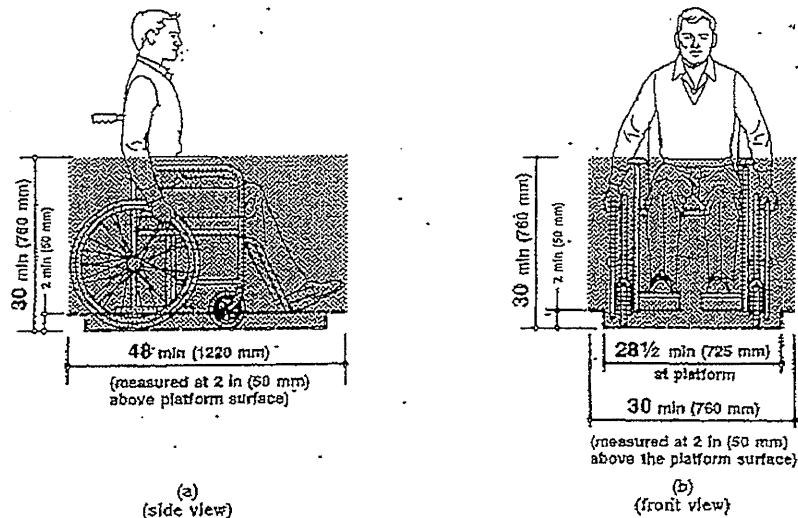


Fig. 1  
Wheelchair or Mobility Aid Envelope

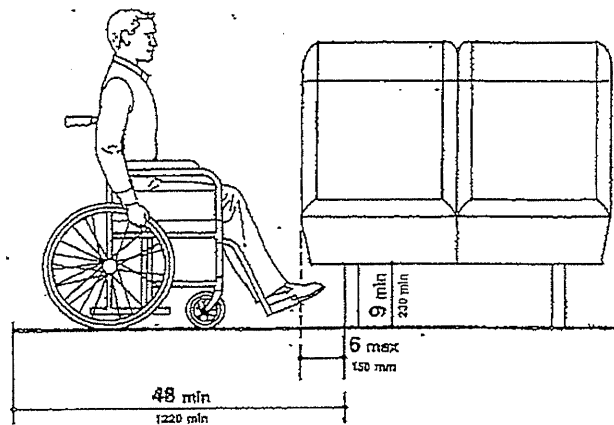


Fig. 2  
Toe Clearance Under a Seat

Common wheelchairs and mobility aids means belonging to a class of three or four wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by persons with mobility impairments which do not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length, measured 2 inches above the ground, and do not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Attachment 4

Attachment 6  
Passenger Disciplinary Form

## WOPT Transit Rider Disciplinary Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense Number: \_\_\_\_1 \_\_\_\_2 \_\_\_\_3

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_ Probation \_\_\_\_ Suspension \_\_\_\_ Dismissal \_\_\_\_ Other

Probation Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Probation End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Nature of Incident:

\_\_\_\_ Unexcused No Show

\_\_\_\_ Excessive Tardiness

\_\_\_\_ Violating Safety Rules

\_\_\_\_ Destruction of Property

\_\_\_\_ Leaving Van without Permission

\_\_\_\_ Improper Conduct

\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate Dress

\_\_\_\_ Theft/Stealing

\_\_\_\_ Insubordination

\_\_\_\_ Fighting/Violence

\_\_\_\_ Use of Drugs or Alcohol During Service

\_\_\_\_ Transit Safety Violations

\_\_\_\_ Behavior/Verbal/Overt which distract  
or harass driver/passengers/staff

\_\_\_\_ Failure to follow disciplinary actions

\_\_\_\_ Create unnecessary disruptions

1. \_\_\_\_ Eating or Drinking

2. \_\_\_\_ Disobeying Safety Rules

3. \_\_\_\_ Vehicle Safety Inspections

4. \_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Attachment 7 West Ouachita Public Transit Vehicle Agreement**

## **West Ouachita Public Transit Vehicle Agreement**

All drivers operating a WOPT vehicle will be responsible and accountable to:



- Possess a valid motor vehicle driver's license issued in Louisiana. This license must have the appropriate classification and any required endorsements needed for operating the vehicle(s) assigned to the operator.
- Be subject to a driver's license motor vehicle record check, and if such records show a suspension or revocation of driving privileges, the driver will not be authorized to operate a motor vehicle for WOPT.
- Operate WOPT vehicles for official WOPT business only.
- Operate motor vehicles in a safe manner always.
- Comply with all applicable state laws and regulations.
- Maintain vehicle in accordance with the maintenance schedule.
- Report moving violations to their Supervisor/WOPT Director.
- Report changes in their driver's licensing to the WOPT Supervisor.
- Accurately record and report vehicle mileage/ridership in accordance with procedures.
- Participate in required driver safety education and training programs.
- Require all occupants to use seat belts, child safety seats, booster seats, or other restraint devices always.
- Pay all moving/parking violation fines and fees.
- Keep automobile ID cards in vehicle glove box always, including current coverage.
- Refrain from towing or charging the battery of a WOPT vehicle.
- Alterations of vehicle or equipment is not permitted in any way.
- Deactivation of airbags is not permitted on any transit vehicle.
- Operation of a mobile tablet, computer, or cell phone is not permitted while vehicle is in motion.
- Transit managers are required to pull off the road to a safe location when making or receiving cell phone calls. Only WOPT related calls are to be made or received.
- Comply with all WOPT policies and procedures, including transport of passengers.

Operating privileges shall be revoked if:

- Driver does not adhere to responsibilities listed above.
- The driver's license is revoked, suspended, withdrawn, or denied.

- Driver refuses to undergo drug or alcohol testing in accordance with WOPT policies or as required by applicable state or jurisdiction laws.
- Operating outside the limitations of a restricted license.

In case of vehicle damage:

- Report any vehicle damage to your WOPT Supervisor/WOPT Director by the end of the day in which the incident occurred.
- Police reports, witness statements, or other pertinent documents should be obtained and forwarded to WOPT.
- The driver shall cooperate with representatives of WOPT including insurance company personnel and obtain written repair estimates from reputable shops or authorized dealerships, as instructed. If it becomes necessary to utilize another vehicle during repairs, the driver will be instructed as to the provisions for the alternate vehicle.
- Drivers should not make verbal or written statements concerning an incident during its immediate aftermath except to law enforcements officials or representatives of WOPT or its agents.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the WOPT Vehicle Agreement Policy established by WOPT. I agree to abide by the provisions of this policy. I understand that violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date