



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## *Town of Acushnet*

### Council on Aging

59 ½ South Main Street, Acushnet MA 02743

Telephone 508.998.0280

#### **Transportation Scheduling/Rider Policy**

The Council on Aging (COA) recognizes the lack of resources available to meet the needs of Acushnet's seniors who do not drive. There is limited public transportation, which leaves many older residents vulnerable, trapped in their homes without the means to shop, visit the doctor or fill necessary prescriptions. The COA strives to provide essential transportation for those in our community who do not drive and who do not have family available to assist them.

The COA utilizes one town owned, wheel chair accessible van to transport Acushnet residents over the age of 50, and those over the age of 21 with disability, to related appointments in Acushnet and the surrounding communities (Dartmouth, Fairhaven, New Bedford and Fall River). In order to provide this service in an orderly and equitable manner, it is necessary to abide by the following:

1. Residents must provide the COA office with all necessary information at least 7 days prior to needing transportation. The only exception is grocery shopping on Fridays which is routinely provided. Riders must call at least 48 hours prior to be added for shopping. Information must include: date, time, emergency contact and location of pick-up. Only morning transportation, concluding at 12:00 p.m., can be accommodated at this time.
2. The COA, not the driver, will contact the rider to set a pick-up time. Riders can not be picked up any earlier than 8:15 a.m.
3. Riders must understand they may share the van with others and may need to wait for others to finish their appointments/grocery shopping/other errand before being returned home.
4. All requests, changes and cancellations must be called into the COA office, not to the drivers. If a rider needs to make an unanticipated stop after their scheduled appointment, they must contact the COA office directly. Unanticipated stops include blood work and prescriptions only. The COA reception staff is authorized to approve or deny this request and will contact the driver directly.
5. Donations are accepted for all rides but are not mandatory. Patrons are not allowed to tip the driver.

6. Transportation to Boston for medical appointments is not possible through the Acushnet COA at this time. However, the Outreach staff is available to assist seniors in finding alternate arrangements.
7. Seniors should talk with family and check other options before requesting transportation from the COA for transportation. This includes Coastline Elderly Services (508-999-6400) and MO.L.I.F.E (508) 992-5978.
8. Seniors should notify the COA office immediately to cancel transportation for any reason. The COA reserves the right to refuse transportation to any individual who has cancelled a ride without 24-hour notice three times in a 90-day period.
9. Van drivers may help seniors bring their groceries, or other light weight items, to the front porch/entrance. At no time will the driver be able to enter the home.
10. Riders must be ambulatory enough to independently transfer themselves on and off the COA van. The drivers at no time will lift, carry or physically assist clients. The drivers may assist with durable medical equipment such as walkers and canes.
11. Seniors who utilize the COA for transportation are allowed to take one (1) companion/family member/PCA, age 21 and over, with them. Riders must identify to the office that someone will be accompanying them at the time the reservation is made.
12. At no time shall the driver be subject to verbal or physical abuse by clients. It is within the driver's discretion to refuse a ride to a client that creates an unsafe situation. The driver will immediately notify the COA Director. Alcohol is strictly prohibited from being consumed on the van.
13. All COA van passengers, including drivers, are required by law to wear seat belts.

*Updated 1/04/2018*

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*Voted 10/11/2023 by COA Board*