

# MARQUETTE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION POLICY

## I. GENERAL

The Marquette County Department of Human Services (herein referred to as “department”) provides transportation services to residents of the county who meet certain eligibility requirements outlined in this policy statement. Services provided with department vehicles meet the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act and are primarily intended for use by the department. If another county department or other authorized organization that serves the elderly and disabled populations requests the use of one of the vehicles, and the request conflicts with the time and/or availability of the intended use by the department, the issue will always be resolved in favor of the department. The department reserves the right to deny any request by another department or organization.

It is to be noted that all such vehicles are designated as “smokeless” and the use of any tobacco product, alcohol, or illegal drug or substance is prohibited while riding in, sitting in, or driving the vehicles (see Section V.A.3.)

The transportation services available to eligible individuals shall be publicized through periodic announcements, newspaper articles, senior dining sites and other means deemed appropriate. Informational brochures are available through the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and the aging unit office.

## II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. *Individuals.* Any resident of Marquette County who is 60 years of age or older, a qualified veteran (as defined by Wisconsin State Statute 45.015), or disabled (certification is required by medical authority or county agency) may utilize the available transportation services for medical and approved social activity trips. Aides, spouses or companions to such persons may also utilize this service and may be required to ride along to assist individual (see Section VIII). Young children cannot be transported under this program (see exception in Section VII.A.); however, other transportation arrangements may be made through the department.
- B. *Other Marquette County Departments.* Any Marquette County government department may request transportation for their clients on a space-available basis.
- C. *Other Use of Vehicles.* Personnel of other Marquette County departments may also use vehicles for authorized purposes, such as attendance at training sessions, if available.

### III. FEES

- A. All riders must be approved through the aging unit in advance. A co-pay schedule for use of the transportation service has been established for individuals using the service. Co-payment is required at the time of pick up and will be collected by the driver. Non-payment of co-pays after three (3) trips will be grounds for refusal of service until paid in full. This schedule is periodically revised by the Transportation Coordinating Committee with County Board approval, and is posted in each vehicle. Aides, spouses and companions may also contribute if they desire.
- B. Other County Departments may request use of a vehicle. The requesting department will provide an employee-driver to operate the vehicle (see Section IV). Other County departments will be charged for the actual cost of fuel used in gallons. If a human services employee serves as the driver, the other department is also responsible for the hourly cost of the employee's time. Use of the vehicles by other county departments is intended to be on an incidental basis.
- C. Other Authorized Organizations may utilize vehicles for purposes, which serve the needs of Marquette County senior citizens, disabled persons or qualified veterans. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by aging unit staff. There will be a one dollar per mile vehicle use fee. The driver must be approved under Section IV.

### IV. ELIGIBLE VEHICLE OPERATORS

- A. Human Services employees are authorized to operate department vehicles if required to do so by their job description or if authorized by the aging unit manager if they are properly licensed.
- B. Others. If a human services employee is not available or not approved by the Aging Unit Manager to operate a vehicle, an employee or representative of the department or other organization outlined in III.B. or III.C. (above) may be approved to operate a vehicle, provided the following conditions are met:
  - 1. Individual must submit proof of a valid Wisconsin operator's license and proof of vehicle insurance (Human Services to check driving record and proof of vehicle insurance)
  - 2. Individual must receive instruction on the operation of the vehicle (including the use of lift, etc.) by the Transportation Specialist or other authorized human services staff
  - 3. Individual must have previous experience in operating a full-sized van or bus and may be required to demonstrate driving capabilities by performing check ride

4. Individual must appear to be physically and mentally capable of operating the vehicle
- C. Buses. If a passenger bus is being utilized with seating capacity of 16 or more (including driver), the operator must possess a valid Wisconsin CDL with a “P” endorsement license to use the vehicle.
- D. Training. Human Services staff is not permitted to operate department vehicles until they have completed the prescribed training. Training subjects include, but are not limited to, operation of the lift and other accessibility-related equipment, interpersonal relations as it relates to dealing with clients including disabled individuals. All such training will be documented, including acknowledgement by the trainee that he/she has received the training.

## V. REFUSAL OF SERVICE

- A. Reasons for Refusal. Marquette County Human Services Department reserves the right to refuse service or use of its vehicles for one or more of the following reasons:
1. The rider does not meet eligibility criteria (see Section II.A.).
  2. The rider is in need of emergency care and ambulance is required.
  3. The rider is demonstrating impaired judgment and poses a potential threat to others (e.g., an uncontrollable person under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol)
  4. When the driver has difficulty getting the rider out of the house (e.g., there is no wheelchair ramp where one is required, the rider is in need of personal/hygiene care assistance, etc.). In such cases the family, supportive home care worker or caseworker will be contacted to help resolve the problem.
  5. The rider has demonstrated offensive, abusive and/or violent behavior.
  6. The rider is carrying weapons such as a gun, knife, etc. Concealed and carry permits do not allow riders to carry weapons with them in county vehicles or in private vehicles serving the transportation program (i.e. vehicles of volunteer drivers.)
  7. Where safety would be compromised.
  8. When there is no ready access to the house because of accumulated snow and/or ice.
  9. The rider requests trips at times or to destinations where COA transportation service is not available (e.g. outside a 50-mile radius of the Marquette County line).
  10. When rider refuses to wear seat belt.
  11. The rider is utilizing an electric scooter or other mobility device that does not meet the definition of a “common wheelchair” as set forth in 49 CFR 27, 37 and 38.

12. The rider is utilizing an electric scooter or other mobility device that does meet the definition of a “common wheelchair” as set forth in 49 CFR 27, 37 and 38 but refuses to permit the “common wheelchair” to be secured while aboard the transit vehicle.
13. When it would impose a financial strain on the program.
14. If a client is not home when the driver comes to pick them up at their prearranged pick up time a minimum of 2 times without prior notification to the office.
15. Non-payment of co-pays after three (3) trips. Services may resume after full payment is received by the department.

B. Procedure for Refusing Service

1. For immediate problems, the driver may make the decision to refuse service after notifying the Transportation Specialist of the reason for refusal (see Section V.A.). If the immediate problem occurs before or after office hours, the driver must notify the Transportation Specialist as soon as possible or the next business day.
2. For problems not requiring immediate action, the driver will notify the Transportation Specialist and/or the Aging Unit Manager of the problem in writing. If appropriate, the Aging Unit Manager will notify the rider of the problem in writing, advising the rider of the corrective action that needs to be taken and of any consequences that may result if the problem is not resolved.
3. When required service jeopardizes contract with program funding sources.

VI. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS. All riders (and the driver) must properly use the safety restraints provided. All riders utilizing a “common wheelchair” must permit the device to be properly secured while aboard the transit vehicle. A rider utilizing an electric scooter or other mobility device that does not meet the definition of a “common wheelchair” may be permitted transport if the rider agrees to be transferred to a regular seat within the transport vehicle and if the non-compliant scooter or mobility device can, in the discretion of the operator of the transport vehicle, be properly secured within the transport vehicle.

VII. SPECIAL NEEDS RIDERS

- A. Children. With prior approval by the Transportation Specialist, children with booster seats or infants with infant seats must be accompanied by an adult. A child will never be dropped off without an appropriate adult present to meet the child.
- B. Disoriented and/or Non-Verbal Persons. The department reserves the right to require an aide for a disoriented or non-verbal rider. An incident report (see

Section XIV) will be submitted by the driver when he/she feels an aide will be required for future transports.

Drivers are responsible for escorting these special needs persons to the specific destination. If a receptionist is available, drivers should give the receptionist instructions regarding where the person is to go and any information regarding the return trip. When a receptionist is not available, the driver must take the rider to their final destination and inform a responsible party of the person's arrival and any return ride information.

- C. Persons with Respirators or Portable Oxygen. Riders who require the use of such equipment are permitted to do so while in department vehicles, as long as such use is consistent with Department of Transportation rules on the transportation of hazardous materials (49 CFR B-1-C).

VIII. RIDER ASSISTANCE. Drivers are responsible to assure the safe boarding and transport of all riders. The type of assistance provided may vary based on rider capabilities. Drivers are permitted to enter a rider's home to provide the minimum amount of assistance required to get the rider safely out of or into the home. Drivers are not allowed to assist rider with home or personal hygiene care (e.g. taking out trash, giving medications, assistance with dressing, etc). Drivers may assist riders with transferring only to help rider maintain balance. Drivers are not allowed to lift or carry rider. Riders who cannot transfer with minimal assistance will be required to supply an aide to perform all necessary transfers at all stops. Wheelchairs will be maneuvered by drivers if necessary. Drivers are responsible for operating the lift in the lift-equipped vehicles and for securing wheelchairs in tie-downs. Wheelchairs may not be moved more than one step up or down. An incident report (see Section XIV) should be submitted regarding locations with difficult access.

IX. HOSPITAL DISCHARGES. Because of scheduling constraints, it might not always be possible to provide transportation for a person being discharged from a hospital. Where it is possible to do so, an approximate pick-up time will be established, and the person must be ready to be picked up when the driver arrives.

X. WAIT TIME. Riders are expected to be ready and waiting 15 minutes before a scheduled pick-up time. A driver will not normally wait more than five minutes past the scheduled pick-up time. The driver will phone the rider and knock several times on the door before the driver contacts the Transportation Specialist for instructions. (If the scheduled pick-up time is outside of office hours, the driver will leave a voice-mail message for the Transportation Specialist.)

XI. RIDE CANCELLATION. In order to schedule as many rides as possible, and as a matter of common courtesy, the department requires at least 48-hour, but not less than 24-hour advance notification by the rider of a scheduled ride cancellation.

XII. UNSCHEDULED STOP REQUESTS. All stops must be approved through the aging unit office. If a rider, while in transit, requests to be taken to a location not

scheduled, the driver must contact the Transportation Specialist. An exception will be made to pick up required prescriptions.

XIII. ANIMALS. Service animals are allowed in department vehicles as medically necessary for disabled riders.

XIV. INCIDENT REPORTS. An incident report is a section of the Driver's Sheet and is a tool that a driver or the Transportation Specialist can use to document any "out of the ordinary" event or to report any information that needs to be communicated. Anything qualifies as an "incident" (from a scheduling problem to particular rider problems). Completed incident reports are to be turned in to the Transportation Specialist or Aging Unit Manager for appropriate action. These reports must be turned in within 24 hours of the incident (Monday if the incident occurs on Friday).

XV. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE. Grievances will be handled per the Marquette County Human Services Department's grievance procedure and/or through the Transportation Title VI Plan, whichever is most appropriate.