

# **TRANSPORTATION SERVICE POLICY**

**ASCENSION COUNCIL ON AGING, INC.  
P. O. BOX 412  
DONALDSONVILLE, LA 70346**

**DONALDSONVILLE SR. CENTER  
101 BOCAGE DRIVE  
DONALDSONVILLE, LA 70346  
225-473-3789**

**GONZALES SR. CENTER  
526 S. IRMA BLVD.  
GONZALES, LA 70737  
225-621-5750**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**It is the mission of Ascension Council on Aging, Inc. to provide safe, efficient, courteous transportation within the parish. We are dedicated to providing quality service in a cost efficient and timely manner to all who require our service.**



## **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES**

**Ascension Parish Council on Aging, Inc. provides transportation within the parish on a demand/response basis. Service is provided Monday through Friday with the exception of listed holidays. Reservations are accepted on a first come first serve basis with a minimum of 24 hours required. Door to door service is provided upon request, otherwise curb to curb service will be provided. Drivers will not enter a passenger's home and the agency does not provide escort service. However, passengers with disabilities are allowed free service for one escort. The system operates lift-equipped vehicles throughout the parish. Our vehicles may go out of the service area for certain circumstances. We do not provide school bus or charter services with FTA vehicles.**

## **DAYS AND HOURS OF SERVICE**

**To schedule a ride or to get more information, call the appropriate office during regular hours.**

<b>Donaldsonville Sr. Center</b>	<b>7:30 a.m. till 3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>225-473-3789</b>
<b>Gonzales Sr. Center</b>	<b>7:30 a.m. till 3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>225-621-5750</b>

## **RESERVATION, SCHEDULING, & CANCELLATIONS**

Requests for service must be made by calling the office for a reservation at least 24 hours in advance. Trips requested after the call-in time may be honored on a space available basis. Passengers are expected to name all required stops when making reservations and must call in any trip changes or trip cancellations. A passenger who is not home for pick-up or cancels a trip at the time of pick-up will no longer be eligible for services after a third no show.

While we try very hard to honor a passenger's scheduling needs, we must also operate in a cost-efficient manner. This will sometime result in adjusting pick-up times to fill the system's needs. Passengers must realize that a driver may be at least 30 or more minutes early for pick-up and the passengers should be ready to go. Do not wait until the last minute to get ready. Our schedules are usually full and drivers are instructed to wait no more than 3 minutes before moving on. A second van will not be sent at a later time because a rider is not ready when the van arrives. The trip will have to be rescheduled for another day. There may be times when circumstances beyond our control may cause us to run late. Please know that we are doing our very best. When no exact time for a return trip is known in advance, such as a doctor's appointment, passengers will be required to wait until a vehicle is available.

## **DONATIONS**

While fares are not required, donations are requested and greatly appreciated. Suggested donations are \$2.00 - \$4.00 per one-way trip on the East and West Banks of the parish. Transportation from the West to the East bank or East to West bank, we suggest a \$10.00 donation. We have no funding source for transporting disabled passengers and these donations help to defray some of the costs of this service. Drivers do not carry change on the vehicles.

# ASCENSION COA TRANSIT

The Ascension Council on Aging, Inc. complies with ADA requirements by attempting to accommodate all wheelchair mobility aids in common use. However, the passenger must provide his or her own wheelchairs or mobility services. Safety considerations are a major concern in assisting wheelchair riders. Therefore, we reserve the right to deny service to wheelchair passengers whose chairs are unsafe and those without a ramp or other means of leaving their home. When a disabled person is unable to function on their own, they must supply their own escort. An escort is someone accompanying a person and assisting that person in entering and leaving buildings, and is expected to sit with the passenger on the van and assist the driver in securing the passenger and/or the passenger's packages. The driver may assist passengers in carrying packages on and off the vehicles and securing them for transportation. NO pets are allowed on vehicles. The only animals allowed are service animals. Drivers will inform passengers when they have reached their destination.

## DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITY

1. Drivers are responsible for pre-trip inspections of vehicles to provide the safest trip possible for passengers.
2. Drivers are responsible for following all company rules and policies.
3. Drivers are responsible for following all laws in regards to vehicles
4. Drivers are responsible for the safe operation of vehicle at all times.
5. Drivers are responsible for lift operation and securing wheelchairs.
6. Drivers are responsible for fueling vehicles.
7. Drivers are responsible for assisting passengers on and off of vehicles.
8. Drivers are responsible for reminding passengers to buckle their seatbelts.
9. Drivers are responsible for announcing stops.
10. Drivers are responsible for contacting the office via radio for issues, problems and to report no shows.
11. Drivers are responsible for attending trainings as required.

## **PASSENGER CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITY**

**Passengers are expected to show courtesy and consideration to the driver and one another. The driver is in charge and his/her instructions are to be followed at all times. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and system rules will be enforced. There will be no smoking, chewing tobacco, eating, drinking of any sort, or drug use on our vehicles. The only exception will be in the event of medical need. Passengers are expected to practice good personal hygiene and comply with all safety rules such as remaining seated and wearing a seat belt when vehicles are in motion. Foul language, fighting, harassing other passengers, and carrying of weapons is also forbidden. Failure to abide by these rules will result in a passenger being denied service.**

## **PASSENGER COMMENT AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

**Our transit system is dedicated to giving the best service possible and in order to further this goal, we like to hear what our riders have to say about our system. We encourage our riders to make their thoughts and suggestions known to us. We need to know what we are doing right, as well as what needs improvement. A comment card is available from any driver or at either Senior Center. If you wish to file a complaint, please send or bring in your written complaint and we will see that it is answered within five (5) working days.**

# **TRANSIT SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Ascension Council on Aging, Inc. is responsible for providing safe, clean, reliable service in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Our system abides by all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as the policies detailed in this service policy. Agency insurance coverage is in excess of the legal minimum. All vehicles are inspected daily for defects and regular maintenance schedules are maintained. Our agency cannot be responsible for any items left on our vehicles. Riders are responsible for their own belongings. Our agency is committed to maintaining an alcohol and drug free workplace and we have a separate drug and alcohol policy. Drivers undergo pre-employment and random drug and alcohol testing.**

## **SAFETY**

**In order to assure safety, all drivers are required to have a clean driving record and the proper license. Drivers receive regular on-going training that is updated yearly. All passengers must be seated and wearing seat belts and any wheelchair passengers strapped down whenever a vehicle is in motion. Drivers will not start a vehicle until all passengers are in compliance. Anyone refusing to wear a seat belt will be denied service. Our restraint system has wheelchair tied downs and all wheelchairs and scooters must be able to be tied down to be transported safely. All wheelchair passengers must have lap belts that secure them to their chair and foot rests for their safety. We are at all times committed to the safe operation of our vehicles including the safe boarding and de-boarding of passengers.**

## ASCENSION COUNCIL ON AGING ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

1. In the event of a traffic accident, the driver will immediately notify the office by radio and give their exact location. If there are passengers on board, their condition must be assessed immediately. Passengers should be removed from the vehicle and brought to a safe place if necessary. If there are no injuries, a 2<sup>nd</sup> van will be dispatched to take the passengers to their destinations. The office will notify the proper authorities and call for an ambulance if necessary.
2. The transit supervisor or center coordinator will leave the office immediately and go to the accident scene. If the accident has injuries, the Director must be called as his/her presence is needed at the scene.
3. When the supervisor arrives at the scene, he/she must evaluate the situation and determine what information the driver may have gotten from the other driver or the authorities: name, address, phone number, insurance information, make and model of vehicle. In the event of injuries, the supervisor will then go to the hospital.
4. The driver will exchange insurance information with the other driver and will answer questions of the police and their supervisor. Drivers and supervisors make no comments to anyone else. If the press is present and questions are asked, the standard answer is "we don't yet know what happened". The Director is the only one to make statements to the press.
5. The supervisor should take a camera with them to the accident scene along with witness forms.
6. Vans should be equipped with witness forms and if able the driver should start getting names.
7. The driver will fill out an accident form and in the event of injuries or excessive damage must undergo drug and alcohol testing.
8. If after investigation, it is determined that our driver was at fault and the accident was avoidable, that driver must take a driver improvement class at their own expense within thirty days of the accident.
9. Vehicle accidents/incidents must be reported to DOTD within 24 hours and entered into STTARS.