



Municipality of Dysart et al
Policies and Procedures Manual
Specialized Transportation Policy

April 23, 2024

Policy No. 73

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DYMO Bus Specialized Transportation Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair and equitable process by which Specialized Transit is offered to ensure a more accessible community. This policy will provide guidance and direction for the coordination of specialized transportation in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Specialized Transit is an accessible, shared-ride, door-to-door, prebooked service intended for persons unable to use conventional transportation due to a disability. Registrants can book trips in advance, and are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. The application process helps determine qualification and is not based on the applicant's income or age.

Scope

This policy applies to the DYMO Bus, which is a specialized bus transportation service operated to assist Dysart et al residents with mobility difficulties and residents that require the assistance of a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Definitions

Booked Time: refers to the time for a pick-up that is confirmed by the Service Provider on the phone when a trip request is made.

Cancelled Trip: means any trip that has been booked and has been cancelled by the Client. Clients are encouraged to cancel a booked trip as soon as they are aware it will not be required.

Client: is defined to include eligible Registrants of the service, an accompanying Support Person and/or a Companion, and/or a Visitor.

Companion: means a person, other than a Support Person, who is travelling with the Registrant on the bus. A Registrant must indicate at the time of booking if a Companion(s) will be accompanying them. Companion travel may be restricted based on vehicle capacity. All Companions must pay the prevailing fare with the exception of children under the age of five (5). Companions must board and exit the vehicle at the same time and place as the Registrant.

Late Cancellation: refers to when a trip is cancelled by the Registrant with less than three (3) hours' notice.

Non-Accommodated Trip: means a trip request not booked because the original time requested is not available, or the original trip request is not available and an alternate time is taken.

No-Show: refers to when a Registrant does not show up at the pick-up point at the Booked Time or when a trip cancellation is made less than 30 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Exceptions will be made where official documentation can be provided that the no-show was the result of a medical emergency.

Registrant: refers to a Client of the service who has met the service eligibility criteria as set out in the registration process.

Service Area: means the area in which all trips, origins and destinations, must be located.

Service Description: described as a shared-ride “door to door” service. The driver must see that the Client is safely inside the outermost door at their destination. The Client is responsible for ensuring there is a Support Person available at the destination if required.

Service Hours: listed as the first pick-up time to the last pick-up time based upon the weekday and Statutory Holiday levels of service. Service hours shall be Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. through to 3:00 p.m.

Service Provider: means the contractor who accepts bookings and operates the bus for the service.

Scheduled Time: means the time of a pick-up. Please note: this time may be altered by up to ten (10) minutes in either direction of the Booked Time. (An 8:10 a.m. Booked Time could end up being a Scheduled Time anywhere between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m.).

Support Person: means a person who is specifically employed or designated by the Registrant to assist with their daily living needs, including travel. The Registrant may be required, as determined through the registration process, to have a Support Person traveling with them. A Support Person traveling with a Registrant does not pay a fare.

Visitor: refers to a non-resident of the Municipality, visiting the Municipality for a short period of time (less than 3 weeks in any 12-month period) who wishes to access the service. Visitor registration is by means of the individual providing proof to the Service Provider that they are registered users of a Specialized Transit Service in the Municipality where they live.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Municipality

The Municipality is responsible for service and contract management, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Supporting the Service Provider with administering registrations, including ensuring eligibility criteria is satisfied.
- Administering/monitoring the Service Provider's performance, if applicable, with respect to all terms and conditions of the contract, including but not limited to, those issues dealing with service hours, vehicle utilization, vehicle maintenance, Client service and system reporting.
- Administering a system for the processing of all related Client contacts, i.e. complaints, recommendations, inquiries, etc.
- Reporting on service performance.
- Completing all financial reporting, including preparation of annual budget and budget performance reports.
- Making recommendations respecting fare levels and the nature and extent of service to be provided.
- Keeping all personal information of Registrants confidential in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFFIPA).

The Municipality may contract a Service Provider to operate vehicles and the booking system. The Service Provider shall also be required to provide operational data for reporting purposes.

The Service Provider

The role of the Service Provider is to operate the DYMO Bus including responsibility for the drivers in accordance with the terms and conditions of the respective contract.

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for Specialized Service is based on several guiding principles. Eligibility is considered on a case-by-case basis for persons unable to use conventional transit due to a disability. Eligibility is not based on a particular disability, age, income or lack of available public transit in an applicant's area.

Specialized Transit is not an attendant care service. Passengers whose medical conditions require specific transportation (i.e. extreme fragility requiring transportation below regular speeds or inability to remain on the vehicle for up to one hour) need to contact a non-emergency medical carrier for transportation.

Registered Clients may use the service for medical appointments, school, shopping, visiting family or friends and social outings within the municipal limits and/or as specified in the rate schedule.

Registrants of the DYMO Bus must be residents of the Municipality of Dysart et al.

There are three different types of eligibility for Specialized Transit service:

Unconditional Eligibility

A person with a permanent disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services.

Temporary Eligibility

A person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services. Example: a person having knee replacement surgery.

Conditional Eligibility

A person with a disability where environmental or physical barriers (example: snow in winter months) limit their ability to consistently use conventional transportation services.

Emergency or Compassionate Grounds

An application for use of the service on emergency or compassionate grounds shall be made by phone to the Service Provider for urgent and unforeseen circumstances preventing the submission of an application, the use of other accessible transportation services, and/or where standard application processing time may cause undue hardship.

Visitors

Services will also be provided to non-residents who are visiting the Municipality for a short period of time (less than 3 weeks in any 12-month period). Non-residents must provide proof to the Service Provider that they are registered users of a Specialized Transit Service in the Municipality where they live access the service.

Appealing Eligibility

If an applicant is denied eligibility to specialized transit services, the applicant may appeal the decision in writing to the Municipality.

Registrations

All Clients must be pre-registered. Applicants can visit dysartetal.ca/dymo to complete an application online or can visit the Municipal Office to pick up a copy of the application.

All incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant and will not be considered until deemed complete. Eligibility will be determined within 14 calendar days of receipt of the complete application form. If services are required earlier than 14 days due to an emergency, please contact the Service Provider accordingly. No fee will be charged for applying for Specialized Transit.

Upon request of the applicant, the Municipality will make available all application forms and eligibility information in accessible formats.

Visitor Registration

A Visitor is considered a non-resident of the Municipality, visiting the Municipality for a short period of time and wishing to access the service. To be considered for temporary approval, Visitors can apply by providing proof of registration for Specialized Transit in the Municipality in which they live to the Service Provider as well as the length of their stay.

Booking the Service

Booking Process

Registered users must call the Service Provider to book a ride. Voicemail services will be available outside of regular hours, but voicemail booking must be verified in a follow-up call from the dispatcher.

Registered users may schedule a trip for any purpose. Riders are advised this is a public shared-ride service.

Demand Bookings

All bookings are made on a “first come, first serve” basis.

The DYMO Bus service will strive to accommodate same day/on-demand bookings. Wait times for pick-up will be dependent on the availability of the bus based upon the current demand on the system. Due to operational constraints not all trip requests may be able to be accommodated. Riders will be offered alternative times if the requested time is not available.

Booking Changes

Bookings, modifications or cancellations of trips may be made by anyone representing a Registrant based on the understanding that all such bookings, modifications or cancellations are the sole responsibility of the Registrant.

Trip Cancellations and No-Shows

Given the high demand for the service, it is critical for Registrants to call and cancel any trips they do not require. Registrants are encouraged to cancel a trip as soon as they are aware it will not be required.

When a rider does not show for the service, the Service Provider will automatically cancel any of that rider's remaining of trips for the day unless they hear from the rider. Riders who do not show up for the trip are required to pay for the regular fare for the No-Show, and this fare must be paid the next time the service is used. If a rider has four (4) or more No-Shows within a calendar month they may incur a temporary suspension from the service. Riders may request medical appointment trips during a temporary suspension by calling the Service Provider.

Any appeal of temporary service suspension shall be received in writing by the Municipality.

Code of Conduct

This specialized transit service is a pre-booked, shared-ride transportation service. All Registrants, Support Persons and Companions are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of other riders and the driver to ensure the safe delivery of service. Incidences of conduct or behavior that is contrary to this will be brought to the attention of the Municipality. They will be responsible for the investigation of the incident and for taking the appropriate action which may result in the suspension of the individual from the service.

Multiple violations of the code of conduct may result in the Municipality issuing a letter of trespass.

Passenger Responsibilities

Passengers shall:

- Have exact fare (cash only) ready.
- Be ready 5 minutes ahead of their scheduled time. The driver is not required to wait more than 5 minutes past the pick-up time. Drivers will not report to reception or enter a residence to collect or locate passengers.
- If passengers must cancel, they shall do so as far in advance as possible.
- Be as flexible as possible in arrangements for a ride. Allow up to a 20-minute wait from their scheduled pick-up time, especially in bad weather.
- Wear seatbelts and remain seated when the vehicle is in motion.
- Not smoke or vape on the bus.

- Be considerate and courteous of the Operator and other passengers at all times.
- Ensure there is a clear accessible path to their door before pick-up and drop-off times, even in the winter months. Safe access to the property is the passenger's responsibility. Inaccessible paths may result in refusal of service.
- Ensure they keep all personal and health information up to date, including their phone number and address.

Fares

For detailed information on the rate schedule, please visit dysartetal.ca/dymo.

Service Hours

Specialized transit hours are Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The determination of the service levels, hours and fares rests exclusively with Dysart et al Council.

Subject to driver availability, Specialized Transit is available on Statutory Holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day.

Support Person

A Registrant may be required, as determined through the registration process, to have a Support Person travelling with them. The Support Person must board and exit the vehicle at the same time and place as the Registrant. A Support Person will not be charged while assisting a Registrant.

Companions

Subject to vehicle capacity, a Registrant may have up to two (2) Companions travel with them on the service. The Registrant must indicate at the time of booking the trip how many Companions are travelling. Companion travel is restricted based on vehicle capacity. All Companions must pay the prevailing fare with the exception of children under the age of five (5). The Companion(s) must board and exit the vehicle at the same time and place as the Registrant and must be able to wear a standard seat belt.

Service Animals

Certified service animals that are needed to assist Registrants will be accommodated. Riders are requested to advise the dispatcher that a service animal will be accompanying them at the time of booking to ensure accommodation. Riders may be required to provide service animal certification upon request by the driver. Please

ensure that you have this documentation with you when you travel on the Specialized Transit. Animals who pose a health or safety risk will not be allowed to travel.

Pets

Riders are requested to advise the dispatcher that a pet will be accompanying them at the time of booking to ensure accommodation. Securely leashed or contained and/or caged dogs and non-exotic pets under the control of the owner shall be permitted, depending on schedule availability. Animals who pose a health or safety risk will not be allowed to travel.

Service Guidelines

Emergency Preparedness and Response

In case of the need to evacuate the transit vehicle due to an accident or emergency, the Operator will immediately contact dispatch who will contact emergency services and advise the Municipality.

The driver should be prepared to evacuate the transit vehicle in emergencies such as but not limited to fire, fuel leak, and or any situation where the transit vehicle is in a dangerous position. If the ramp does not function the Operator will manually deploy the ramp.

Booking Regular Trips

A permanent booking arrangement for service for Registrants who travel on a regular pre-determined basis may be accommodated for destinations such as work, post-secondary school or medical purposes but is limited to one booking arrangement per Registrant.

Time of Pick-Up

The driver will knock or buzz when they arrive at a residence unless otherwise requested by the Client. Clients are encouraged to board the vehicle as soon as possible once it has arrived so that the service can be as efficient and flexible as possible.

The Service Provider is allowed to arrive at a pick-up point up to 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time and up to 10 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

If a service delay exceeding 30 minutes occurs, the dispatcher will call all affected Clients to inform them of the delay. If a Client wishes to be contacted via email, they must inform the dispatcher at the time of booking. If a Client does not wish to wait and

makes other arrangements for transportation, they are asked to call and inform the dispatch service.

When a Client is not at the designated pick-up area, drivers shall not leave a pickup point prior to five minutes past the booked pick-up time unless the Client has boarded.

Service Disruptions

As per the Municipality of Dysart et al's Accessible Customer Service Policy, the Municipality will make reasonable effort to provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the DYMO Bus services.

This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Additional information such as a contact person or time with which the notice will be updated may also be included where reasonable. This notice will be posted in visible places, or on the Municipality's website, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances, as soon as reasonably possible.

Driver Assistance

Door to Door

Drivers may assist Clients from "door" to "door". Riders must ensure that the pathway to the door is accessible, clear of snow, ice and any objects that may present a safety risk to the Client or driver.

The door shall also be within 50m from the transit vehicle and allow the driver to remain in sight of the transit vehicle.

Drivers will see that the Client is safely inside the first outermost door at their destination. Drivers will not report to reception, specific locations or other medical locations to locate a customer. Entering private homes, unlocking doors or waiting for someone to arrive to open the door is also not permitted by the driver.

Assistance (Steps and Ramps)

Driver assistance to the door will be provided, upon request, if the assistance can be provided in a safe and effective manner for both the Client and the driver.

Responsibility for Operation for the Vehicle

The driver "at all times" is responsible for the safe and effective operation of the vehicle. This includes operating speeds and routing (consistent with driver schedule), passenger safety, health, comfort, and security.

Operation of Personal Lifts

The driver will not operate a lift at a Client's residence. Clients, or their Support Person, are required to operate personal lifts.

Entering the Client's Residence

Drivers do not enter Client's residence; however, the driver may help a Client from "door to door".

Long Term Care, Retirement and Group Home Facilities

Long Term Care, Retirement and Group Home Facilities shall ensure that Clients are ready at the scheduled time of pick-up and, if required, shall escort the Client to the bus. Drivers will not report to reception. If the Client is not accompanied by a Support Person, the Client must be able to load themselves on the ramp and secure their wheelchair with very little guidance from the driver.

Multi Access Facilities

For some locations with more than one entrance, the dispatch service will indicate which entrance that has been designated for pick-up and drop off.

Notwithstanding the above, special arrangements may be made at the time of booking for an alternate drop-off or pick-up location as long as the alternate location provides for the safety of the Clients and may be used by specialized transit vehicles without violating parking or similar regulations.

Where there is no designated pick-up location at a multi access facility, the pick-up location should be arranged at the time of booking.

Vehicles Unattended

At no time will the bus be left unattended while Clients are on board unless assisting a Client to the entrance. The driver must have the bus in sight and be in close proximity.

Refueling of Vehicles

There will be no refueling of the bus while Clients are on board.

No Smoking or Vaping Permitted

No Smoking signs will be installed in an appropriate place on the bus and no smoking or vaping of any kind shall be enforced and adhered to by the vehicle operator and specialized transit Clients.

Clients Requiring Oxygen

Persons requiring oxygen while in transit will be considered eligible provided the oxygen system is appropriately secured.

Mobility Aids

Drivers shall verbally guide riders with the positioning mobility aids on the vehicle ramp. Drivers shall secure any mobility aids and assist with belts and seatbelts as required.

Parcels and Personal Belongings

If a rider cannot manage carry-on items on their own, they will need to ensure they are travelling with a Support Person or Companion to assist. Riders must maintain control of their packages while on the bus. Drivers are not responsible for any damage to personal belongings or parcels that may occur during transport.

Clients with Scooters

Clients using a 3-wheel scooter (with or without guide wheels) are encouraged to transfer to the bus seats during transit. In the case where a Client is unable to do so unassisted, the Client must be accompanied by a Support Person to assist. Specialized Transit Drivers will not assist with the transfer.

Clients using a 4-wheel scooter have the option to transfer to the bus seats during transit as long as it is physically possible for the Client to do so without assistance from the driver.

Wheelchairs and Other Equipment

Service will be denied to any Client for the following safety reasons:

- Any wheelchair or similar type vehicle which, in the opinion of the Service Provider, cannot be accommodated safely on the ramp or in the vehicle;
- Any wheelchair or similar type vehicle that cannot be completely controlled by the Client;
- Any wheelchair or similar type vehicle which, in the opinion of the Service Provider, is in poor condition, e.g. flat tires;
- Wheelchairs or mobility scooters longer than 48" (1.2 meters) or wider than 32" (81.3 cm).
- Wheelchairs or mobility scooters with rider shall not exceed a combined weight of 1000 lbs.

Lost and Found

Drivers shall review the bus after every shift to collect any lost or found items. Those items are to be store in the transit facility and riders shall contract the Operator to arrange for pickup of any lost and found items.

Driver Code of Conduct

The responsibility for driver behaviour rests exclusively with the Service Provider. The Service Provider is responsible for providing and supervising drivers to operate the bus, including back-up drivers, in accordance with the terms and conditions of their contract

and in accordance with all operational rules and/or regulations. The Service Provider will ensure that drivers complete *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* training.

Driver behaviour that is contrary to the safe, effective and efficient delivery of service will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate conduct with Clients, inappropriate language, and/or general rowdiness.

Drivers are required to adhere to all policies, procedures and/or rules governing the provision of the service. For greater clarity and without limiting generality of the foregoing, the following will apply with respect to driver behaviour:

- At all times drivers are to conduct themselves as professional transportation providers. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining a good service attitude, being well-groomed, polite and considerate of the public, and avoiding conflict and/or confrontation with Clients and/or Support Persons by using effective communication skills.
- At all times, drivers are responsible to ensure the safety of Clients while the bus is in service. This includes, but is not limited to, being alert and well rested at all times, making the use of good defensive driving techniques, no illegal drugs or alcohol in their system while on duty, avoiding the use of prescription medications that may impair judgment and/or motor skills, and no use of narcotics or other habit-forming drugs.
- Smoking on the bus is prohibited.
- Drivers will not distribute literature or other such items on the bus, without the prior approval of the Municipality.
- Drivers will be personable with Clients but not personal. This includes, but is not limited to, not asking personal questions or giving personal information about themselves or others, not encouraging or initiating flirtations with Clients, telling or encouraging others to tell jokes with sexual, racial, ethnic or gender connotations, and gossiping or making negative comments about Clients, office staff, management, other drivers, contractors or others.
- Drivers are to conduct themselves as professional transportation providers. Driver conduct/behaviour that is contrary to expectations will not be tolerated and could result in the driver being suspended from operation.
- If a driver is running more than 30 minutes behind the Scheduled Times according to the driver's schedule, they are required to contact their supervisor so that arrangements can be made to inform the Clients.

Incidents that are contrary to the above are to be brought to the attention of the Municipality. The contractor will be responsible for the investigation of the incident and taking the appropriate action.

Driver Procedural Guidelines

Drivers shall:

- Be responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the bus;
- Ensure the bus arrives at the proper accessible entrance at the pick-up location;
- Exit the vehicle and greet each passenger;
- Provide general passenger assistance in boarding and disembarking the bus within reason. Passenger assistance may include guiding them to the vehicle, lending a steady arm for balance in entering and exiting the vehicle;
- Follow the passenger up the ramp to ensure their safe entrance onto the bus;
- Use four (4) tie-downs to secure a wheelchair or mobility scooter;
- Be aware that on occasion a passenger may need to make an unscheduled stop due to the nature of their disability;
- Always come to stand in front of the individual as they exit the vehicle; and
- Maintain their schedule when time, traffic and weather conditions permit.

Drivers shall not:

- Push, pull or lift riders getting on or off the transit vehicle;
- Park on private driveways (with the exception of the Client's driveway if that is the pick-up location);
- Make adjustments or repairs to mobility aids;
- Help riders go up or down flights of stairs, carry parcels, baggage, personal effects or heavy articles;
- Lift wheelchairs or scooters up or downstairs;
- Report to reception, specific stations or other medical locations to find Clients;
- Open/Close/Lock/Unlock doors, enter private homes or wait for someone to arrive to open the door;
- Assist with fare payment by looking into bags, backpacks, coats or other personal belongings; and
- Wait more than 5 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time.