

# **TRI-CAP TRANSIT CONNECTION**

## **BUS SERVICE POLICY Effective 1-01-2017**

### **Description of Service**

Tri-CAP Transit Connection is a public bus transportation program operating within Benton, Morrison, Sherburne and Stearns Counties. Tri-CAP is committed to providing safe, dependable, affordable and courteous transit service to the residents of Benton, Morrison, Sherburne and Stearns Counties. All buses are fully accessible. We provide curb-to-curb service in our designated areas. Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service covers three geographic areas: a 15-mile radius of the Tri-CAP Offices in Waite Park and outside of the Metro Bus service area, a 10-mile radius of Morrison County Government Center in Little Falls including Pierz & Randall, and a 10 mile radius of Sauk Centre City Hall within Stearns County including all of Melrose. Our Flexible-Fixed Routes cover the rural areas as posted at [www.tricap.org](http://www.tricap.org) with deviation of up to ½ mile off the posted routes as schedules permit. Advance reservations are required for all bus services.

### **Non-Discrimination**

Tri-CAP Transit Connection will not discriminate against any individual. There are no income or age restrictions on this service. Tri-CAP provides equal opportunity in all services, activities, programs and employment practices without regard to race, color, sex, religion, political affiliation, national origin, age, marital status, height, weight, disability or sexual orientation. Certified service animals are allowed to ride on Tri-CAP buses and we ask that other passengers refrain from touching or talking to them. The owner must stay with the service animal and keep it under control at all times.

### **Hours of Operation & Office Closings**

Dispatch Center hours are Monday through Friday 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m and the City of Elk River 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. In addition, messages can be left on our voice mail system after hours, on weekends and holidays, however messages are not reviewed until the next regular business day. The office will be closed and there will be no bus service on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr, Day, February 20- In-service, Memorial Day, Independence Day, August 17-In-Service, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Thursday & Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Weather or emergency closings will be announced on the office voice mail and also on the following radio stations: WJON AM 1240 and WWJO FM 98.1 in St. Cloud, KASM AM 1150 and KDDG FM 105.5 in Albany and KLTF AM 960 and KFML FM 94.1 in Little Falls and KLCI-BOBFM 106 in Sherburne County. Bus service may be cancelled or limited to plowed roads depending on circumstances. In uncertain or potentially threatening weather, it is up the passenger to find out if the buses are running. Tri-CAP is unable to call individual passengers to inform them of weather cancellations.

### **Reservations**

All requests for bus service are to be made by calling the Tri-CAP dispatch center at 320-251-1612 or 1-888-765-5597. Reservations can be made up to two weeks in advance, but should always be made one business day ahead. **Effective October 1, 2016 ride reservations made less than 24 hours in advance will incur a .75 added charge per one way ride in addition to the standard fare.**

### **Fares**

The exact fare or appropriate Tri-CAP token is due upon boarding. Drivers cannot make change.

Community "in town" trips are \$1.25 per boarding or stop, due at time of each boarding or stop. Rural trips (city to city or rural to city) are \$3.00 per boarding or stop. Any additional

stops will be charged at the appropriate rate, that is an additional stop within a community will be \$1.25, and an additional stop that is rural or city to city is \$3.00; however additional stops will be limited depending on the needs of other passengers being transported.

#### **Child and Student Fares:**

When transported from the same origin and destination as a paying parent or guardian:

- Up to two children age 5 and under can ride free.
- Up to two additional children age 5 and under can ride at ½ fare.
- Up to four students ages 6 to 17 can ride at ½ fare.
- A maximum of four children and/or students can ride under free or discounted fares.

Children or students who are part of a special outing or group trip will pay regular full fare and do not qualify for the free or discounted fares.

Non-payment of fare will be cause for suspension of services until the outstanding bill is paid in full.

#### **Passenger Assistance**

Tri-CAP Transit Connection provides curb-to-curb service. Drivers are never permitted to enter a passenger's home. Passengers must be ready and waiting at the curb when the bus arrives. All wheelchair passengers must have a ramp at their home. Under no circumstances will the driver take a wheelchair up or down steps. For safety reasons, passengers using a scooter type electric cart may be asked to transfer to a bus seat. All wheelchairs and electric carts must fit properly on the lift mechanism and must be secured safely in order for the bus to transport. Passengers will care for themselves while on the bus or will be required to have an assistant ride with them. Tri-CAP reserves the right to assess the fit of each wheelchair/scooter to our equipment before transporting. We may suggest that an assistant accompany and/or help with the transport of a conveyance that could include loading and unloading as well as any other tasks for safe handling deemed necessary by Tri-CAP staff. We are unable to transport any wheelchair or scooter that does not fit properly on our lift or cannot be safely loaded and secured.

Drivers are not required to assist passengers with packages. Items carried on to the bus such as packages, back packs, suitcases, pet carriers, etc., must remain with the passenger at all times and may not obstruct the aisle or wheelchair securement area. For the safety of passengers and drivers, bicycles or other non-securable items are not permitted on the bus. Buses cannot wait for passengers at the bank, post office, etc. Drivers do not leave the bus to go into facilities or homes.

#### **Pick Up Window**

Passengers must allow a ten minute window on either side of the scheduled pickup time on the Dial-A-Ride routes, as the bus may be running either early or late due to scheduling, weather or traffic conditions. For example, if you are scheduled for a 9:00 pickup, the bus could arrive between 8:50 and 9:10 and you are expected to be ready. The bus will leave after waiting for three minutes.

#### **No-Show & Service Suspension Policy**

A no-show means any of the following:

1. A passenger who is not at the designed pick up point when the bus arrives, and has not cancelled the trip in advance.
2. A passenger who decides not to ride after the vehicle has arrived.
3. A passenger who cancels with less than 24 hours notice.

A passenger who has a no-show as defined above will be issued a warning letter within three working days of the offense for each occasion and could risk suspension from use of the service under the following guidelines:

- ◆ Within a three-month period beginning on the date of the first no-show warning, two warning letters will be mailed to the no-show passenger. If a third no-show occurs during the three-month period, the passenger will be suspended from using the service for 14 days. If the three-month period expires before three no-shows occur, the clock starts over on the three no-show rule.
- ◆ Within a 12-month period beginning on the date of the first no-show warning that resulted in a 14 day suspension, the second suspension will be for 30 days, the third is for 60 days and any subsequent is for 6 months.

### **Ride Cancellations**

Ride cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance whenever possible. At the discretion of the Tri-CAP office staff, cancellations of less than 24 hours may be defined as no-show appointments and follow the warning procedure outlined above. Just as with no-show appointments, repeat cancellations could result in suspension from service.

### **Passenger Conduct and Responsibility**

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 169.686, passengers must fasten and keep fastened the factory installed seat belt system while the bus is in motion. A person who provides a written certificate from a licensed physician verifying the inability to use a seatbelt because of a medical condition or physical disability will be exempt according to MS 169.686 subd 2. All passengers will behave in a courteous manner at all times with consideration for fellow passengers and Tri-CAP staff. Smoking or use of other tobacco products, e-cigarettes and consumption of food or beverages is prohibited, unless warranted by medical accommodation. Passengers using inappropriate language, engaging in horseplay, fighting or hitting, in possession of illegal drugs or who lack personal hygiene will not be permitted to utilize Tri-CAP's transportation services. Tri-CAP reserves the right to indefinitely or permanently suspend any passenger because of seat belt or conduct issues. Non-service animals must be contained in an appropriate carrier. Shirt and shoes are required. Alcoholic beverages can be transported only when the full original packaging is in-tact. Any opened case, open bottle or other opened alcoholic beverage container is strictly forbidden. All packages or shopping bags must leave the bus with the passenger. Anything left on the bus will be considered abandoned and disposed of accordingly. Children who ride alone must be able to wait at the designated pick up location for the arrival of the bus and able to care for themselves once they are on the bus. Preschool children pickups and drop-offs must be the same for everyday of the week.

Potentially unsafe conditions for passengers and/or vehicles may require changes in routes or schedules. Passengers will follow the instructions of the bus driver in the event of an emergency.

### **Passenger Comments and Complaints**

Comments and complaints can be registered with the Transportation Director by calling local 320-251-1612, toll free 1-888-765-5597, or writing to Tri-CAP Transit Director, P.O. Box 683, 1200 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Waite Park, MN 56387-0683.

### **Tri-CAP's Responsibilities**

Tri-CAP Transit Connection is responsible for providing clean, reliable, safe and efficient transit services. We do not take responsibility for any items left on the bus. Tri-CAP Transit Connection abides by all applicable federal, state and local regulations. We maintain a drug and alcohol free workplace. Tri-CAP Transit Connection reserves the right to refuse transportation to anyone who does not comply with these service standards.

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