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[www.facebook.com/PalaceTransit](https://www.facebook.com/PalaceTransit)

## Passenger Handbook

Palace Transit is pleased to serve the City of Mitchell and Davison County with public transportation service.

This services has a set of policies that passengers must follow. This handbook provides the policies pertaining to passenger responsibilities for our service. Please note that the policies are not new ones.

It is for the benefit of all passengers and the long-term survival of the transit system itself that policies regarding passenger responsibilities are adhered to. The policies in the handbook are simple to follow, and also critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of our system.

All passenger policies will be enforced in a consistent, fair manner. If you feel you have been dealt with unfairly, an appeals process and telephone comment number is also included in this handbook.

Following our guidelines will help your trip be pleasant, relaxing and trouble-free.

*Adopted by the Community Services Advisory Board on 6/10/21.*

**This transit agency is committed to providing non-discriminatory service.**

To request more information or to file a discrimination complaint, contact this transit agency or the South Dakota Department of Transportation at (605) 773-3574.

## Service Hours & Fares

### Monday-Friday

5:30am-7:00am	\$3 per one-way trip	
7:00am-5:00pm	\$2 per one-way trip	
5:00pm-6:00pm	\$3 per one-way trip	Last pickup is at 5:30pm

### Saturday

7:00am-4:00pm	\$3 per one-way trip	Last pickup is at 3:30pm
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### Sunday

7:00am-2:00pm	\$3 per one-way trip	Last pickup is at 1:30pm
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No Service will be provided on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve – Close at 12:00pm
- Christmas Day

All passengers are required to pay fare for each ride unless previous arrangements have been made with the office. Fares may be paid with token, cash or check to the bus operator while boarding the bus. If paying cash or check, the correct amount is required. Children under the age of 3 may ride for free with a paying adult.

If an individual over the age of 60 is unable to afford transportation service, arrangements for bus fares can be made at the Palace Transit office.

Wait Time - \$1.00 for the bus operator to wait 3 minutes after drop off. Bus Operators will NOT wait longer than 3 minutes as this causes a schedule delay for others. Wait time must be scheduled with the office when scheduling the trip.

Any rides beyond the City of Mitchell's city limits will be charged mileage of \$2.50 per mile plus regular fare (minimum of 1 mile fee if outside city limits).

Tokens may be purchased at the Palace Transit office located in the James Valley Community Center at 300 West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Mitchell, SD.

Palace Transit is a Medicaid provider. The Palace Transit office will need to verify that travel expenses will be covered by Medicaid before the ride is scheduled.

## **General Palace Transit Policies**

1. Stay properly seated and buckled while on the bus. Do not put your feet on the seats or back of seats and do not lie down on the seats.
2. Aisle must be kept clear of all loose objects at all times. All carry-on items must be able to be properly secured so that they do not pose a threat to others.
3. You must limit packages and bags to no more than one seat of space and area on the floor in front of the seat out of consideration to all customers, so please plan your shopping accordingly. Time and space do not permit more than this limit.
4. We do NOT transport furniture or larger items.
5. It is the NOT the responsibility of the bus operator to assist you with your bags and packages. An excessive amount of packages causes delays and the driver to run late.
6. Law prohibits firearms, knives and any other weapons on the transit vehicles.
7. Smoking, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, marijuana (including medical) and illegal drugs are not allowed.
8. Keep noise level to a minimum. The bus operator needs to be able to hear traffic and emergency vehicles.
9. Children under the age of three must ride with a parent or responsible guardian.
10. Passengers and/or care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are properly dressed for their ride. Bus operators will NOT assist a passenger with any article of clothing. Passengers who are not adequately dressed for the weather conditions will be refused service.
11. Palace Transit is NOT an ambulance service and will not take any passenger to the Emergency Room. If you require medical attention, please call 911. If a medical emergency occurs while onboard the transit vehicle, the bus operator will contact the office and medical personnel will be notified. If you have a medical condition you feel Palace Transit should be aware of, let the office know prior to scheduling services.
12. Palace Transit will not be held responsible for items that are damaged during transport.
13. Animals are allowed only if in a pet carrier (excluding service animals). Animals must stay by the passenger at all times.
14. Palace Transit has a no backing policy. Due to this policy, drivers will NOT pull into residential driveways or put themselves in a position which require backing up.
15. At the end of each shift the bus operator will bring in any items that have been left in the vehicles. Lost and found items will be retained in the Palace Transit office for 30 days.
16. Bus Operators will attempt to notify passenger of arrival by sounding horn.
17. Bus Operators will NOT assist any passenger in getting ready for their trip.
18. Please offer the seats closest to the door to the elderly and those who have a more difficult time moving about.

## **Scheduling/Canceling Rides**

If you need to schedule a ride, cancel a ride or make changes to an existing ride, you must contact dispatch in the Palace Transit office. Bus operators CANNOT take ride information.

Rides must be scheduled Monday-Friday by 4:00pm at least one day prior to your ride (if you need a ride on Monday, you must call by 4:00pm on the Friday before). Same day rides CANNOT be accepted per Federal Regulations.

Will call rides may be set up in advance when a passenger is unsure of the time of a return trip or unsure if they will need a ride on a certain day. We will do our best to accommodate will call rides, but priority will go to those who have scheduled a time for their rides in advance.

If you are planning on making more than one stop, those arrangements must be made with the transit office when scheduling your ride. Extra trips will NOT be made if they have not been previously scheduled with the transit office.

To cancel a ride, passengers must call the Palace Transit office at least 30 minutes before scheduled pickup time. If you do not call 30 minutes in advance, you will be charged the full fare per our No-Show Policy. Please be sure to cancel your rides as far in advance as possible so other passenger needs can be met.

If you anticipate being late for your scheduled pickup, please call the Palace Transit office.

## **Transportation for ages 3-18**

All passengers age 3-18 must have a rider registration form on file at the Palace Transit office. We ask that you visit with your children about our basic bus riding rules:

- Remain seated and buckled at all times.
- Use inside voices.
- Have your tokens ready for the bus driver upon pick up.
- No eating, drinking or chewing gum on the bus.
- No Bullying!

## **Scheduled Trips**

Palace Transit is public transportation and you will have to share rides. Routes are determined and based on routing software. You may not be taken directly to and from your destination. Passengers may remain onboard the Palace Transit bus for up to and possibly more than 1 hour depending on road conditions and schedules.

- Palace Transit makes every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. Due to the nature of the service, arrival times may vary.

- A 10-minute window has been established for everyone’s benefit. All passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to 10 minutes or the possibility of a 10 minute delay.  
Example: If you schedule a 9:30am pickup, the bus may arrive as early as 9:20am or as late as 9:40am.
- Passengers must be waiting at a designated pickup point at least 10 minutes before their pickup time. The No Show policy will apply if the passenger is not there when the bus arrives.
- All bus operators will wait only 3 minutes after arriving at the pickup location before leaving without the passenger. Waiting any longer can cause unnecessary delays. The No Show Policy will apply.
- In the event an appointment is completed prior to the scheduled return time, passengers are encouraged to notify the Palace Transit office that they are available for an early return. Every effort will be made to pick up the passenger as soon as possible, but if the demand for service does not allow, passengers will be picked up at their scheduled return time.
- Same day call-ins, including unscheduled requests for a return trip, will NOT be accepted. You must have a return ride scheduled to be brought to a location.
- Although Palace Transit cannot assure any specific pickup time unless scheduled, the passenger shall be held financially responsible for any will call trips missed per the No Show Policy, unless they notified the Palace Transit office 30 minutes prior to the bus arrival.

### **No Show Policy**

Any passenger who is not at their designated pickup point within 3 minutes after the bus has arrived will be considered a “No Show” and the bus operator will continue with the daily schedule.

Passengers will pay the full fare for any no shows before they will be allowed to ride Palace Transit again.

If no show fees are not paid within 30 days, fare will be invoiced at \$5.00 per ride.

### **Curb to Curb Service**

Palace Transit provides curb to curb service. The following policies explain the meaning and intent of curb to curb.

- Bus operators will NOT enter a private home, residential building, business, medical facility or public building for any reason including an attempt to find a passenger.
- Bus operators may assist passenger boarding and exiting the bus only.

- Bus operators may assist passengers into and from the inside door only at businesses, medical facilities or public buildings. Bus operators will NOT assist passenger past this point.
- It is the individual's personal care attendant or care providers responsibility to ensure that passengers are waiting at the door for their ride.
- If you have a cart for groceries, you must have it outside and ready. Bus operators will NOT go and get the cart or wait for you to retrieve the cart.

### **Seatbelt Policy**

All passengers of Palace Transit are required to wear a seatbelt. Passengers who refuse to wear a seatbelt will be denied service (unless a written notice has been filed and approved with the Palace Transit office).

Do not remove your seatbelt until the bus has made a complete stop at your destination.

If a car seat is used, it is the passenger's responsibility to make sure that the car seat is properly secured.

In accordance with the City of Mitchell policy, all Palace Transit Bus Operators are required to wear seatbelts while the vehicle is in motion.

### **Wheelchair/Special Service**

Palace Transit vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. If a rider is unable to complete travel by his/herself an attendant/escort will be required to assist the rider.

Palace Transit does not furnish wheelchairs.

If a passenger is unable to board a Palace Transit vehicle because of steps, the passenger may use the wheelchair lift to board the bus and must use the handrails if standing.

All passengers riding in wheelchairs must allow the driver to properly secure the wheelchair per the manufacturer's recommendations.

Bus operators will NOT assist any passenger in or out of a wheelchair at any time. If such a condition exists, passengers are responsible for arranging assistance from someone other than Palace Transit staff.

Under no circumstances will a bus operator be allowed to assist a person in a wheelchair up or down any steps or ramp.

Only Palace Transit Bus Operators are allowed to operate the lift.

### **Aide/Companion Riders**

For medical trips, a single personal care attendant/aide who is directly involved in the mobility assistance of their attendee will be allowed to ride free of charge. All non-medical trips will require attendant to pay for their bus fare.

Aides must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the client and must be scheduled with the Palace Transit office at the same time the trip is scheduled.

Any other person riding with a passenger will be considered a companion and will be required to pay the full fare.

### **Oxygen Dependent Passengers**

Palace Transit will provide transportation to passengers who are dependent upon portable oxygen, consistent with their needs and care planning.

Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate these passengers consistent with good safety practices.

All drivers and others who assist in transportation will be aware of the features and problems associated with portable oxygen.

The following general procedures apply:

- All oxygen containers must be secured during transportation.
- Containers, which are normally secured to a wheelchair, may stay in those securements.
- Containers, which are attached to mobility aides such as a wheeled walker, must be separately secured to the vehicle.
- Unless special approval is received, only one portable tank may be carried per oxygen dependent passenger.
- Requests for special approval must be made to the Transportation Operations Supervisor prior to scheduled ride.

### **Service Animals**

Service animals are defined as follows: *Any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or mental health disability.*

Control of the service animal is the responsibility of the care taker. Palace Transit is not required to provide care or food for a service animal or provide a special location for it to relieve itself.

Palace Transit employees may ask if the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

Service animals may be removed from the transit vehicle if:

1. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it (for example, a dog that barks repeatedly).
2. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

### **Food & Drinks**

Food may be transported in a Palace Transit vehicle but must remain in its original package or a sealed container and may not be opened or consumed onboard. Gum is not allowed to be chewed on board the bus.

Beverages must be kept in a sealable container at all times and must remain unopened. Fast food restaurant cups or cans are not allowed.

Do not leave trash on the floor or between seats.

### **Refusing Service**

Palace Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who (but not limited to):

- Intoxicated
- Disruptive
- Belligerent/Rude
- Poses a safety threat or health threat to themselves or others
- Unreasonable personal hygiene
- Profane/Inappropriate language and/or actions
- Has a contagious illness/infection
- Excessive No-Shows
- Not following Palace Transit's policies

If any inappropriate behavior occurs or policies are not followed, Palace Transit reserves the right to enforce the following steps:

1. First offense: A warning letter will be sent.
2. Second offense: A second letter will be sent which will result in rides being discontinued for 1 week.
3. Third offense: A third and final letter will be sent and rides will be discontinued indefinitely.

## **Weather**

As a Palace Transit passenger, you must keep abreast of weather conditions that may affect service. Additional travel time may be required for certain weather related road conditions.

We ask that all passengers help avoid any delays by being on time and having the correct fare ready. Please clean your footwear of snow and slush before boarding so it does not gather on the steps or floor of the bus, causing danger to others.

All passengers must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before boarding and before leaving your seat. Be prepared for sudden stops while riding the bus.

At all times, watch your step, wear your seatbelt and wear appropriate winter clothing.

Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their homes accessible to the Palace Transit bus operators. Bus operators are NOT allowed to assist passengers through snow or across ice.

If a passenger schedules service knowing that a path has not been cleared to their homes, the trip will be considered a no show and that policy will apply.

Severe weather can affect Palace Transit service. The following service reductions may occur any time hazardous road conditions exist:

- Time intervals will increase.
- Some routes may be shortened or canceled.
- Bus service on less traveled streets, especially those not plowed or sanded may be canceled.
- Absolutely NO alley travel allowed.
- In severe weather, all passengers will be taken home immediately.

Palace Transit will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exists which makes travel unsafe, Palace Transit reserves the right to discontinue service until conditions are favorable.

During severe weather, service may only be available to necessary rides based on Palace Transit's discretion. We do not consider routine medical appointments, hair appointments, or shopping a necessary ride based on weather.

If service is temporarily discontinued, all rides, regardless of purpose will be cancelled.

## **Appeal Process**

If a passenger is in disagreement with any penalty resulting from the enforcement of the policies, a written request for appeal may be submitted to:

Palace Transit  
300 W 1<sup>st</sup> Ave  
Mitchell, SD 57301

Appeals must be presented in writing or in person. If you prefer a hearing, please indicate this in your written request for appeal. Also indicate if special accommodations or requirements are needed.