

# **STEWARTVILLE HEARTLAND EXPRESS CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

## **Introduction**

The ability to get from one place to another is a necessity for any citizen who wants to participate in recreational activities or to enjoy a full and stimulating social life. It is the mission of Stewartville Heartland Express to provide efficient, effective, and quality bus service to the citizens of Stewartville. The City has provided public transportation since 1999 and will continue to do so as long as sufficient public funding is available.

This document outlines specific service standards for the operation and management of Stewartville Heartland Express. These standards have been developed through the review of previous service guidelines, present service capacities, and compliance with State and Federal guidelines.

## **Description of Service**

The Stewartville Heartland Express provides a dial-a-ride service to the general public within the city limits of the City of Stewartville and surrounding area. The transit bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift that is accessible to all individuals.

## **Service Availability**

Stewartville Heartland Express provides service Monday through Friday 8:30-5:30. Stewartville Heartland Express does not provide service on New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, ½ day on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and 1/2 day on New Years Day. If any of these holidays land on the weekend, the day prior to or following will be considered a holiday.

## **Trip Reservation Procedure**

Trip reservations can be made from 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. We request a 24 hour advance but will accommodate those who are not able to do so.

When requesting service, give the dispatcher your origin, destination and desired pick-up time.

All requests for service shall be met within the constraints of available capacity in terms of routing and scheduling. All attempts shall be made to provide service within a period of 45 minutes of the time that is requested. Everything possible will be done to arrange an alternative travel time that is acceptable to the passenger. Only in the event that a suitable travel time cannot be arranged will a trip request be denied.

## **Fares**

Each fare is applicable for a one-way trip. Passengers are requested to have their fare ready and to pay upon boarding the vehicle. Tokens can be purchase in advance at City Hall. You must present the exact fare. Drivers are not able to make change or handle the fare for the passenger. Once the passenger disembarks from the vehicle, or arrives at a destination, one trip is completed. Upon entering the vehicle again, a new trip commences and the passenger will be required to pay a new fare.

## **Passenger Assistance**

The Stewartville Heartland Express provides curb to curb service. Drivers have been trained in passenger assistance techniques. Drivers are required to follow the passenger assistance guidelines listed below:

- Drivers may assist passengers in entering and exiting the vehicle only if this does not pose a risk to the passenger or the driver.
- Drivers are not required to assist passengers with packages. Items brought onto the bus must remain with the passenger and may not obstruct the aisle or wheel chair securement area.
- If you need assistance walking from your home to the curb, you must find your own assistant. Drivers cannot enter or cross the threshold of any dwelling. One companion may ride free when assisting a wheel chair passenger.
- Drivers cannot take wheel chairs up or down steps for any reason.
- Drivers reserve the right to refuse loading or unloading at a location that they deem unsafe.
- Buses cannot wait for passengers at the bank, post office, etc.

## **In Vehicle Travel Time**

In vehicle travel time for any user shall not exceed 45 minutes. Exceptions may apply in emergency situations or under unforeseen circumstances.

## **Bus Waiting Policy**

Passengers should be ready 10 minutes before their scheduled pickup time at the designated pickup site. The bus may arrive up to 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Vehicles shall wait a maximum of three (3) minutes before leaving. After three (3) minutes the bus will leave and not return.

## **Cancellations**

All passengers are requested to cancel trips at least two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time.

## **Late Pick-Ups**

Transit vehicles could be later than the passenger's scheduled pick-up time due to vehicle breakdown, inexactness of vehicle trips, delays due to traffic or trains, etc. Please allow 10 minutes to pass beyond your scheduled pick-up time before calling the dispatcher to inquire about your ride.

## **Companions**

A companion may travel with a passenger in need of assistance. Passengers who are unable to independently conduct themselves outside of the vehicle should have a personal care attendant or companion present to assist the passenger. Stewartville Heartland Express reserves the right to require a personal care attendant or assistant when transporting a passenger that has a documented medical or behavior condition that could pose an unsafe situation for either the driver or any of the other passengers. One companion may ride free. Companions must embark and disembark at the same location as the passenger that they are assisting.

## **Pets**

Pets are not permitted on Stewartville Heartland Express, with the exception of trained animals used as assistance aids.

## **Safety**

All passengers are requested to promptly seat themselves and to use the seat belts. Federally approved car seat be used for young children. All passengers in wheel chairs are to be safely secured by the driver, when the vehicle is in motion. For safety reasons, persons using a 3-wheel electric cart will be requested to transfer to a bus seat.

Passengers who use the lift will be assisted onto and off the lift by the driver. Drivers will always operate the lift and will keep the passenger under surveillance at all times.

## **Inclement Weather Procedures**

Stewartville Heartland Express will not operate if road conditions are deemed unsafe. Announcements will be made on the local radio station, KYBA Y105 FM, local cable access channel, and posted on the City's web site.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Please be aware that the driver is in command of the vehicle. We request that you follow his or her instruction, especially in the case of an emergency. The driver will assess unsafe conditions and will make the decision to load or unload at an alternate location or to seek shelter during severe weather.

In the event of an accident or on-vehicle emergency procedures, you will be asked to:

- Follow the driver's instruction
- Remain calm
- Make an orderly evacuation of the vehicle if warranted, staying off the roadway in a safe location until further notice

If you or another passenger become ill, injured or in distress while on the vehicle please notify the driver or another passenger that you need assistance.

### **Passenger Conduct and Responsibility**

All passengers are expected to behave in a courteous manner with consideration for fellow passengers. No eating or drinking or open containers are allowed on the bus. No tobacco products, inappropriate language, bothering of other passengers, horseplay, fighting, carrying of weapons, or possessing illegal drugs will be allowed on the vehicle.

Passengers must secure all personal items and belongings while riding the bus. Stewartville Heartland Express is not responsible for items left on vehicles.

Drivers reserve the right to deny entrance into a vehicle if the passenger appears disorderly or leads the driver to conclude that the passenger will exhibit disruptive behavior that would pose a safety threat not only to the driver but also the other passengers. Stewartville Heartland Express reserves the right to refuse service to anyone who violates any of the standards.

Failure to adhere to the above policies may result in the following:

- First Offense: Verbal warning from the driver, dispatcher or transit manager.
- Second Offense: Written warning from the transit manager
- Third Offense: The passenger will be prohibited from using the transit system for a designated period of time, based upon the severity of the violation.

*If the violation is serious, the driver has the discretion to terminate the passenger's ride immediately, omitting steps one and two. If violations continue following suspension, the passenger may be suspended indefinitely.*

### **Lost and Found**

Please contact Stewartville Heartland Express – 533-8775 to inquire about lost items. All items found on the bus will be turned into the dispatcher.

## **Passenger Comments and Complaint Procedures**

Stewartville Heartland Express is committed to providing safe, cost-effective transit service. If for any reason you would like to make a comment or file a written complaint you may do so by addressing your concern to the following address:

Cheryl Roeder, Deputy Clerk  
City of Stewartville  
PO Box 275  
Stewartville MN 55976  
Phone: 507-533-8775  
E-mail: [croeder@stewartvillemn.com](mailto:croeder@stewartvillemn.com)

Comment forms are available on all buses.

## **Non-Discrimination**

Stewartville Heartland Express will not discriminate against any individual, regardless of age, race, color, sex and/or national origin.

Adopted: July 2003