

Gananoque Wheels of Care Association Policies and Procedures

Overview

Gananoque Wheels of Care is a pre-booked, shared ride, door to door transportation service for persons that cannot use customary transportation due to disability or medical conditions.

The Gananoque Wheels of Care Board of Directors oversees the operation of the Gananoque Wheels of Care. The Board is made up of members of the public (volunteers). Gananoque Wheels of Care is a not for profit charitable organization funded by passenger fares, municipal funding and fund raising. All drivers are volunteers. As a non profit charitable organization Gananoque Wheels of Care accepts donations which go to offset operating and capital costs.

The policies and procedures set out in this document reflect the unique characteristics defining the Gananoque Wheels of Care specialized transportation service. The policies and procedures intend to balance the transportation needs of all passengers, and the current economic realities. These policies and procedures are subject to change (additions, deletions, and amendments) from time to time as considered appropriate by the Gananoque Wheels of Care.

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Service Concerns

Policy issues and /or unresolved problems relating to the delivery of the Wheels of Care services are to be brought to the attention of the board president.

Service Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm. Exceptions can be made depending on the availability of a volunteer driver. Service is available on statutory holidays.

Service Area

Gananoque Wheels of Care services the Town of Gananoque and the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

Fares

The fare paid by clients shall be determined by the Gananoque Wheels of Care Board of Directors or its representative. Fares are tendered as determined by the call center at the time of reservation.

Eligibility

The service is available to all residents of the Town of Gananoque and Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands who are unable to use or do not have access to a personal vehicle due to disability or medical conditions. Eligibility is considered on a case by case basis, not based on a specific health condition. Health care providers cannot guarantee eligibility.

Door to Door Service

Wheels of Care drivers will escort the client from the outermost entry door of their pick-up location , and see that client is safely inside the outermost door at their destination.

Shared Ride Service

Other passengers will be picked up and dropped off during the same time period/trip.

Bookings

All bookings are made on a “first come, first served” basis with no prioritization of trips. Bookings are accepted starting 14 days in advance. All bookings, modifications or cancellations of trips may be made by anyone representing a client based on the understanding that all such bookings, modifications or cancellations are the sole responsibility of the client, and the client must have given (if able) prior authorization to do so. Any late cancellation fees must be paid.

It is critical for clients to call and cancel any trips they do not require. Clients are encouraged to cancel a trip as soon as they are aware it will not be required.

Any client with an in arrears account will not be eligible until their account is cleared.

Trips Requests Outside of Service Area; Statutory Holidays

The Wheels of Care service is limited to the “regular service area” as outlined in the Wheels of Care Constitution. This includes appointments to Kingston and Brockville.

Exceptions may only be made if a client living in the service area has a medical appointment outside the area.

Each case must be approved by the Wheels of Care Board of Directors or their representative. Statutory holiday booking requests for trips may be accepted depending on driver availability. Charter trips are available.

Late Cancellation & No-show Policy

A fee will be charged for cancellations and no shows occurring without 24hours notice.

Passenger Code of Conduct

All passengers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of other passengers, the driver and the safe delivery of service. Passengers are required to adhere to all policies, procedures an/or rules governing the provision of the service. For clarification and without limiting the generality of the foregoing will apply with respect to passenger behaviour:

Passenger behaviour that is disruptive to the delivery of the service and /or other passengers will not be tolerated; this includes but is not limited to vandalism, inappropriate language, general rowdiness and/or personal interference with other passengers and /or the driver.

Fares are arranged through the call centre.

Passengers are to adhere to driver instructions regarding boarding and un-boarding the vehicle.

Smoking on the vehicle is prohibited.

Passengers will not distribute literature or other such items, on the vehicles without the prior approval of the Wheels of Care Board.

All passengers must wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions, including footwear when using the service, unless the latter are not worn for medical/health reasons.

All passengers must wear a seatbelt.

Many individuals have fragrance sensitivity thus passengers are to refrain from wearing scented products while being transported.

Passenger conduct/behaviour that is contrary to Wheels of Care policies will not be tolerated and could result in the passenger being suspended from the service.

Incidents that are contrary to the above are to be brought to the attention of Wheels of Care Board or it's representative. A representative of the Board will be responsible for the investigation of the incident and for recommending appropriate action.

Service Guidelines

Caregiver No-show

A caregiver must be present for all rides unless client has a “no attendant” designation. Should a caregiver not be present at time of pick up drivers will not provide service. The Trip will be considered as a no show and charged.

Door to Door

Drivers shall escort passengers on and off the bus. Caregiver to provide any additional assistance required by the client. Drivers must see that the client is safely inside door at destination (provided proper visibility of the vehicle can be maintained). Drivers are not required to “search” for clients, nor are they required to ring buzzers at multi-residence apartments.

Entering the Passenger's Residence

Drivers are not to enter a client's residence. Drivers are not to search in passengers belongings (eg. Purse, coat) for keys.

Groceries, parcels, luggage, etc.

Drivers are not required to assist with groceries, parcels, luggage, or similar packages. The client is responsible for someone else to assist an individual or that individual must be able to independently carry on such items. The number of items transported is limited to that which can be safely stored and/or secured on the bus. Wheels of Care will permit personal shopping carts or “bundle buggies” with the following guidelines:

The cart/buggie must not exceed 28 inches wide by 28 inches long.

The cart/buggie must be secured by the vehicle wheelchair restraints. Passengers are not permitted to hold the cart in place during transit.

All items must be inside the cart. Bags and parcels cannot be hanging outside the cart.

The passenger is responsible for getting the cart to/from the bus.

Gananoque Wheels of Care and/or drivers are not responsible for ANY damage to carts or their contents.

Passengers with Scooters

It is recommended that passengers utilizing 4-wheel scooters transfer to a regular vehicle seat during transit as long as it is physically possible for the passenger to do so. All passengers utilizing 3 wheel scooters MUST transfer to a regular seat during transportation and be capable to do so with minimal assistance.

Path of Travel

It is the responsibility of the passenger (either directly or through third party management) to ensure ramps, driveways, steps and sidewalks are clear of snow and ice, and in good repair facilitating a safe and effective manner for both passenger and driver. Unsafe conditions at the pickup and or drop-off point may result in transportation being denied.

Refueling of Vehicle

Generally there will be no refueling of vehicle while passengers are on board.

Responsibility for Operation of the Vehicle

The driver “at all times” is responsible for the safe and effective operation of the vehicle. This includes operating speeds and routing, passenger safety, health, comfort and securement. At no time is anyone but the driver to secure wheelchairs or other devices.

Seat belts

Seat belts must be worn by ambulatory passengers at all times unless prior medical exemption documentation is provided. Passengers are to remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.

Trays on wheelchairs

Wheelchairs equipped with trays and/or accessory poles may limit the ability of the driver to properly apply the vehicle equipped seat belt. Drivers are not responsible for moving these items in order to apply the seat belt. Wheels of Care is not responsible if these items make applying the seat belt impossible.

Use of vehicle wheelchair lift

Brakes on all mobility devices must be applied and hold in the “on” position and/or power be deactivated for powered mobility devices. Passengers are not permitted to manually hold the brakes in the on position while on the lift. Passengers who use walkers may sit on the walker while on the lift provided the mobility device has a seat. Please note: that a single strap is not considered a seat. Support persons/companions are not permitted to ride the lift with a passenger. Only drivers are permitted on the lift with a passenger. All wheelchairs and scooters must be placed on the lift with the passenger's back facing the vehicle.

Vehicle Unattended

At no time is the vehicle to be left unattended while passengers are on board unless

assisting a passenger to/from the entrance. Wheels of Care drivers must maintain the

Wheels of Care vehicle in sight and in close proximity at all times.

Wheelchair and other Mobility Equipment

Service can be denied to any passenger whose wheelchair or mobility device, in the opinion of the service provider cannot be:

- accommodated safely on the vehicle lift; or
- cannot be secured safely in the vehicle; or
- is in unsafe condition e.g. flat tires

Driver Code of Conduct

The responsibility for driver behaviour rests exclusively with Gananoque Wheels of Care. Driver behaviour that is contrary to the safe, effective and efficient delivery of the service will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate conduct with passengers, unsafe driving practices, unsafe boarding, securement and exiting of passengers, inappropriate language and/or general rowdiness. Additionally, this applies to communications via the driver cell phone.

Drivers are required to adhere to all policies, procedures and/or rules governing the provision of the service. For greater clarification and without limited the 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 passengers and/or attendants/companions by using effective communication skills.

At all times, drivers are to ensure the safety of passengers while the vehicle is in service. This includes, but is not limited to, being alert and well rested at all times, making use of good defensive driving techniques, no illegal drugs, marijuana 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 vehicle is prohibited.

Drivers will adhere to all trip notes for clients.

Drivers will not distribute literature or other such items on the vehicles, without the prior approval of Gananoque Wheels of Care..

Drivers will be personable with passengers but not personal. This includes but is

not limited to not asking personal questions or giving personal information about

7themselves or others, telling or encouraging others to tell jokes with sexual, racial, ethnic or gender connotations, and gossiping or making negative comments about passengers, 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 or terminated from the operation. Incidents that are contrary to the above are to be brought to the attention of the Wheels of Care Vice President or his representative. He/she will be responsible for the investigation of the incident and taking the appropriate action.

Driver Communications

Drivers are to contact the call center (or after hours with the Wheels of Care Vice President or his/her representative) via cell phone, upon the occurrence of any irregularities or incidents.

Media Communications

All media communications will be through the Wheels of Care board representative to convey news to media outlets, and respond to their inquiries. No other persons are permitted to speak on behalf of the organization, releasing confidential information, releasing news, or communicating as a representative of the organization without the prior authorization to act as a designated representative. Any media inquiries will be directed to the designated representative.

Summary

The intent of this manual is not to replace any other document such as the Wheels of Care Constitution; it is meant to be a supplement to those documents in place, as a reference document. It also does not cover all aspects of the Wheels of Care service. The policies and procedures are subject to change (additions, deletions, and amendments) from time to time as considered appropriate by the Wheels of Care Association.