



Municipality of Meaford Corporate Policy

Policy: Specialized Transit Policy

Department:

Last Revision:

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1.0 Policy Statement

The Municipality of Meaford's Specialized Transit is a door-to-door pre-booked shared ride accessible public transit service for people with disabilities available to registered residents of the Municipality.

2.0 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 Municipality. Specialized Transit is a shared ride, door-to-door, pre-booked service where registrants can book



trips in advance, and are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. The two part application process helps determine qualification and is not based on the applicant's income or age.

3.0 Definitions

“Client Care Coordinator” – could include but not limited to an employee with Home & Community Care, support worker through the LHIN, or after care support team from the hospital who works or has worked with a specialized transit applicant.

“Companion” – a person or persons travelling with the registrant subject to vehicle capacity, paying regular fare and accessing the service at the same drop off and pick up locations as the registrant.

“Developmental Services Agency” – including but not limited to Community Living Meaford.

“Disability” – As per the Ontario Human Rights Code, disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder; or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

“Medical Appointment” – a scheduled appointment with a regulated health professional.

“Municipality” – The Corporation of the Municipality of Meaford.

“Registrant” – A Municipality of Meaford resident with a disability who has qualified and received an Identification card for Specialized Transit.

“Regulated Health Professional” includes the following:

- i. A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- ii. A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario

- iii. A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
- iv. A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
- v. A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
- vi. A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
- vii. A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
- viii. A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
- ix. A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

“Support Person” – In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to programs, services or facilities.

“Service Provider” – The contracted transit company that provides the operations and maintenance of the Municipality’s transit fleet, including scheduling, driving, vehicle maintenance and customer service.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

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

- 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 (dedicated and non-dedicated), vehicle maintenance, client service and system reporting.
- Administering a system for the processing of all related Client contacts, i.e. complaints, commendations, 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 of Meaford 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.

5.0 Eligibility

5.1 General Statement

Residents of the Municipality of Meaford with a disability may be eligible for Specialized Transit. Disabilities may be permanent and/or temporary and are those identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code including, but not limited to physical, sensory, cognitive and mental health disabilities. Qualification is not based on the applicant's income or age.

5.2 Eligibility Guidelines

To be eligible for Specialized Transit, criteria considered for applicants may include but is not limited to:

- The use of mobility devices for everyday activities;
- Medical condition preventing the applicant from obtaining a driver's license;
- Inability to walk 400 metres on even ground
- Inability to climb a step 35 centimetres high with support, or descend without support;
- Inability to keep track of time or find their bearings;
- Inability to communicate verbally or through sign language; and/or
- A disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code (see definitions).

There are two categories of eligibility for which the applicant can apply for; those being:

- Unconditional - A person with a permanent/chronic disability
- Temporary - A person with a temporary disability who requires access for a defined time period

Temporary passes may be issued for special circumstances at the discretion of the Accessibility Coordinator.

5.3 Appealing Eligibility

If a Specialized Transit application is denied, the applicant can appeal the decision in writing to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Within 30 days of receiving a complete appeal, a decision will be made. If more time is needed, the applicant shall be granted temporary eligibility until a final decision is made. The decision of the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall be final.

6.0 Registrations

6.1 How to Apply

The completed application including any related documentation is to be returned to:

Accessibility Coordinator
Municipality of Meaford
21 Trowbridge Street West
Meaford, N4L 1A1
transit@meaford.ca

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 situation, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 519-538-1060. No fee will be charged for applying for Specialized Transit.

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

6.2 Application Form

Part A – Applicant Information

- Applicant or designate needs to fill out of the Specialized Transit Application

Part B – Supporting Documentation or Medical Sign off

- Applicant must provide supporting documentation that can include one of the following:
 - Proof of CPP Disability Pension
 - Proof of ODSP
 - Proof of personal accessible parking permit
 - Proof of Access 2 Card (an Easter Seals Canada Program)
 - Proof that the applicant cannot obtain a driver's license for medical reasons
 - Letter from a Developmental Services Agency regarding use of services
- **OR** a health care professional or client care coordinator can complete Part B

Note: Both Part A and Part B must be completed in order for your application to be considered.



Return the completed application (Parts A and B) to the Accessibility Coordinator at: 21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford NH4L 1A1 or transit@meaford.ca . The Municipality of Meaford will provide notification of eligibility by mail, and any original documentation will be returned. All information on this application form will be kept confidential. Failure to completely fill out the application will delay the application process.

6.3 Identification Card

Approved applicants will be sent a numbered identification card valid for three (3) years, expiring at the end of the calendar year or for the anticipated length of a temporary disability. This card must be shown to the driver each trip when boarding and will indicate if a support person is required to travel with the registrant. The Identification Number must be provided when booking a Specialized Transit Trip. The identification card is the property of the Municipality of Meaford. The registrant, and support person where applicable, must adhere to its terms and conditions.

6.4 Support Person Requirement

A registrant may be required, as determined through the registration process, to have a Support Person travelling with them. The identification card issued to the registrant will provide the information for the Support Person who 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.

6.5 Companions Allowed

Subject to vehicle capacity, registrant may have up to two Companions travel with them on the service. The registrant will have to 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 three (3). 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.

6.6 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.



6.7 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. Visitors can apply by providing proof of registration for Specialized Transit in the municipality in which they live to the Accessibility Coordinator as well as the length of their stay to be considered for temporary approval.

7.0 Trip Cancellation

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.

8.0 Return Trip - Medical Professional Trips

Whenever possible, a return time can be booked. The Contractor uses a “Will-Call” system for medical appointments. The registrant is to call and advise the dispatch service when their appointment is completed, and a bus will be sent to pick up the registrant as soon as possible.

9.0 Code of Conduct

This specialized transit service is a pre-booked, shared ride transportation service. Accordingly all Registrants, Support Persons and Companions are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respectful of other Registrants, the driver and the safe delivery of service.

Incidences of conduct or behavior that is contrary to this will are to be brought to the attention of the Accessibility Coordinator who will be responsible for the investigation of the incident and for taking the appropriate action which may result in the suspension from the service. Suspension may be appealed to the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

10.0 Service Area

The service area is defined as the area within the Municipality of Meaford, as well as the City of Owen Sound, the Town of The Blue Mountains, and the Town of Collingwood for medical appointments only.

11.0 Service Guidelines

11.1 General Guidelines

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 15 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time and up to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Waiting 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 does not wish to wait and makes other arrangements for transportation, they are asked to call and inform the dispatch service. This will not be considered a “no-show”.

Leaving Pick-Up Point: When a Client is not at the designated pick-up area, Drivers shall not leave a pick-up point prior to ten minutes past the booked pick-up time unless the Client has boarded.

11.2 Subscription Bookings

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 subscription booking per registrant.

11.3 Clients with Scooters

Clients using a 3-wheel scooter with or without guide wheels are required to transfer to regular Transit vehicle 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. Client's using a 4-wheel scooter have the option to transfer to regular Transit vehicle seats during transit as long as it is physically possible for the Client to do so without assistance from the Driver.

11.4 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.
- Mobility scooters larger than 0.76m (30 inches) wide or 1.23m (48 inches) long.

12.0 Fares

Fares for specialized transit service shall be charged in accordance with the Fees & Charges By-law.

Contact

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Email: accessibility@meaford.ca

Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.