



# **Outline of General Public Demand Response Services**

**June 1, 2022**

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## **1.0 About COAST**

The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) has proudly served the Greater Seacoast region of New Hampshire (Rockingham and Strafford Counties) and parts of York County in Maine, with affordable, safe transportation since 1982. In that time, COAST buses have carried over 15.6 million passengers.

Originally founded as a private, non-profit organization in 1981, COAST was codified as an independent public body of the State of New Hampshire through the passage of NH RSA 239 by the Legislature in 1985. As a regional public transit system, COAST is not part of a specific municipal government (like in Nashua or Manchester), nor are we a transit authority like the MBTA. We work cooperatively with the towns and cities we serve to establish funding sources, routes and levels of service.

COAST is governed by a Board of Directors. The directors represent the communities served by COAST, as well as various local, regional, and statewide organizations that participate in COAST or have other connections to our organization. Our board meets monthly to set policy, approve contracts, and provide direction and oversight for the organization.

## **2.0 Description of Services**

COAST will provide demand response services to the general public on a space available basis. COAST will provide services for members of the general public—the customers do not need to individually apply for services.

### **2.1 Service Area**

All trips must remain within Farmington, Rochester, Somersworth, Dover, Durham, Lee, Barrington, Madbury, Rollinsford, Newington, Portsmouth, Greenland, Newmarket, Stratham, or Exeter in New Hampshire, or Berwick, South Berwick, Eliot, or Kittery in Maine.

### **2.2 Reservations**

Trip requests must be made at least the business day before by 5:00pm to allow for scheduling. At COAST's sole discretion, standing order trip requests may be accepted. Reservation requests are accepted by TripLink Monday through Friday, between 8:00am and 5:00pm by either phone or email. When making a reservation, please provide the rider's name, pick-up and drop-off locations, the time they need to be picked up or dropped off (whichever is most important), a

contact number, and any mobility information, such as whether they use a wheelchair or a walker.

Reservations are made through TripLink at 603-834-6010, or [triplink@communityrides.org](mailto:triplink@communityrides.org).

Reservation requests are not confirmed trip times. The night before the trip, TripLink will create the schedule for the next day. In order to ensure all rides can be covered, trips may be shifted from the original request time by up to an hour (see section 2.4 for a more detailed explanation of this process). Riders will receive an automatic phone call or text message indicating the scheduled pick-up time for their trips the next day. This call will go to the contact number provided. Riders should make sure to be ready ten minutes before the time listed in the phone call or text.

### **2.3 Shared Ride Services**

All COAST demand response services are operated as a shared ride service in conjunction with other COAST shared ride, demand response services. This means there may be multiple customers on the vehicle at a time, and those customers may be riding under a variety of programs and funding sources. Customers are not guaranteed a direct ride between their origin and destination; rather, the vehicle may deviate to pick-up or drop-off other customers. COAST takes great care to ensure the ride times for each customer are reasonable and comfortable, and uses specialized software to help create these schedules, monitor them in real time, make adjustments as necessary, and monitor the outcomes for quality and service.

By grouping rides from multiple programs in this way, COAST can increase efficient use of resources. In addition, many customers enjoy the social nature of the trip.

### **2.4 Reservation Windows—How Our Scheduling Works**

When making a reservation, riders can request to prioritize either the time to be picked up, or the time to be dropped off. Every individual ride scheduled must prioritize one or the other and cannot prioritize both. Our reservationists can select based on the circumstances, or you may select which end of the ride is more important to you. Pick-ups or drop-offs may be adjusted by up to an hour in order to fit them into the schedule, though we always work to keep the adjustment as minimal as possible, and our average adjustment is much lower than this. However, we will only adjust times in the direction that preserves the time riders are trying to prioritize. How this works is described below:

If the rider wants to prioritize the time they arrive at the destination, we will ensure they do not arrive later than that time. In this case, the rider may say they want to be dropped off by a certain time. This trip may be adjusted to have a drop-off up to one hour earlier, but it will not be

adjusted to have a drop-off later than the time requested. This is useful for when someone needs to be at an appointment by a particular time. For example, a rider could make a reservation to be at an appointment by 10:00am. This would be a 10:00am drop-off priority. We may adjust the drop-off time to be anywhere from 9:00am to 10:00am, but we will not adjust the drop-off to be after 10:00am. The rider's pick-up time will be calculated based on how long it takes to get to the drop-off with the other customers that are riding. A pick-up time cannot be specifically requested for a drop-off priority reservation.

If the rider wants to prioritize what time they are picked up to start their trip, we will ensure we do not pick them up earlier than that time. This is used when the time they are picked up is more important to them than the time they arrive at their destination. This trip may be adjusted to have a pick-up up to one hour later than the time requested, but it will not be adjusted to have a pick-up earlier. This is useful for when the rider is being picked up from an appointment and know they will not be ready earlier than a specific time. For example, the rider could ask for a 10:00am pick-up priority. We may adjust the pick-up anywhere from 10:00am to 11:00am, but we will not adjust the pick-up to before 10:00am. The drop-of time will be calculated based on how long it takes to get to the destination with the other customers that are riding. A drop-off time cannot be specifically requested for a pick-up priority reservation.

Many customers find it works best to schedule the ride from their original departure point going out as a drop-off priority, and the ride back to their final destination as a pick-up priority. This best allows the rider to control the times they are at their destination.

Reservations may be made weeks in advance of a ride. However, the schedule is created by COAST the night before. The scheduled pick-up window for each ride will be ready around 6:00pm the evening before. Customers are typically informed of these via an automated call.

In certain instances, COAST may also have to request same day schedule changes to accommodate unanticipated changes to the schedule. In such instances, every effort will be made to advise riders of the change(s) as soon as they are known.

## **2.5 Span of Service**

Rides will be available from 6:00am until 6:00pm, Monday – Saturday.

The program will be available year-round, except for the holidays of New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Additionally, COAST occasionally closes due to inclement weather or other emergencies which may preclude service from operating.

## **2.6 No Shows**

All rides will be scheduled with a twenty-minute pick-up window, during which time the customer is responsible to be ready and waiting for pick-up. The ride is considered to be on time if the vehicle arrives during this pick-up window. The vehicle and operator will wait at the pick-up location for a maximum of five minutes (unless the customer can be seen coming to the vehicle, in which case we will wait for them to arrive). If the customer is not present after five minutes, the vehicle will leave and will mark the customer as a “no show” for this trip.

If a customer is marked a no show for the first trip of the day, all their remaining trips that day will be canceled. Once a customer has been marked as a no show, COAST will not return for them that day. Due to the high cost of no shows, and the inconvenience to other customers that they cause, COAST asks customers to avoid no-shows, and call and cancel rides as soon as it is known the ride is no longer needed. COAST will also charge \$10.00 per no-show.

If a customer is a no show for a return trip, COAST will work to determine whether they no longer need a ride and failed to notify COAST, or if they are simply delayed for no fault of their own (such as a doctor’s office running behind schedule). Customers who miss their return ride should notify COAST when they are ready for their return ride. COAST will return to pick up customers as needed, to ensure they are not stranded. However, COAST will not be able to provide the return ride if it is after COAST’s operating hours.

## **2.7 Personal Care Assistants and Guests**

Customers may bring one personal care assistant (PCA) on their trip at no additional cost, provided that COAST is informed at the time of reservation that a PCA will be traveling with the customer. Additional guests will be permitted to ride with customers provided they are part of the original reservation, have the same pick-up and drop-off location as the customer, and there is space available on the vehicle.

## **2.8 Accessibility**

All COAST services are wheelchair accessible. Individuals using a wheelchair, or the individual booking their ride for them, must notify COAST of this requirement when applying for services or when their situation changes. This is simply to ensure we do not overbook the number of individuals in a wheelchair that can be on a single vehicle at any given time, as well as to ensure we send the vehicle with the appropriate weight-rated lift for the individual.

COAST operators will provide minimal assistance in boarding and alighting from the vehicle, as well as assistance to the first-floor door of a facility if it is nearby and within sight of the vehicle. Additionally, COAST operators will assist a customer with a bag or two if needed. However, operators will not go into residential buildings at all, will not go more than a few feet into the

first-floor lobby of a public building, or look for customers beyond the pick-up location, cannot be responsible to escort customers that cannot be left unattended, and cannot operate an electric wheelchair or scooter for a customer. COAST does not provide medical assistance to customers.

### 3.0 Contact Information

Customers will need to provide COAST with a working phone number and billing information, that we can reach out should there be any issues with rides, clarifications needed, or to identify no-shows.

### 4.0 Cost of Service

- Each ride on weekday (Monday through Friday) will be billed at \$10.00, plus \$5.88 per direct mile.

For example, a ride of 2.5 direct miles would cost \$24.70, or \$10.00, plus 2.5 times \$5.88.

- Each ride on Saturday will be billed at \$20.00, plus \$5.88 per direct mile.

For example, a ride of 2.5 direct miles would cost \$34.70, or \$20.00, plus 2.5 times \$5.88.

- Each no-show will be billed at \$10.00. A customer with a no-show may pay the fee at the time of the next ride along with the rest of their fare. The no-show fee plus the full fare will be required for the customer to board. If a customer no-shows a trip when they already have a no-show on record, future rides will not be scheduled until previous no-shows have been paid.
- Each rider may have one individual personal care attendant (PCA) or guest to assist with their mobility, healthcare, or other needs free of charge. Additional guests riding with the rider will be charged \$10.00 per person.

To ensure clear understanding of the billing structure, here are definitions of relevant terms.

**Ride** – a ride is a single one-way pick-up and drop-off. A round trip would then typically consist of two or more rides.

**Direct Mile** - the number of miles between the trip pick-up and drop-off address of a particular ride along the shortest public and reasonable route, as calculated by COAST's trip scheduling

software. Direct mileage is consistent for a ride between two points regardless of the route the vehicle actually travels while performing shared ride service. Direct miles are calculated separately for each passenger. Therefore, two passengers each sharing a ride for a trip with a direct mileage of two miles would equal four billable direct miles.

### **No-Show -**

A No-Show is defined by COAST as when a rider has a trip scheduled and:

- The vehicle arrives on time, but the rider no longer wants the ride and cancels, or
- The vehicle arrives on time, but the driver cannot locate the rider at the requested pick-up location, or
- The vehicle arrives on time, and waits for 5 minutes, but the rider is not ready to go.

OR

- The rider or rider representative calls to cancel a scheduled trip less than 2 hours before the start of the scheduled pick-up window.

No shows are not counted for circumstances deemed to be out of the control of the rider or rider representative, such as a doctor's office canceling an appointment at the last minute.