

# Brookings Area Transit *Passenger Handbook*

*“The mission of Brookings Area Transit is to provide coordinated transportation services for all citizens of the Brookings area and foster independence by providing mobility options.”*



[BrookingsAreaTransit.com](http://BrookingsAreaTransit.com)

## **Contact BATA**

**Office:** 605-692-5416

**Dispatch:** 605-692-2222

**Dispatch Toll-Free:** 855-962-9120

**Fax:** 605-692-9120

**Email:** [bata@BrookingsAreaTransit.com](mailto:bata@BrookingsAreaTransit.com)

**Website:** [BrookingsAreaTransit.com](http://BrookingsAreaTransit.com)

***“No one shall be denied a ride based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, political affiliation, or belief in any other consideration prohibited by law.”***

**Updated December 2020**

## Intent of Passenger Handbook

Brookings Area Transit Authority, Inc., (BATA) is pleased to serve the Brookings County area with a demand response public transit system. Our passengers are the most important part of our agency and keeping you safe is our number one goal.

This booklet provides a reference to your responsibilities as a passenger of our service. These policies serve as a guide for making decisions that affect your responsibility and safety.

All policies will be enforced in a consistent manner. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, please reference the complaint process which is included at the end of this booklet.

## Service Hours

Please refer to [BrookingsAreaTransit.com](http://BrookingsAreaTransit.com)  
for BATA's hours of service.

**Service may be limited or suspended on these holidays:**

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Labor Day  
Christmas Day

Easter Sunday  
Independence Day  
Thanksgiving Day

***Service hours and holiday schedule are subject to change. Updates are posted in vehicles, on our website, and on our Facebook page.***

## **Scheduling Rides within Brookings City Limits**

Reservations may be made by calling dispatch or visiting our website at [BrookingsAreaTransit.com](http://BrookingsAreaTransit.com). Reservations must be made within dispatch hours at least one day before the ride is needed. Same day rides will be accommodated as possible for eligible passengers at a higher fare.

When scheduling your ride, please provide the dispatcher with your first and last name, your appointment time, the number of passengers, and your destination. BATA requires pick-up time to be 30 minutes before your appointment. For example, if you have an appointment at 10:00AM, your scheduled pick up time would be 9:30AM.

Please do not schedule your rides for more than 30 days in advance. Passengers who require a regular ride (work, therapy, school, etc.) may create a standing reservation that can last up to a year. It is the rider's responsibility to notify dispatch of changes or cancellations to a standing schedule.

If you are calling to arrange transportation and have never ridden with BATA before, you will need to provide your name, phone number, DOB, and address before transportation can be provided.

***Please Note: If you need to schedule a ride or make changes to an existing ride, you must contact dispatch. Drivers cannot take ride information.***

## **Scheduling Rides in Brookings County**

BATA provides transportation to all of Brookings County. Fares vary according to location. Please refer to BATA's website or call dispatch for fare information.

## **Scheduling Rides out of Brookings County**

Travel outside of Brookings County must be arranged by calling dispatch. Please refer to BATA's website for information regarding Sioux Falls transportation.

All out of County transportation will be contingent on demand for service and conditions beyond BATA's control (i.e. weather, shortage of drivers). Because of this, we do not allow out of county travel to be scheduled online. Please call dispatch to confirm your trip at least one day prior to your date of travel.

## **Refusal of Service**

BATA reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who:

- Is intoxicated or belligerent towards drivers or other passengers;
- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or others;
- Has unreasonable personal hygiene, open wounds, or highly contagious diseases;
- Transports pets without a designated carrier, other than service animals. ***Transportation of pets must be declared to dispatch at the time the ride is scheduled.***

## **Pick Up and Arrival Times**

Arrival times may vary according to BATA's demand for service. Passengers should anticipate an early arrival of up to 10 minutes before the scheduled pickup time with the possibility of a 10-minute delay. Buses will only wait for 5 minutes past the scheduled pickup time. The bus will not wait if it has arrived more than 5 minutes past your scheduled pickup time. If you've waited more than 10 minutes after your scheduled pick up time, please contact dispatch to inquire about the ride.

***Example: If you schedule a 9:00AM pickup, the bus may arrive as early as 8:50AM or as late as 9:10AM. Be prepared to leave at any time within this 20-minute window and schedule your rides accordingly.***

Our buses serve many passengers within very small-time frames; please ensure you are scheduling pickup times for 30 minutes before your appointment to allow our buses to serve multiple passengers and get everyone to their destinations on time.

### **5 Minute Rule**

As mentioned above, drivers will wait for 5 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time at which time the driver will leave and list you as a "no show."

If you anticipate being late for your scheduled ride, please call dispatch to see if we may be able to accommodate you at a later time for a same-day fare.

***If the bus must go back for a passenger after they have been a no show, the same day fare will apply.***

## **Return Trips**

Passengers are encouraged to schedule a return pick up time for transportation which is not medical. A scheduled pick up requires the passenger to be ready at the set time. If the passenger is not ready at the set time, return by BATA would result in a higher fare.

Riders can also schedule a 'will call' for return trips. 'Will call' rides require the passenger to call dispatch when they are ready for their return ride. We make every effort to pick up our 'will call' passengers in a timely manner. If a bus does not arrive after 15 minutes, please call dispatch.

**Drivers will not make any unscheduled stops.**

## **Cancelling Rides**

Please make every effort to cancel rides at least an hour before the scheduled pick up time. If repeated 'no shows' occur, refusal of service may apply.

## **Door to Door Service**

**Private homes:** Our drivers are instructed not to enter past the first door of a private home for any reason.

**Businesses/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:** When picking up passengers from a business/medical facility/public building, drivers may go to the lobby area. Drivers will not go past the lobby to drop off or pick up passengers.

**Apartment Buildings:** Drivers' schedules do not permit them to enter a building to look for passengers who have scheduled a ride.

## **Lift Capability and Services**

BATA vehicles are equipped with lifts which are available for use by anyone. BATA complies with ADA requirements for accessible vehicles. To access these requirements, please visit [www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html).

Training on how to board and disembark a vehicle with a mobility device will be provided on an as needed basis. Please call dispatch to schedule training prior to your ride.

The bus and all equipment are to be operated by trained staff only. For safety reasons, passengers or escorts are NOT ALLOWED to assist with operating lift procedures, or any other operating functions of the transit vehicles.

If you cannot be properly secured, you will be given the option of whether you would like to proceed with the ride.

## **Escorts & Personal Attendants**

Escorts can ride free of charge but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you. Escorts MUST be willing and able to assist you with mobility, personal and/or medical needs. If you require assistance with any of these needs, you should use an escort.

Drivers will provide reasonable assistance to all passengers; however, BATA drivers are not licensed medical professionals. Because of this, we encourage passengers who need additional assistance to use an escort.

If BATA determines that you require an escort for transportation, you will be required to utilize one before further transportation will be provided.

## Vehicle Backing Policy

BATA has a NO BACKING policy. Drivers will not pull in residential driveways or put themselves in a position to which requires backing up.

## Items on the Bus

There is a 5-bag limit per rider. Please place your items on the floor of the bus.

Transporting a bike is allowed, but you are responsible for its transfer. Please notify dispatch if you need to transport a bike. If you cannot carry larger items yourself, they cannot be transported.

**BATA is not responsible for lost or stolen items!** Items found on the bus are placed in the lost and found at BATA's office. Unclaimed items will be donated periodically.

## Seat Belt/ Riding Policy

All passengers are required to wear a seat belt. If you refuse to wear a seatbelt, you may be denied service.

BATA does not provide car seats for youth passengers. If your child requires a car seat, it is your responsibility to provide and secure one.

You must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before leaving your seat. You must always also remain seated with your seat belt on while the bus is in motion. Please be prepared for sudden stops.

## Food and Drinks

There is NO eating or drinking allowed on BATA vehicles.

## Smoking and Alcohol

Use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaporizers, or alcohol is not permitted on BATA vehicles.

## Fares

Fare is due upon entering the bus. Contact BATA's dispatch or go to [BrookingsAreaTransit.com](http://BrookingsAreaTransit.com) for information regarding BATA's fare structure.

Children age 12 and under can ride to the same destination as a parent free-of-charge.

Tokens may be purchased from BATA's office, BATA drivers, First Bank and Trust locations, Dakotaland Federal Credit Union locations, First National Bank of Volga (Brookings Branch), BankStar (Volga Branch), and Volga City Hall.

***BATA's actual cost per ride is considerably higher than our fare structure, however, we are able to lower the passenger cost because of donations, Federal & State funding, and local support. Fare structure is subject to change as necessary.***

## Medicaid Recipients

BATA is a Medicaid provider. Dispatch will need to verify travel expenses are covered before your ride will be scheduled. Transportation not covered by Medicaid is your responsibility.

## Medical Emergencies

BATA is not an ambulance service. If you require emergency medical attention, please call 911.

If you have a medical emergency while on the bus, medical personnel will be notified.

If you have a medical condition which you feel BATA should be aware of, let dispatch know prior to scheduling services.

## Transportation for ages 3-18

- **No child will be transported unless a current Emergency Contact Form is on file at BATA.**
- **Rides cannot be charged.** If your child does not have the bus fare, they will not ride. There are no exceptions!
- Schedule changes must be made by a parent or guardian. We cannot take ride information from children.
- K-12 passengers should start looking for the bus at 7:10am. Bus schedules change daily so riders must be ready when the bus arrives each day.
- Preschool passengers should be ready for pickup 30 minutes before the class start time. The bus will arrive within that 30-minute window. ***Preschools do not allow drop-off more than 5 minutes before class start time. Drivers will pick-up Preschool riders with this in mind.***
- There are no guarantees on pick-up or drop-off times. Routes are determined based on the fastest order for that day's scheduled rides.
- Buses will arrive at the schools at dismissal time and depart seven minutes later. Rides required after the bus departs will cost a same day fare.
- Same day rides will have a same day fare.
- An adult must wave at the driver indicating he or she is home before a child can be dropped off.
- Negative behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in removal of your child from the bus schedule. Each vehicle has camera surveillance to monitor these issues.
- Contact BATA if your child is not home within 45 minutes of their pick-up time.

## **Access to Private Homes**

For your safety and the safety of BATA staff, it is your responsibility to ensure sidewalks and driveways are accessible.

## **Service Suspensions**

BATA staff will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions occur, making travel unsafe; BATA reserves the right to suspend service until conditions are favorable. If service is temporarily suspended, all rides, regardless of trip purpose, will be cancelled.

Appropriate announcements will be made to the local media, including but not limited to, Keloland Close Line, KBRK 1430AM, 910 The Ranch AM, 107.1 and 93.7. Service closure will also be noted on BATA's Facebook page.

## **Winter Riding Tips**

- Keep informed of weather conditions, which may affect services.
- If streets are icy, allow additional travel time.
- Prior to entering the bus, clean footwear of snow and slush so it doesn't gather on the steps or on the floor of the bus, potentially posing a hazard.
- Always watch your step, wear your seat belt, and wear appropriate winter clothing.
- Assess your needs to travel and call to reschedule as needed.

## **Severe Weather Guidelines**

Severe weather may affect BATA's service. The buses will run slower to be safe in adverse weather. The following service changes may occur at any time hazardous road conditions exist.

- Timed pick up intervals may increase
- Non-essential trips may not be provided
- Bus service on less travelled streets, especially those not plowed, may not be provided
- Absolutely no alley travel will be allowed
- In cases of severe weather changes, passengers on buses will be taken home immediately or to the nearest shelter, as deemed necessary

## **Proper and Adequate Clothing**

You or your care provider is responsible for ensuring that you are dressed properly for your transportation. This is especially relevant to passengers who use the mechanical lifts and may be exposed to adverse weather for longer periods of time.

Drivers will not assist you with your clothing. Winter attire should include proper coats, hats, gloves, and footwear.

## **Donations**

Brookings Area Transit Authority, Inc., is a non-profit organization. All donations are appreciated and can be made in person, by mail, over the phone, or on our website.

Your support through donations, memorials, estate planning, etc. are humbly appreciated and accepted.

## **Complaint Process**

This transit agency is committed to providing non-discriminatory service. To request more information or to file a discrimination or service complaint, contact this transit agency at (605)692-5416 or the South Dakota Department of Transportation at (605)773-3540.

A written complaint can also be initiated by writing to:

**Brookings Area Transit Authority, Inc.**  
**418 Western Avenue**  
**Brookings, SD 57006**

Complaints may also be presented in person at the above address. Please call the office in advance if special accommodations or requirements will be needed.

