

Wiregrass Transit Authority Passenger Guide



Effective February 2020

**Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development
Commission**

PO Box 1406

Dothan, AL 36302

Phone: 334-836-5555

Fax: 334-836-4132

www.searpc.org

www.wiregrasstransit.org

INTRODUCTION

The Wiregrass Transit Authority (WTA) began operation in 1993 as the public transportation provider for the City of Dothan and for Houston County, Alabama. The system is an operating department of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission and is funded with federal funds administered by the Alabama Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and local monies from the City of Dothan and the Houston County Commission as well as fares and other revenues.

The mission of the Wiregrass Transit Authority is to provide safe, affordable, dependable and reliable mobility and access to the citizens of Dothan and Houston County.

This Transit Passenger Guide is intended to provide helpful information to interested individuals regarding the **Dial-A-Ride** service offered by the Wiregrass Transit Authority. These policies are intended to establish a framework for service by this organization. As we try to operate during a period of shrinking resources and increasing demands we must make every effort to get maximum and efficient use out of all of the vehicles that are serving the area at any given time. For us to be successful, our passengers must partner with us to provide the most efficient possible service.

We encourage you to take advantage of the Wiregrass Transit Authority's convenient bus schedule and routes. WTA serves the City of Dothan and Houston County. It's an easy, inexpensive, and convenient way to travel. WTA is for anyone who needs transportation, wants to protect the environment, or wants to save money on gasoline. For all your transportation needs, WTA will get you where you want to go! If you have questions or need additional information about WTA, you may call **334-836-5555** or check our web site at www.wiregrasstransit.org. Thank you for riding with us!

WHAT IS DIAL-A-RIDE?

Dial-A-Ride is the demand response service that is being offered by the Wiregrass Transit Authority (WTA). This service is provided on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. It is open to all citizens and members of the public who live or who are located in Dothan and Houston County.

TYPE OF SERVICE: WTA provides origin-to-destination service only. It is up to the passenger, their family or care giver to make arrangements if assistance is needed between their door and the curb. The driver is **NOT** allowed to enter the home, garage, medical facility, business or office building where the passenger is picked up or dropped off. The driver cannot go beyond the curb where the bus is parked. The driver can assist the passenger into vehicle from the curb as needed.

ELIGIBILITY: The Dial-A-Ride service is open to the general public who live or are located in the designated service area. Individuals under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (over 18 years of age); exceptions must be approved by Transit Director only.

SCHEDULING HOURS/DAYS: Passengers may schedule a trip on **Monday through Friday** between the hours of **8:00 AM - 2:00 PM Central Time**. If you need a ride, call us at **334-836-5555**. Scheduling requests left on the agency answering machine will not be accepted or acknowledged. You may cancel your ride by leaving a message on the answering machine.

ADVANCED SCHEDULING: You may schedule up to **two (2) weeks** in advance, but **must** schedule **at least one (1) business day prior** to your transit needs. It is recommended to call at least one (1) week prior to date of the ride.

ROUTINE TRIP SERVICE: If a customer schedules repetitive trips on a routine and regular basis, (i.e. going to school, work, dialysis appointments, etc., traveling to and from the same destinations each time) routine trip service may be requested. With routine trip service, you may call once to initiate a recurring ride. However, you must call within the scheduling time listed previously. WTA will schedule the ride on a continuing basis until the request is terminated, changed, or the cancellations and/or "no-shows" become excessive. Routine trip service termination due to excessive cancellations or "no-shows" may result in a loss of routine trip privileges. The passenger may also be required to pay for missed trips. Passengers are required to contact WTA weekly by Thursday afternoon of the week prior to confirm that they still need routine trip service for the upcoming week.

FARES:

Fares are based on a zone system. These fares are listed below. All fares are for one person one way.

\$2 inside the city limits in Dothan.

\$5 from Webb, Ashford, Rehobeth, Taylor and Cottonwood.

\$8 from Gordon, Pansey, Columbia, and Wicksburg.

Children under 3 years of age are free with a paying adult passenger.

Passengers **MUST** pay their fare when boarding the vehicle for each trip. You cannot pay in advance for future trips. Passengers may buy coupons from the driver for future trips.

Passengers **MUST have exact change** when you board the vehicle or you **WILL NOT** be permitted to ride. Drivers are not able to make change! If the driver is able to stop, wait and allow the passenger to get change, there will be a \$2 charge for this stop. We do not accept pennies. NO out of state **checks**, debit, or credit cards will be accepted.

Fare coupons will be sold by drivers and the Transit Office based on request from passengers. Exact cash is required.

We do not provide credits or refunds. Any rider that pays round-trip pays at his/her own risk. If a passenger does not ride back, the passenger will lose his/her fare.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY: We are able to provide reliable, reasonably priced transportation for members of the community who have disabilities that restrict mobility. The lifts and wheelchair securement systems designed for our vehicles are easy to operate and make transporting passengers a very simple matter. **The lifts are designed to support a total of 800 pounds (combined weight of the passenger and wheelchair) and accommodate wheel chair up to 30" wide x 48" deep.** If a passenger and their wheel chair exceed this combined weight or dimensions, we will not be able to safely transport them. This is for the safety of the passenger. Weights in excess of this will cause the wheelchair lift to fail and the passenger may well be injured. When scheduling a ride, you will need to inform us of your special needs, and we will gladly arrange a bus to accommodate you. Wheelchairs must be completely secured and seat belts must be worn by all passengers. The driver is able to assist with normal boarding and de-boarding. If further assistance is needed, be prepared to have someone accompany you. Driver cannot assist beyond the curb.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th & 5th, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day & Friday after, and Christmas Eve/Day, and New Year Holidays. Exact dates will be published each year on the www.searpc.org website.

TYPE OF SERVICE OFFERED

The Wiregrass Transit Authority (WTA) offers Dial-A-Ride Service in the City of Dothan and within Houston County. This service is explained below. Residents of surrounding counties (not inside the Dothan City limits) who desire to use this service may do so as long as both their pick up and drop off points are within the City limits of Dothan or Houston County.

DAIL-A-RIDE SERVICE

SERVICE AREA: Everyone in the City of Dothan and Houston County is eligible to use this service. This service may be used for any legal purpose — medical, shopping, classes, work, bill paying, etc. This service will pick you up at the curb in front of your home or other location and transport you to your designated stop in Dothan or Houston County. You must call the WTA office to schedule this ride.

SERVICE HOURS: 6:00 AM – 5:00 PM Central Time. The last pick-up is at 5:00 PM.

SERVICE DAYS: Monday through Friday except listed holidays.

WILL CALLS The passenger will call the WTA office by 4:30 p.m. when he or she is finished and a driver will be sent to pick the passenger up as soon as a driver is available. Every effort is made to make the pickup within one hour of the call requesting a ride, but this cannot be guaranteed. If the passenger fails to board within five minutes of the arrival of the bus the passenger will be considered a “no-show”.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A RIDE FOR WTA DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE

1. Call WTA at **334-836-5555** Monday thru Friday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM Central Time. We cannot accept reservations at other times. Scheduling requests left on our answering machine CANNOT be accepted.
2. Please provide the following information when you call to schedule a trip:
 - a. Physical address for pick up (actual street address)
 - b. Destination address and/or the common name of the destination (an example would be Flowers Hospital Doctors Center)
 - c. Date for which service is requested
 - d. Desired pick up time (NOTE: Driver can arrive 15 minutes early so be ready to leave at this time.)
 - e. Return time (NOTE: Driver can arrive 15 minutes early so be ready to leave at this time.)
 - f. Type of aid used or accommodation required (wheelchair, walker, etc.)
 - g. If you will be traveling with an attendant or guest or children
 - h. If you will be traveling with a service animal
3. We will make every effort to accommodate your request for transportation. There are certain times of the day when demand for our services always exceeds our ability to provide that service. We ask you to be patient with us and to consider one of the alternate times that we may offer you for your trip. This is especially important if your trip is not for a specific appointment.
4. Please CALL IF YOU MUST CANCEL or you will be subject to our Cancellation Policy and No Show Policy. Equally important, if you do not cancel and do not ride then you are potentially depriving someone else of an opportunity to use our services.

WTA TRAVEL RULES

The WTA Dial-A-Ride service is not a taxi service. Rides are to be scheduled between two weeks and at least one business day in advance. We do not make same day reservations.

Each time you get off the bus, the designated fare will be charged when you board the bus again.

REFUNDS OR CREDITS: We do not provide refunds or credits on round trip fares paid in advance or coupons

BOARDING: Passengers should be ready to board when the bus arrives. Because of unpredictable traffic and weather — you must allow for a 30-minute variation in pick-up time. For example, if your scheduled pick-up time is 9:00 AM, you will be picked up anytime between 8:45 AM and 9:15 AM. Please make your appointments to take this fact into consideration. **Closings for weather will be distributed by local news media. These closings are only established when travel is dangerous**

DRIVER WAIT TIME: Passengers should be ready to board when the bus arrives. **The driver will wait THREE (3) minutes past the bus arrival time. If the passenger does not board within this time frame, THE DRIVER WILL LEAVE FOR THE NEXT DESTINATION** and the passenger will be considered a “no-show”. Drivers will not return to pick up passengers who were not ready within the three-minute time frame.

NO-SHOW POLICY: If a passenger does not call to cancel appointments, this is considered a “no-show”. Passengers that are “no shows” will have their return trips automatically cancelled for that day. If a passenger is a no-show **THREE (3) times within a three month period**, the passenger **will be suspended from using the Dial-A-Ride service for a period of TEN (10) working days for the abuse of the transit program.** If a passenger receives more than one suspension within a year, the second suspension will be thirty (30) days or longer. It will be determined on a case by case basis, up to and including possible permanent suspension. When a passenger does not board on time, it makes the other passengers late to their scheduled appointments or prevents others from scheduling a trip.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Passengers who wish to cancel their scheduled rides are required to notify WTA **at least one hour prior to the scheduled trip.** Rides cancelled after this will be counted as a No-show. Any individual who cancels more than **two times in one week will be required to call the day before for a period of ten (10) business days.** Following this 10-day period, riders will again be allowed to schedule “standing” rides on a weekly basis. If the driver has already arrived at the passenger’s location before the trip is cancelled, the passenger will be counted as a no-show and the No-Show Policy will apply. See above for details of No Show policy.

DESTINATION CHANGE POLICY: Individuals making reservations to ride cannot change their destination the day of the ride. Any changes must be made prior to **2:00 PM Central Time** the day before the scheduled ride. Destination changes are subject to changed destination, vehicle, and schedule availability.

UNSCHEDULED TRIPS: NO UNSCHEDULED STOPS WILL BE MADE!! You must schedule ALL stops that you wish to make within the allowed scheduling time frame. Additional stops normally cannot be added and/or scheduled stops be changed on the

day of your scheduled ride. Passengers may not change their destinations with the driver upon boarding the bus. All changes must be made through transit dispatch.

ATTENDANTS: Drivers are NOT available for door-to-door services, but provide origin-to-destination services ONLY. Passengers using the Dial-A-Ride service that require additional or special assistance may need to engage the assistance of family members or an attendant to get to and from the bus or for special assistance while riding the bus.

CARRY ON PACKAGES: Carry-on packages are welcome. However, the passenger needs to limit the number of packages to **TWO (2) bags** and the passenger must be able to carry on the bus at one time without assistance. These bags should not be larger than 18" x 15" in size. If the passenger only has one bag, then it can be larger. However, two large bags **will not be allowed on the bus.** If you have a greater number of bags than as explained above, the driver will not allow you to ride the bus and you will have to find other transportation. A box does count as one bag. Drivers may not load or unload packages for the passengers. The wheel chair lift may not be used to load packages, boxes or other bulky items.

SEAT BELTS: All passengers are requested to properly wear and use seat belts at all times in all vehicles. **Infants up to 1 year must have a seat/carrier that can be secured in the vehicle. Children 1 to 15 years of age must wear the seat belt.**

"I Saw a Bus": WTA operates a fleet of 13 or more vehicles in the service area. This means that the bus you see may be assigned to a different route than yours, meaning that particular bus cannot stop to pick you up.

WHEELCHAIR/MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT AND PASSENGER RESTRAINT SYSTEMS: All mobility devices will be properly secured to the vehicle using the installed securement systems. Wheelchair passengers will be required to wear a wheelchair seat belt and be properly restrained using the vehicle restraint system to include lap and shoulder harnesses/straps. If able, those using non-wheelchair mobility devices will be requested to move to a seat and use the vehicle seat belt system. This is done for the safety of the passenger. These mobility devices are inherently unstable and provide little or no protection to the passenger in an accident.

The scheduled times and days of Dial-A-Ride services are subject to change.

WTA SAFETY RULES

It is the WTA policy to provide safe, efficient, and quality transportation. In order to provide the highest quality of service, we must have safety rules to assure that all riders of WTA are given the opportunity to use the service to its maximum potential.

The following policies must be followed by all passengers on all WTA buses:

BE READY FOR THE BUS! Dial-a-ride buses may arrive up to 15 minutes before or after the scheduled pick up time. Please remember that the bus will board customers at scheduled pick up locations only.

Have fare ready before you board the bus, hand it to the driver, and be seated promptly.

No Smoking allowed on the bus. No use of other tobacco products allowed on the bus.

No loud talking or offensive language because this infringes on the rights of all passengers.

No food and drinks on the bus. This includes fast food restaurant cups and containers. This does not apply to groceries or food or beverages in sealed containers that cannot be consumed while on the bus.

No alcohol is allowed on the bus nor can it be consumed on the bus. This applies to open containers of alcohol. Certainly passengers may transport any legal alcoholic beverage in a sealed container. Passengers that are or appear to be intoxicated and unable to control their behaviors will not be transported.

Proper clothing must be worn at all time. Shirts and shoes are required.

Radios, MP3 players and other audio devices may be listened to through earphones **ONLY**.

Limited talking to the driver. Drivers may discuss route information only. The driver must be 100% focused on driving to insure a safe trip and good performance.

Stay seated while the bus is moving and do not change seats until the bus stops.

When de-boarding the bus, please wait until the bus has pulled away before crossing the street, as oncoming vehicles cannot see you.

Misconduct by passengers is not allowed. Misconduct is considered to be any act which creates an unsafe environment/hazard and the potential for injury or death to any passenger, driver, WTA staff or the general public. Destruction of any portion of the bus or defacing any portion of the bus is also considered severe misconduct.

Abusive conduct by passengers is not allowed. Abusive conduct is considered to be any verbal or physical act that is generally offensive or invades the privacy or rights of others; physically touching another person in a rude, insolent, or angry manner.

Any passenger whose personal hygiene habits to include, but not limited to, offensive body odor, uncontrollable body fluids, or other hygiene habits that results in constantly making drivers and other passengers ill or threatens their safety or health will have their transit services suspended immediately. This suspension will continue until we are assured that corrections have been made. This may require certification from family members or social service agencies.

Passengers must treat each other and the driver with respect. Every passenger and driver has equal rights to be safe, un-harassed, and assured of their own space on WTA buses.

Passengers must treat dispatch staff with respect. Passengers should not be verbally abusive to dispatch staff while on the phone. Dispatch staff makes every effort to schedule all rides, however, demand sometimes exceeds available spots on bus. Passengers that are abusive to dispatch staff will be subject to suspension policy.

CERTAIN ITEMS CANNOT BE CARRIED ON PUBLIC TRANSIT BUSES:

- Pets or animals (except service animals) are not allowed on the vehicle.
- Open containers of food or drink, containers of gasoline, kerosene, vehicle batteries, and other hazardous materials.
- No furniture, gardening equipment, plastic pools, or other large items on the bus.
- WTA reserves the right to refuse other items on the bus if we feel it is a safety hazard to our driver and/or passenger(s).
- Portable containers of oxygen, for medical reasons, are allowed.

Call **334-836-5555** if you have a question about an item you wish to carry onto the public transit vehicle.

PASSENGERS WHO REFUSE TO FOLLOW THE NECESSARY TRAVEL AND SAFETY RULES CAN BE REFUSED SERVICE.

CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT OR ABUSIVE CONDUCT:

- First offense may result in suspension of service for that day.
- Second offense within a one-year period shall result in suspension of service for 30 days.
- Third offense within a one-year period shall result in suspension of service for 90 days.

NOTE: Depending upon the seriousness and perceived danger of any misconduct or abusive conduct, even a first offense could result in permanent suspension of bus services to the offending passenger. SEARP&DC officials have the right to refuse service or remove anyone who violates WTA policies or jeopardizes the comfort or safety of other passengers, drivers, dispatchers, schedulers or other WTA or SEARP&DC staff.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

In order for WTA to better serve the community, we welcome input and questions from the public. Please call us to inquire about any of our services. We are here to serve the people of the community, so let us hear from you with comments, questions, or concerns! Call us at 334-794-4093.

Written correspondence can be sent to the following address:

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission
PO Box 1406
Dothan, AL 36302.

You may contact us by email at transit@searfdc.org.

Wiregrass Transit Authority Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Wiregrass Transit Authority. SEARP&DC personnel policies govern employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request. The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Mike Crittenden
Transportation Director
Wiregrass Transit Authority
PO Box 1406, Dothan, AL 36302
(334) 794-4093

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the Director, or his/her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the Director, or his/her designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format accessible to the complainant, such as large print or Braille. The response will explain the position of the Agency and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the Director, or his/her designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Director, or his/her designee. Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Director or his/her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Director or his/her designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by the Director or his/her designee, appeals to the Director or his/her designee, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the Wiregrass Transit Authority for at least three years. Formal complaints can be obtained from the Wiregrass Transit Authority office, located at 201 Depot Street, Dothan, AL and should be submitted directly to the office at or by mail, to Transportation Director, Wiregrass Transit Authority, PO Box 1406, Dothan, AL 36302

Request for Reasonable Modifications

Policy: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and directives from the Federal Transit Administration, Wiregrass Transit Authority will make every effort, to the maximum extent feasible, to ensure that a person with a disability has access to, and benefits from, its services.

Wiregrass Transit Authority will make reasonable modifications to its policies, programs, and procedures applicable to its transportation services when necessary to avoid discrimination and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.

Reasonable modifications do have limitations and are not intended to: Cause a direct threat to the health and safety of others; Create undue financial and administrative burdens; Constitute a fundamental alteration to a service; Not necessary to provide equal access to a Sound Transit service.

Considerations when making a reasonable modification request: Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service; Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term "reasonable modification" when making a request; Whenever feasible, requests for modifications shall be made and determined in advance, before the transportation provider is expected to provide the modified service, for example, during the paratransit eligibility process, through customer service inquiries, or through the entity's complaint process; Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance (e.g., because of a condition or barrier at the destination of a paratransit or fixed route trip of which the individual with a disability was unaware until arriving), operating personnel of the entity shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Operating personnel may consult with the entity's management before making a determination to grant or deny the request.

The request must identify the modification needed in order to use the service. Whenever feasible, please make the request in advance, before the modification is needed to access the service.

Within the scope of the ADA and reasonable modification, if Wiregrass Transit Authority denies a request it will make every effort, to the maximum extent feasible, to ensure that a person with a disability has access to, and benefits from, its services.

Procedure: To request reasonable modifications based on a disability please use the Reasonable Modification Request Form, or contact Wiregrass Transit Authority's ADA Coordinator for assistance.

Accessibility Coordinator - Wiregrass Transit - (334) 794-4093

You may be asked to complete a request form. Wiregrass Transit Authority will review the request in accordance with its reasonable modification plan. Wiregrass Transit Authority strives to respond, in writing, to each request within 15 calendar days. All the information involved with this process will be kept confidential.

Accommodation of Mobility Devices

Consistent with Department of Transportation regulations, Wiregrass Transit Authority will transport a mobility device with three or more wheels and its user so long as the lift can safely accommodate the size and weight of the mobility device and its user and there is space for the mobility device on the vehicle.

Wiregrass Transit Authority
Title VI Notice to Public

The Wiregrass Transit Authority hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related statutes. Title VI and related statutes prohibiting discrimination in Federally assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance. A copy of this agency's complete complaint procedures may be found on this agencies web site at <http://www.searpcdc.org/departments/wiregrass-transit-authority/> or www.wiregrasstransit.org

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding Wiregrass Transit Authority's program has a right to file a formal complaint with Wiregrass Transit Authority. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to Manager, Wiregrass Transit Authority within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence. For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact:

Mike Crittenden
Transportation Director
Wiregrass Transit Authority
201 Depot St. or PO Box 1406
Dothan, Alabama 36302
VOICE: (334) 794-4093
FAX: (334) 836-4132
E-MAIL: transit@searpcdc.org

Except for those related to Title VI, all complaints unresolved at the local level will be submitted to the Alabama Department of Transportation for final resolution to the Alabama Department of Transportation, State Local Transportation Engineer, Local Transportation Bureau, 1100 John Overton Drive, Montgomery, Alabama 36130, telephone number (334) 242-6438.