



# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PASSENGER HANDBOOK

Serving the following counties:

Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson,  
Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, Wood

GoBus  
3800 Stone Road  
Kilgore, Texas 75662  
800-590-3371

Updated September 2017

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## General Information

GoBus serves 14 counties in rural East Texas with a population of approximately 900,000 and a land area of approximately 10,000 square miles. GoBus serves a diverse population of various ages, physical challenges, economic and financial status, and ethnic backgrounds. GoBus ensures that no person shall be excluded from riding, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by GoBus, solely by the reason of his/her race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. GoBus assures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended (section 504), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities.

## Operations

### Hours

GoBus operates from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and is closed on Saturday and Sunday. Service will not be available for the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Day After

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

## Fare Structure

A fare per each one-way trip shall be charged to all eligible passengers and their escorts with the exception of required personal care attendants (PCA, see page 8 for PCA definition), who may travel with an eligible passenger at no cost. Fares are based on one-way trips. This means each time the vehicle is boarded the fare must be paid by cash or check based on the fare schedule. All fares must be paid with exact change; drivers cannot make change. If trip demand allows, a customer may request an added trip to obtain exact change, however no guarantee of on time delivery. A fare is charged for each additional trip. Failure to do so will result in no service for that trip and the trip will be reported as a no show. At this time, credit cards are not accepted.

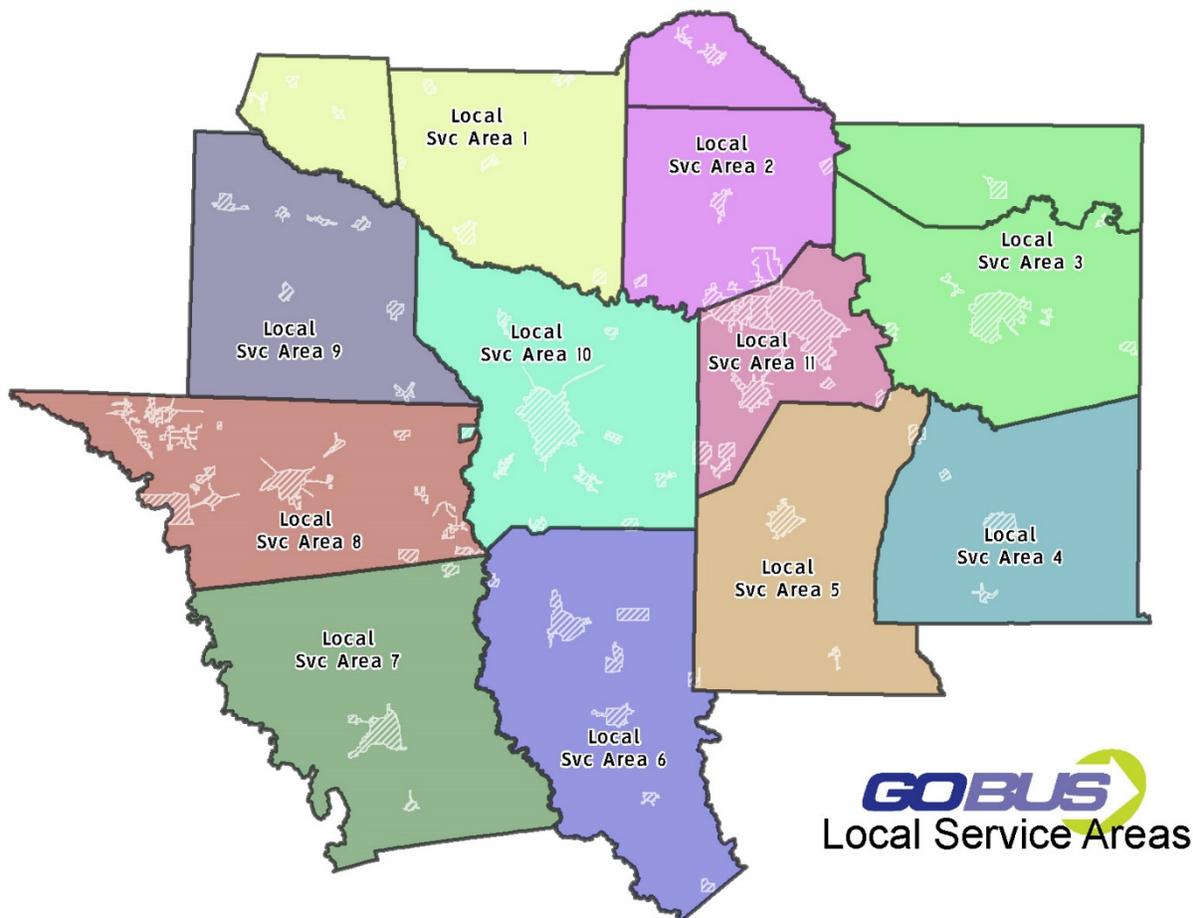
\$4 each way within local service area

\$8 each way one local service area over

\$10 each way two local service areas over

\$3 for each additional service area

\$1.00 for each additional stop – up to three total stops permitted



## PREPAYMENT AND REFUNDS

Customers are allowed to pay for one week's worth of trips in advance by cash or check, however if the trips are not taken, refunds will not be issued. Passengers are responsible for keeping up with their tickets and lost or stolen tickets will not be replaced.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

If inclement weather exists, GoBus may reschedule or cancel service. Employees are to report to work unless otherwise informed by their supervisor. GoBus will attempt to inform passengers by calling them or by using local radio, television, and social media. Be sure to "like GoBus" on Facebook for up to date information.

## REQUESTING SERVICE

GoBus provides curb-to-curb demand response service. Requests for service are subject to availability and must be made the day before service is needed, before 2:00 p.m., or up to seven (7) days in advance. Requests for service should be made during GoBus Dispatch office hours, Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The trips are scheduled to show the required time to be at the destination. Trips must be scheduled in the order wished to complete. If demand allows, one schedule change may be requested on the day of travel if the change is within a 2.5-mile radius. Same day trips may be accommodated, depending on availability, but it is recommended to schedule trips in advance.

## RIDING GOBUS

GoBus is a public transportation system that provides rides for many passengers each day. Drivers cannot be at three or four pick-up points at one time and must allow for time to ensure the customer makes it to and from origin to destination by scheduled appointment time. Therefore, passengers must be ready for pick-up and allow for travel time for transportation to their destination. All passengers must be ready to go two (2) hours prior to their appointment time. Passengers are responsible for calling GoBus when ready for pick-up, to request a return trip home, or to continue additional scheduled trips. GoBus has up to one hour to pick up the passenger once a return trip has been made.

When the driver arrives at the pick-up location, he/she is required to wait no more than five (5) minutes for the passenger to board the bus. Drivers will honk and ask dispatch to make a courtesy call if a valid phone number has been provided.

Service may not be rendered if the origin or destination location cannot be accessed by the vehicle or if the location does not provide safe passage for the vehicle or safe access to and/or from the vehicle by the passenger. The driver shall attempt to make reasonable accommodations and if not possible then they shall immediately call the Dispatch office for further instruction in such a case. Steep driveways, low hanging tree limbs, deteriorated sidewalks or backing situations may result in denial of service.

To increase efficiency GoBus is a shared-ride service which means passengers will often ride while other passengers are picked up and dropped off. Personal items must stay in the custody of the passenger; no items should be left unattended on the GoBus vehicle at any time. Drivers are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

- Drivers are not permitted to lock/unlock passenger's residential door.

- Drivers may provide door-to-door service when requested at the time of advanced scheduling, but are not permitted to enter a passenger's home.
- Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down steps or long gravel areas.
- Drivers are not permitted to lift passengers.
- Drivers are not allowed to exit the vehicle to assist or enter upon property (fences or porches) unless animals are restrained to avoid possibility of biting.
- Drivers have the discretion to assign seats and determine mobility device placement when necessary for the efficiency and/or safety of the operation.

## PASSENGER CONDUCT

Rules of conduct on GoBus are the same as the laws governing conduct in public places.

- It is GoBus policy that the driver and all passengers use seat belts. If a passenger refuses to wear his or her seat belt, they do so at their own risk and release GoBus of all liability.
- Passengers utilizing mobility devices will be required to have their mobility device properly secured by the driver with a four point tie down safety restraint system, including shoulder and lap belts.
- If a passenger is unable to fit within the seat belt due to size, then an extension will be utilized. If an extension is unavailable at the time of transport, the driver will ask the passenger to sit in the furthest back seat possible for their safety before transporting. They will also notify the Field Operations Manager so that a seat belt extension can be ordered.
- If a passenger is unable to wear a shoulder or lap belt due to medical reasons they must provide proof with a physician's statement.

No person shall, while interacting with a GoBus employee and/or as a passenger on any vehicle that is operated by GoBus as a public conveyance, do any of the following acts:

- a. Smoke, Vape or possess any lighted or smoldering pipe, cigar or cigarette;
- b. Consume any beverages, food, or alcohol (unless medically necessary);
- c. Intentionally deface, damage, write upon, or soil any part of the vehicle;
- d. Spit, urinate, or defecate in or upon any vehicle;
- e. Throw, deposit or place paper, bottles, cans or any other garbage or solid waste in or upon a vehicle;
- f. Play audio or video devices, unless played through headphones so that it is inaudible to other passengers and the driver;
- g. Keep mobile phone conversations to a minimum and should not disturb others;
- h. Beg or solicit while on the bus;
- i. Bring any pet or animal on a vehicle other than a service animal accompanying a person with a disability, or an animal in a cage or approved standard pet carrier;
- j. Stand or walk around in a vehicle while it is in motion;
- k. Possess any explosives or carry any corrosive acid or flammable liquid not in a sealed container;
- l. Possess firearms, with the exception of law enforcement officers;
- m. Bring any laundry on board unless it is in an enclosed bag, no mesh laundry bags are allowed;
- n. Intentionally interfere or conduct any unnecessary conversation with the driver, so that the driver's attention will not be diverted from the safe operation of the vehicle;

- o. Use profane or abusive language toward GoBus employee or other passengers or act in a hostile or threatening manner while on board the vehicle;
- p. Board intoxicated;
- q. Present a significant risk to the health or safety of others, no open wounds;
- r. Bring on board any baggage or articles which, due to their size, would restrict free movement of passengers;
- s. Bring on board gasoline or a gasoline container or any type of hazardous material (respirators and portable oxygen supplies are permitted to be carried and used on board by a person needing them for health reasons);
- t. Permit unauthorized passengers or hitchhikers;
- u. Board with unreasonable personal hygiene that is offensive to others;
- v. Conduct any unnecessary conversations of a personal nature that could be viewed as offensive or harassment;
- w. Conduct any unnecessary contact with self, driver and/or a passenger that could be viewed as offensive or harassment.

All passengers must have on a shirt, shoes, and pants or they will not be permitted to board the bus. GoBus may refuse to transport or may eject any persons violating the provisions contained above. If assistance is required, the driver should contact dispatch or appropriate member of management to determine if police should be notified.

#### **MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE**

For our customers' safety and security, activities on and around GoBus vehicles and facilities may be visually and audibly recorded.

Cameras protect passengers and employees from dangers by serving as deterrents, assisting in monitoring and training for employees regarding emergency situations, incidents/accidents, various training component to include customer service, and aiding in investigations as necessary. Drivers are to immediately notify their supervisor with any issues related to video surveillance equipment.

#### **TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN**

All children are required to be restrained in an approved child passenger safety seat according to state law. The passenger must provide the car seat. Children under 1 year of age should have a child safety restraint rear facing seat. Passengers traveling with infants, as their escorts will be required to provide their own infant carrier approved for use in vehicles. The passenger will be responsible for placing the infant into the carrier and securing the carrier with a safety belt. The passenger and escort must both be ready at the door when the vehicle arrives. The infant will not be allowed to ride up the lift with a passenger utilizing a mobility device. The infant's car seat will be secured by a safety belt to the vehicle seat during transport.

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard GoBus is fourteen (14) years of age. Children under the age of fourteen (14) must have an adult (18 years or older) attendant accompany them during transport. If appointment necessitates that an adult attendant serve as personal care attendant such as medical or dental appointments, then the condition will warrant a free ride for the attendant.

#### **ACCOMMODATION OF MOBILITY DEVICES**

GoBus will accommodate mobility devices that do not weigh more than 800 pounds when occupied.

Any passenger who utilizes a mobility device shall ensure the brakes on the device are in working order before transportation can be provided. GoBus will make every reasonable effort to accommodate various models available to passengers. However, due to the increasing size and weight of such equipment, some limitations will be necessary in order to ensure the safe transport of the mobility device and passengers.

## PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

GoBus allows a personal care attendant to accompany a passenger at no additional charge when such an attendant is required to utilize the GoBus service. Passengers are required to supply their own attendants at their own expense.

Generally, the following conditions warrant a fare-free attendant:

Immobility – if the passenger is unable to provide self-mobility, or if self-mobility is possible but a great risk of falling or physical injury exists, and the assistance of an attendant would provide mobility or lessen the danger of injury, then the passenger’s attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Disorientation – if the passenger, due to a visual or mental impairment, is unable to properly orient him/herself and navigate to reach a particular destination, and if the assistance of an attendant would overcome the problem, then the passenger’s attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Non-Comprehensive – if the passenger, due to mental impairment, is unable to adequately perform those mental processes necessary to handle common occurrences or is unable to effectively control his/her own actions, and if the assistance of an attendant would overcome the problem, then the passenger’s attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Communication Impairment – If the passenger is unable to effectively transmit or receive communications due to sensory or mental problems and if these problems would prevent the passenger from using the service, then the passenger’s attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Other – Other impairs passengers not included in the general guidelines may also be eligible if, in the opinion of a licensed physician, the passenger would be unable to use GoBus without the aid of an attendant. The reasons supporting this opinion should be clearly stated in writing by a physician and submitted to the Call Center Manager.

Personal care attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Assisting the passenger from his/her door to the bus and back again;
- Opening doors;
- Pushing mobility device to and from the vehicle;
- Transfer assistance from mobility device to seat;
- Carry packages;
- Communicating with the driver if the passenger is unable.

If an attendant does not specifically perform some type of assistance for the passenger, then the individual is not considered an escort and is charged the normal fare. Attendants are not to assist in mobility device boarding or securement; this is the driver’s responsibility.

## **GUESTS**

If a passenger is responsible for another person who cannot be left alone due to age or mental ability the guest may ride with the paying passenger at no additional cost.

## **MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION**

GoBus does not provide medical transportation for passengers with Medicaid because Medicaid has its own medical transportation.

## **NURSING HOMES AND ADULT DAYCARES**

GoBus will allow passengers from nursing homes as long as they have an attendant from the nursing home or a family member riding with them to and from their destination. The attendant or family member is solely responsible for the passenger. GoBus will not transport a passenger from a nursing home without an attendant.

## **AREA AGENCY ON AGING TRIPS**

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) covers fares on trips for seniors over the age of 60 to medical, dialysis and senior centers. Customers wanting to use this funding source must call GoBus and register for eligibility. Additional stops may be scheduled for the applicable fare.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

GoBus requires all animals to be secured in a pet carrier with the exception of service animals as described below.

It is the policy of GoBus to allow service animals to accompany their owner without restraint. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is required to aid the owner and that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a mobility device or retrieving dropped items. Handler maintains full responsibility of service animal.

## **CARRY-ON PACKAGES**

Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to not more than the equivalent of eight (8) grocery bags per person. An attendant may travel to assist with the loading /unloading of packages. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. Driver may assist with carry-on packages but are not required.

## **MEDICAL OXYGEN**

Oxygen will be transported only when medically necessary. It should be in a cylinder and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. The driver may inspect each cylinder to assure it is free of cracks or leaks. Leaking, dented, gouged, or pitted cylinders will not be transported. Cylinders will be limited to the extent necessary for the day's trip. Cylinders will be secured to prevent movement and not be placed in the aisle or near sources of heat. Under no circumstances should smoking or open flames be permitted in the passenger compartment when medical oxygen is present.

## BACKING POLICY

GoBus Operators are instructed to **avoid backing up** if at all possible and to report all backing situations. GoBus provides curb-to-curb transportation, drivers are not allowed to go down driveway's that are obstructed, flooded, has low lying limbs, or if there is a possibility they will get stuck. If the driver cannot make it down the driveway the passenger must meet the bus at the street.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

In the event of an emergency please follow instructions from your driver.

# Service Suspensions and Terminations

## CANCELLATIONS

It is requested that passengers notify the dispatch office of any necessary cancellations at least two (2) hours prior to the scheduled trips. If the cancellation is made after the two (2) hour window it will result in a no-show. This allows the dispatch office to reassign that time to another passenger.

## NO SHOWS

A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the GoBus dispatch office. No shows affect not only the transit system, but also other customers. Our drivers make every effort to pick up all passengers on a timely basis, and when one of our customers is not there the drivers are required to spend time seeking out the person. This causes our drivers to fall behind their anticipated schedules and causes unnecessary delay for other passengers attempting to get to their scheduled destinations.

If a passenger no shows from his/her origin, GoBus will cancel the return trip. If a passenger later determines they need a return trip they must call GoBus to attempt to schedule. GoBus will attempt the return at the earliest time possible, within service hours, depending upon vehicle availability. No guarantees of return are made. The Call Center Manager or Field Operations Manager reserves the right to authorize a driver to return for a pick up if circumstances warrant. The no show policy for all passengers is as follows:

After 1 (one) no-show in a month the customer will then be charged.

The next time the passenger calls to schedule service, they are notified that they owe the amount of the fare for the no-showed trip. The dispatcher also identifies any passengers with outstanding balances on each driver's schedule for the next day. The driver then informs the passenger when they board that they owe the fare for the no-show.

In cases where the passenger's fare is billed to an organization (such as a human service agency), the organization is billed for the no-show, and it is up to the organization to address the problem with the passenger.

- Two no-shows within a one-month period will result in a letter or phone call of notification and the passenger being placed on no-show status.
- A third no-show within a one-month period will result in a review of past services and provided and a customer's record of no-shows. This review could result in a letter of notification stating riding privileges on GoBus has been suspended.
- If determined preventable, no-show will result in suspension of services for 1 week.

- A second occurrence of three no-shows within one-month period will result in a 2-week suspension.
- Suspension periods cannot be split or otherwise divided or altered without approval of the General Manager.
- No-shows for billed customers will be submitted to funding source for reporting purposes.

#### OTHER SUSPENSIONS

Based on the judgment of the Transportation Director, passengers who demonstrate tendencies toward violent or destructive behavior through threats, verbal and/or physical behavior, shall have their GoBus service eligibility terminated.

#### APPEALS OF SUSPENSIONS AND TERMINATIONS

Passengers may appeal their suspensions or terminations by written notification as outline in the Complaint Procedures section. The GoBus board and Transportation Director shall have the discretion to alter the penalty as dictated by circumstances.

## Title VI Policy

#### GoBUS COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS

GoBus hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related statutes. Title VI and related statutes prohibit discrimination in federally assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program of activity receiving federal financial assistance.

#### TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCESS

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding GoBus programs has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to Title VI Complaint Coordinator with 180 days following the date of the alleged occurrence. For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact GoBus, 3800 Stone Road, Kilgore, Texas 75662 or by phone 800.590.3371. Title VI notices to the public are posted on all GoBus service vehicles. The Title VI policy is available in English and Spanish.

## Complaint Procedures

#### GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

As a recipient of public transportation funds, administered by the Texas Department of Transportation, GoBus hereby attests that it will abide by the eligibility guidelines and service priorities, as stipulated and set forth in the Agency's Contract.

In the event of a public transportation complaint, the complainant should adhere to the following complaint procedure:

In the event of a complaint the complainant should contact a supervisor in the administration offices by calling 800.590.3371 or by mail, GoBus Complaint Department, 3800 Stone Road, Kilgore, TX 75662.

Upon receipt of the complaint GoBus will request a written detail of the complaint. The complaint should include details regarding the situation: date, time, driver and problem. All complaints or statements should be signed or if by telephone the actual complainant should be the persons that calls. Complaints received by telephone will be investigated and resolved prior to ending the call or with a call back. A written response will not be required if complainant is satisfied with the resolution. The Transportation Director will be notified upon receipt of all complaints, and the Field Operations Manager or assigned staff member will conduct an investigation into written complaints. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response will be issued to the complainant not later than ten (10) days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and action taken will be forwarded to the funding source offices as required, and a copy will be kept on file at the GoBus office.