**ESSEX COUNTY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Essex County’s mission is to provide transportation services to Frail, Elderly and Disabled residents of the county as a mean to enhance the quality of life of those residents.

**Eligibility for use of the Essex County Special Transportation System (ECSTS) is:**

* All residents of Essex County aged 60 and older.
* All disabled residents of Essex County aged 18 and older with award letter from Social Security. (Doctor notes are not acceptable)
* Clients are allowed to take one guest/aide at no additional charge to assist them while attending their appointments if space is available. The guest must be aged 18 or older.
* Clients who have challenges are allowed to use an approved service animal. The approved serviced animals are listed in the ADA as:
* **NOTICE: *ANY AND ALL PERSON’S RIDING ON THE VEHICLES OF THE ESSEX COUNTY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MUST WEAR ALL SAFETY DEVICES. (SEAT BELTS, EQUIPMENT SECUREMENTS and ANY SAFETY DEVICES REQUIRED BY BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY LAWS)***

**Any person who uses a mobility device for travel whose device cannot be secured in accordance with the Essex County Special Transportation System and who cannot or who refuses to transfer to a seat will be informed immediately by the driver and asked if they wish to continue their transportation.**

**Service Animals:**

* The Essex County Special Transportation System allows service animals to ride the Essex County Special Transportation System as describe in the Federal Transit Administrations regulation FTA C 4710.1. Chapter 2 - General Requirements. 2.6 Service Animals. Also as described in the American with Disabilities Act. (ADA) most recent revision and update.

*“Service animals are animals that are “individually trained to work or perform tasks.” This training can be*

*by an organization or by an individual, including the individual with a disability. Transit agencies are not*

*required to transport animals that have not been individually trained to perform specific work or tasks. If*

*an animal’s only function were to provide emotional support or comfort for the rider, for example, that*

*animal would not fall under the regulatory training-based definition of a service animal. Simply providing*

*comfort is something that an animal does passively, by its nature or through the perception of the owner.*

*However, the ADA regulations do not prohibit a transit agency from choosing to accommodate pets and*

*comfort animals, which would be a local decision. (See FTA response to Complaint 15-0117 for an*

*example of how FTA has addressed the issue of defining what constitutes a service animal.)”*

**A brief description of the rules follows:**

 *“A passenger’s request that the driver take charge of a service animal may be denied. Caring for a*

*service animal is the responsibility of the passenger or a PCA. (See Appendix E to Part 37,*

*Example 15.)*

*• Section 37.167(d) does not prescribe limits on the number of service animals that accompany*

*riders on a single trip. Different service animals may provide different services to a rider during*

*trips or at the rider’s destination.*

*• On complementary paratransit or other demand responsive services, transit agencies may ask*

*riders for notification of their intent to ride with a service animal in order to help ensure adequate*

*space is available for the animal. (An optional good practice is to keep such information in riders’*

*files.)*

*• Other riders’ or agency personnel’s allergies to dogs or other animals would not be grounds for*

*denying service to a person accompanied by a service animal. The regulations explicitly state that*

*service animals must be allowed to accompany individuals on vehicles and in facilities.*

*Encountering a service animal in the transit or other environment is an expected part of being in*

*public.”*

These rules and regulations are available on the Federal Transportation’s (FTA) website. A full copy is available on the Essex county website for your review.

**Appointments & Reservations:**

* Appointments for transportation can be arranged no greater than 2 weeks before the appointment and up to 2 days before the appointment. Appointments are made on a first come first served basis.
* Appointments are from 8:00am to 3:00pm.
* Only 2 appointments can be made per day.
	+ - **NO NEXT DAY APPOINTMENTS CAN BE TAKEN.**
		- **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ARE CURB to CURB.**
* All residents must have a confirmed appointment before attempting to arrange transportation.
* Clients can be transported to one appointment location and returned from that location only. If they wish to go to another location that must be approved but return transportation from the second location may not be available.

**ESSEX COUNTY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

**Attention consumers of the ESSEX COUNTY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

**Essex County Special Transportation reserves the right to refuse a ride to any consumer of the transportation system where the policy is violated or the safety of transportation system is compromised. The following conduct will NOT be tolerated at any time!**

1. **RUDENESS TO ANY DRIVER, FELLOW CONSUMER, OR RESERVATION STAFF.**
2. **FIGHTING.**
3. **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**
4. **INTOXICATION. (APPEARANCE or ODOR)**
5. **INSECT INFESTATIONS.**
6. **MISUSE OR ABUSE OF THE SYSTEM OR STAFF.**
7. **ANY OTHER DETRIMENTAL BEHAVIORS THAT ENDANGERS THE SAFE OPERATION OF THE VEHICLES OR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF THE FELLOW CONSUMERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

**All violations WILL result in immediate refusal of transportation and after an investigation and may result in a suspension for a period of time or permanent suspension from the transportation system.**

**ESSEX COUNTY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION OPERATOR POLICY:**

* Operators/Drivers are to wear an approved identification badge in plain view at all times when on shift and operating county equipment.
* Operators/Drivers are to be in a clean uniform at all times when operating County equipment.
* Operators/Drivers are to have good hygiene.
* Operators/Drivers are required to assist all clients on and off the vehicle.
* Operators/Drivers are to ensure all clients are seated properly and wearing the appropriate seatbelt/restraining device before the vehicle is placed in motion.
* Operators/Drivers are to be courteous and respectful at all times.
* Operators/Drivers are to be trained by the vendor in all A.D.A. procedures and requirements, New Jersey State Paratransit requirements and safety procedures.
* Operators/Drivers are to report all accidents immediately to the supervisor on shift and complete a report as soon as possible.
* Operators/Drivers are to reports ALL incidents to the supervisor on shift and complete a report before the end of their shift.

**ROUTE DEVIATION POLICY**

**When the Essex County Special Transportation System or its vendor operates a route deviation service it will meet the following five criteria:**

1. The service allows customers to request a route deviation in some way, typically by making a phone call in advance.
2. The service will deviate for the general public, not just people with disabilities.
3. The service will provide information to the public on how to request a deviation.
4. The service does not limit the number of route deviations on the route or per run.
5. Following an off route deviation, the bus must and will return to the point on the route it left.

 As per Federal requirements Essex County Special Transportation System or its provider willcomply as follows:

* Clearly indicate on the bus timetable, marketing materials and websites service is “route deviated” and provide the telephone number and process to be followed to request a route deviation.
* Will indicate the “distance” bus will deviate for passenger pick up and drop off.
* There will be no language limiting the number of deviations per run or route.
* Deviations must be open to all passengers’ not just people with disabilities. All marketing materials must indicate deviations are open to the general public.
* All route deviations completed by transportation provider MUST be documented (example driver manifest) and kept on file.

**REASONABLE REQUESTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Essex County Special Transportation System and its Vendor follows the U.S. Department of Transportation guidelines on transportation available for persons with special needs as described in ***DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37.***

All requests should be made at the time of reservation but must be made 24 hours in advance to allow for proper consideration and scheduling. If there are any questions please call the transportation service in advance for explanation and instructions.

**QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

Essex County Special Transportation welcomes any question or concerns of our consumers and will record and address those concerns without reprisals of any kind. If you have anything you would like to share with Essex County Special Transportation you may call the company operating the transportation service, Veolia Transportation and ask for Mr. Burke. The number is 973-618-1280.

You may also write Mr. Burke at 10 Eisenhower Parkway, Roseland NJ, 07068.

You may also contact the Division of Senior Services at 900 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona NJ 07044.

Or call at 973-395-8375 and leave your comments and contact information so we may follow up with you.

 The vendor who operates the Essex County Special Transportation System must ensure all staff adhere to the policies and procedures and enforce all the listed policies and procedures of the

Essex County Division of Senior Services, Complete all necessary forms at the appropriate times and ensure all staff complete all forms in the required time.

 The forms listed below are an example of the operational forms required to report all accidents and incidents of any kind that occur by staff conducting the operation of Essex County.

* The operator/driver must complete an incident or accident form whenever anything occurs.
* The dispatcher must complete an incident form whenever an operator driver reports an accident or incident.
* The supervisor must complete a supervisor’s report/investigation form after investigating the accident/incident.
* ALL forms must be sent to the Division of Senior Services by fax within 24 working hours.