

## **Hopelink ADA Policy** (September 2011)

### **ADA Policy**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The ADA is civil rights legislation which requires that persons with disabilities receive transportation services equal to those available on the fixed route service.

It is the policy of Hopelink that, when viewed in their entirety, services, programs, facilities, and communications provided by Hopelink, directly or by a contracted service provider, are readily accessible and usable to individuals with disabilities to the maximum extent possible. 49. CFR 37.105

### **Hopelink Employees**

*Excerpted from Employee Handbook, revised June 2010:*

#### **A. Equal Employment Opportunity**

Hopelink is an equal opportunity employer. This means Hopelink does not discriminate in employment decisions or policies in violation of law on the basis of any legally protected status. This may include, but is not limited to race, gender, color, national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, political ideology and veteran status, gender identity, military status, genetic information and any other basis protected by state or local law. Hopelink's policy of non-discrimination applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, reduction in force, transfer, compensation, and training. In addition, we actively recruit employees who have skills, knowledge, and abilities in working with diverse populations. Hopelink also has built in monitoring mechanisms to assure compliance and harassment/discrimination reporting procedures. We comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws that prohibit discrimination in employment.

#### **B. Employees with Disabilities**

We comply with our legal duty to provide reasonable accommodations to allow people with disabilities to apply for and perform their jobs. If you have a disability that affects your job performance, you must let us know as soon as possible, preferably in writing. An appropriate staff member will then discuss with you the reasonable accommodations available to enable you to perform the essential functions of your job. If you become unable to perform the essential functions of your job, even with the reasonable accommodations, please ask about assistance in identifying and applying for other jobs at Hopelink that may become available and for which you may be qualified.

### **Transportation Services**

The below ADA policies pertain to the Hopelink's Medicaid Transportation brokerage and DART service (performed under contract with King County Metro Transit). Generally, the policies listed below apply to all of these transportation services; when policies differ between services they are noted.

## **1. Fare**

Fares for Hopelink's Transportation Services are determined by the funding source. DART fares are set by King County Metro and are published online at: <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bus/fare/fare-info.html>

## **2. Holiday Closures**

King County Metro DART service, operated by Hopelink, will run on a limited schedule as determined by King County Metro. The holidays they recognize are Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day.

There are no holiday closures for Hopelink's Medicaid Transportation Brokerage.

## **3. Approved Equipment**

In order to accommodate your wheelchair or power scooter on a Hopelink Transportation vehicle it must meet the following standards:

- The equipment must have 3 or 4 wheels.
- The measurement of the equipment must be no more than 30" wide and 48" long, including footrests and backpacks.
- The equipment must not weigh more than 600 lbs. when occupied, except for Hopelink's Medicaid Transportation Brokerage which can accommodate up to 800 lbs.
- Walkers must be collapsible and stored between seats.
- Equipment must be in good working order, with batteries charged, tires inflated, brakes working, footrests attached, and all parts secure. (49 CFR 37.3)

## **4. Mobility Device Brakes**

When occupying a lift or securement area, it is recommended that passengers apply the brakes on their mobility devices; however, they are not required to do so. With power chairs or scooters, it is recommended that the power switch be turned to the "off" position.

## **5. Portable Oxygen Use**

Individuals with disabilities who use portable oxygen devices are allowed to travel with respirators and properly secured portable oxygen supplies. Oxygen supplies must not obstruct the aisle. (49 CFR 37.167(h))

## **6. Securement Policy**

Operators will use front and rear tie-downs to secure mobility devices. Operators will secure mobility devices at the strongest parts of the device; however, the passenger can indicate the most optimal tie-down spot. The mobility device will be secured front facing unless otherwise requested by the passenger. Drivers will assist passengers with securement systems, ramps, and seatbelts; however, drivers cannot assist riders using power chairs or scooters with the operation of their equipment. Hopelink Transportation cannot refuse to transport someone whose mobility device cannot be satisfactorily restrained provided that mobility device fits within the definition described in Section 3. (49 CFR 37.165)

## **7. Stop Announcements**

Stops at major intersections, transfer points, and destination points will be announced on fixed route buses. DART operators will announce other stops upon request. (49 CFR 37.167 (a-c))

## **8. Personal Care Attendants**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may ride with a passenger at no charge. A PCA is someone who travels with, and helps, a rider who is not able to travel alone. Passengers must provide their own PCA if one is needed. Passengers should notify Hopelink that they will be using a PCA when they reserve a ride. This information will guarantee a place for the PCA to ride with the passenger. (49 CFR 37 (d))

## **9. Service Animals**

A service animal is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. In order to ride Hopelink Transportation:

- The animal must be on a leash or in a container, remain under control of the owner, and behave appropriately.
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians, rodents, and cats must be kept in an enclosed carrier/container.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. It may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The animal must not be aggressive toward people or other animals. (49 CFR 37.167 (d))

Passengers should inform Hopelink at the time of the ride request if you will be traveling with a service animal.

## **10. Boarding Assistance**

Operators shall position the bus to make boarding and de-boarding as easy as possible for everyone, minimize the slope of the ramp, and use the kneeling option as needed. Bus operators shall provide assistance to passengers upon request. Passengers with disabilities shall be allowed adequate time to board and disembark the vehicle.

## **11. Maintenance of Lifts or Ramps**

All operators must test the lift or ramp during the pre-trip inspection. Break down of accessibility equipment must be reported immediately to dispatch. A vehicle with an inoperable lift or ramp must be removed from service as soon as possible and cannot be returned to service until repaired. (49.CFR 37.163) All vehicle lifts and vehicles shall be maintained at a minimum to the manufacturer's specifications.

## **12. Priority Seating**

Upon request, DART operators shall ask – but not require – passengers to yield priority seating at the front of the bus to seniors and persons with disabilities. Drivers are not required to enforce the priority seating designation beyond making such a request.

## **13. Reserved Seating**

Mobility device securement areas on DART buses are reserved. Passengers using common mobility aids shall be boarded if the securement areas are not otherwise occupied by a mobility device, regardless of the number of passengers on the bus. Bus operators are required to ask passengers sitting in the securement areas to move to other available seats or to stand.

## **14. Suspension of Service**

DART riders must comply with King County Metro's Code of Conduct. Anyone in violation of the Code of Conduct may be asked to leave the Metro vehicle or facility, and risk suspension of their privileges to use Metro transit or enter transit property. The Code of Conduct is available online at: <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bus/ruleride.html>

## 15. Eligibility Requirements

Hopelink's Medicaid Transportation brokerage coordinates transportation to and from medical appointments for individuals on Medicaid assistance, based on eligibility requirements set forth by the Health Care Authority. Hopelink screens passengers to assure they meet these requirements.

DART service is available to the general public.

## 16. Complaint Process

Hopelink Transportation is committed to providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options for the community. Hopelink Transportation has established a Customer Complaint Policy and customers wishing to file a complaint may contact Hopelink Transportation at 800-923-7433 or 1-800-246-1646. Complaints are also accepted by fax, mail to any Hopelink facility, and via email, which is included on Hopelink's website at: <http://www.hope-link.org/contact>.

## 17. Staff Training

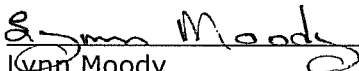
Hopelink provides comprehensive training to DART employees before they begin providing service. Trainers are certified by a nationally recognized program in passenger service for disabled passengers (in our case, the Community Transportation Association of America PASS program—Passenger Assistance Service and Safety)

Our PASS training includes:

- The history and general implications of the ADA and specific training on ADA compliance in public transportation;
- Disability awareness;
- Sensitivity in communicating and assisting passengers with disabilities;
- A survey of mobility aid devices; and
- Training on boarding and securing mobility aids.

Our training also includes the King County Metro standards for customer service and the ADA, including passenger sensitivity, meeting ADA requirements, standards for ADA required callouts, etc. Finally, staff are also trained to understand Hopelink standards for customer service for people with disabilities which, in some cases, exceeds King County and ADA standards.

Our partners/subcontractors for the Special Needs Transportation Brokerage are required to train drivers to meet the standards outlined in the PASS training description above. Most partners use the PASS program, administered by a third party. Additionally, partners train their staff in Hopelink service standards that exceed PASS requirements. Hopelink occasionally provides PASS training to their partners.

Approved by:  Date: 9/20/11  
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& Transportation