

# DENTON COUNTY GENERAL SPAN, INC. TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Span Denton County is the designated rural public transportation provider for Denton County, Texas. Span Denton County's mission is to provide a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive rural transportation plan to meet the mobility needs of Denton County residents. It is the policy of Span that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or income status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any program or activity administered by Span.

Information in these policies and procedures includes the following:

- I. Description of Span Denton County Services
- II. Application Process
- III. Disability Certification
- IV. How to Schedule a Trip
- V. Span Denton County Fares
- VI. Aides, Companions and Animals
- VII. Wait Time, No Shows and Trip Cancellations
- VIII. Mobility Devices
- IX. Seatbelts and Restraints
- X. Passenger Behavior
- XI. Termination of Services
- XII. Grievance and Appeal Procedures
- XIII. Title VI Complaints
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For additional information, please call 940-382-1900 or metro 940-243-8556.

## **I. Description of County General Span Denton County Services**

Service is provided to individuals residing inside Span's service area and will transport these residents to any location in Denton County. Span **does not** currently provide service to individuals in the DCTA cities of Denton, Lewisville, and Highland Village or other adjacent Denton/Lewisville Urbanized communities. Span may serve some of these cities under contract. Span will also assist travelers to destinations outside of Denton County by coordinating with

other transportation providers (i.e. DART, the T) whenever possible. (Out-of-county trips may require transfer to another bus or rail service.)

Span transportation service is provided by lift equipped vehicles. Operators are available to provide some assistance **upon request**. Operators are not trained to provide medical assistance.

Assistance includes:

- The operator will assist passenger from the door of a residence or pick-up location to the vehicle if needed.
- The operator will attempt to notify passengers of arrival.
- The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the vehicle.
- The operator will deliver the passenger to the door of his/her destination.

Assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs.
- Assisting passengers on ramps deemed unsafe.
- Assisting in carrying personal belongings or purchases.

SPAN IS NOT AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SPAN INC. POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW AN OPERATOR TO LOSE VISUAL CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY VEHICLE AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON.

## **Service Hours**

Trips can be scheduled for pick-up as early as 6:00 a.m. and drop off as late as 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Currently, there is no weekend service. Service is provided throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • New Year's Day         | • Labor Day              |
| • Martin Luther King Day | • Thanksgiving Day       |
| • Memorial Day           | • Day after Thanksgiving |
| • Independence Day       | • Christmas Eve          |
|                          | • Christmas Day          |

## **II. APPLICATION**

In order to use Span Denton County, passengers must complete and submit an application. Applications can be obtained by calling the Span Dispatch Office at (940) 382-1900. Upon receipt of completed applications, please allow a maximum of 21 days to process applications. Span will begin processing properly completed applications immediately upon receipt. Only

completed, signed applications will be considered for review. Once the application is fully completed, the signed original should be dropped off, mailed or faxed to:

Span Denton County  
1800 Malone  
Denton, TX 76201      940-383-8433 (fax)

Upon completion of review, Applicants will receive written notice via U.S. mail and may begin scheduling trips.

### **Reapplication Process**

Passengers will need to reapply every three years from the date they are initially approved. Reapplication ensures that Span's files are accurate and contain up-to-date information. Span will notify passengers when they are due for reapplication.

## **III. DISABILITY CERTIFICATION**

People with disabilities that meet regulatory criteria are entitled to reduced fares. In addition to the regular application, applicants must submit a properly completed Certification Form. Both documents must be received and reviewed to begin the application process to qualify for reduced-fare trips due to disability.

A licensed physician or certified human services professional familiar with the applicant's condition must sign the Certification Form verifying the disability and the applicant's functional limitations if applying for reduced-fare based upon disability. It is recommended that the Certification Form and Application be submitted at the same time in order to prevent delay of the application review. Examples of licensed or certified human service professionals include: Medical Doctor, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Social Worker, Rehabilitation Professional, Physical/Occupational Therapist, Physician's Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse.

Once all documentation is received, Span personnel will evaluate it and request, if necessary, any additional relevant information about the applicant's functional limitations related to transportation. The applicant will be notified in writing of eligibility upon determination.

### **Notice of Eligibility Determination**

An applicant that is determined to be eligible for reduced-fare service due to disability will be mailed (to the address printed on the application) documentation of eligibility. The document will include the name of the eligible individual, the phone number of the Span dispatch office, an expiration date for eligibility, and any conditions or limitation on the individual's eligibility including the use of a personal care attendant. If the determination is that the person is not eligible, the written notification will state the specific reason(s) for the finding. All applicants have the right to appeal the initial determination of eligibility (see *Grievance and Appeal Procedures*). Span employees and Span Board of Directors will strive to maintain an accommodation process that is cooperative rather than adversarial in nature, attempt to fulfill disability eligibility requests when possible and will document any and all attempts at reasonable accommodations.

## Recertification Process

Passengers with disabilities will need to recertify their eligibility every three years from the date they are initially approved. Re-certification is done to ensure that circumstances have not changed which would invalidate a passenger's eligibility. Recertification also ensures that Span's files are accurate and contain up-to-date information. Span reserves the right to re-certify eligibility at any time. Span will notify passengers when they are due for recertification.

## IV. HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRIP

### Trip Requests

1. Requests for service can be made from 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday by calling (940)-382-1900 or Metro (940)-243-8556.
2. At the time of scheduling your reservation you will need to provide Span with your name, addresses of the pick-up/drop off points and the pick-up/drop off times. Please note that all schedule requests can be made as early as 14 days prior or as late as 1 day prior to the day of service.
3. Same day call-ins, including unscheduled requests or will-calls for return trips, will not be accepted. Bus drivers are not able to make unscheduled stops while in-route.

### Scheduling

1. Span Denton County is a shared ride, public transportation service. As such, we will attempt to schedule your pick-up time as close to your requested time as possible. Once our schedule is completed the day before your trip, **you must call us between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. the day before your trip to obtain your scheduled pick-up time.** If the scheduled time is not acceptable to you, you may cancel your trip. (The trip must be cancelled by the day before in order to avoid a "late cancellation" or "no show" penalty. See *Failure to Meet the Bus*)
2. Because of traffic and other issues beyond our control, please note the vehicle may arrive **up to 15 minutes before or after** your scheduled pick-up time ("30-minute ready time window"). Once the bus has arrived, the driver **will not wait more than 5 minutes** for the scheduled passenger to board the bus.
3. Whenever possible, Span Denton County will attempt to notify all passengers that the vehicle will be early or late (beyond the 30-minute window). This will allow the passenger time to make arrangements if the vehicle is unavoidably detained. If Span Denton County does not have a telephone on record or if the number has been changed, we will not be able to notify the passenger of the change in pick-up time. It is the responsibility of the passenger to provide accurate and up-to-date contact information to Span. Please make sure that we have a current telephone number and address on file.
4. Only trips with scheduled pick-up times will be entered on the daily schedules.
5. Subscription service is available to a limited number of passengers that travel to the same place at the same time every week. If a passenger is afforded a subscription slot, the

passenger will automatically be placed on the schedule for those trips. The passenger will not be required to schedule each trip separately; however subscription passengers are still required to call the day before (between 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.) to get their scheduled pick-up time for the following day, and must cancel subscription trips to avoid penalties.

## **V. Span DENTON COUNTY FARES**

Fare for Span Denton County is established by the Span Board of Directors. The current fares are as follows:

- General Public - \$5.00 per one way trip
- Disabled (requires eligibility certification) - \$2.50 per one way trip
- Senior (aged 60 or older\*) - \$2.50 per one way trip

*\*may require verification of age*

Without exception, Span passengers must pay the bus driver promptly for that leg of the trip PRIOR to the vehicle's departure. Passengers shall pay the fare in exact change or with a pass. Bus drivers will not make change. Drivers may not take payment for a subsequent leg of your trip if that bus will not be providing the trip. A one way trip ("trip leg") is each boarding of the passenger onto the bus.

### **Passes**

Passes (for senior and disabled fares only) may be purchased in books of 10 (for \$25.00) or 20 (for \$50.00) by submitting requests by mail or in person at the following location:

Span Administrative Office  
1800 Malone  
Denton, TX 76201

Requests submitted by mail should include the address to which the passes should be mailed along with appropriate payment in the form of a check or money order. Please do not mail cash.

## **VI. AIDES, COMPANIONS AND ANIMALS**

### **Aides**

An aide is a social services attendant or personal care assistant required to travel with a passenger. Aides ride for free; the aide must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the passenger. Aides will need to be placed onto the schedule and the need for an aide must be indicated on the certification form in order for the aide to ride for free.

Span may require a passenger to supply their own aide. Span does not provide aides. Generally the following conditions warrant an aide:

- Incapable of self-mobility
- Unable to communicate
- Unable to handle common activities
- Unable to control his/her own actions
- Unable to remain seated and belted
- Unable to independently transfer from wheelchair
- Children under 15 years of age
- Others as reasonably determined by Span's Transportation Manager

### **Companions**

A companion is anyone *other than an aide* who travels with a disability-certified passenger. Companions may accompany such passengers on a trip. A companion will be charged a fare comparable to the passenger. A companion must be picked up and dropped off at the same address as the passenger. An aide does not count as the one companion. Additional companions may accompany a passenger if space on the vehicle permits. Companions must be scheduled at the same time you call in to schedule your trip.

### **Animals**

Guide dogs and other service animals are permitted on Span vehicles and allowed to accompany passengers if this need is indicated in the passenger's Span file. Other small animals are also allowed, but must be contained in an approved pet travel kennel and must be restrained in the kennel throughout the trip. When scheduling a trip, passengers must indicate that an animal will be accompanying the passenger.

## **VII. WAIT TIME, NO SHOWS AND TRIP CANCELLATION**

Bus drivers will utilize the following guidelines concerning a person's failure to meet the Span vehicle.

### **Wait Time**

Span bus drivers will not wait longer than five (5) minutes from the arrival time for passengers to board the vehicle. If the vehicle arrives within the 30-minute ready window (15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time), the passenger must board the vehicle within five minutes of arrival time. Passengers or their associates may not ask the bus driver to delay this five-minute interval under any circumstances; this is to assure the timely pick-up and transportation of all Span passengers.

### **No Show**

Failure to meet the vehicle within five minutes from the time of arrival will constitute a no-show. Also if a passenger fails to cancel their trip within 3 hours before the pick-up time it will also be considered a no-show. A passenger is allowed 2 no-shows per calendar month without penalty.

## **Late Cancellation**

If a passenger cancels their trip on the day of service but does so **more than 3** hours before the pick-up time it will be considered a late cancellation. A passenger is allowed 4 late cancellations per calendar month without penalty.

## **Penalties**

- Three (3) no-shows in a 30 day period will result in the suspension of services for 1 month. If the problem continues service can be suspended indefinitely.
- Five (5) Late Cancellations in a 30 day period will result in the suspension of services for 1 month. If the problem continues service can be suspended indefinitely.
- In addition, Span may impose reasonable penalties for any passenger that develops a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips.
- Subscription riders that face penalties may lose their subscription slot.

## **VIII. MOBILITY DEVICES**

Span vehicles, in compliance with the ADA and the Federal Code of Regulations, are designed to carry passengers utilizing wheelchairs. A wheelchair is defined as a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

**Span reserves the right to deny service if carrying the passenger would be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements.**

## **IX. SEATBELTS AND RESTRAINTS**

Span provides seatbelts for all passengers. Agency policy requires that all passengers utilize them at all times for their own safety as well as the safety of other passengers. All carry-on items must be safely restrained during transport. All wheeled mobility devices must be properly secured at all times the Span vehicle is in operation.

## **X. PASSENGER BEHAVIOR**

To assure the safety and comfort of all passengers and the driver, the following activities are prohibited on all vehicles and persons who engage in these activities may be refused service:

- Smoking
- Eating or drinking
- Playing personal radios unless headphones are used at a volume unable to be heard by surrounding passengers
- Consuming alcoholic beverages
- Using illegal drugs

- Using obscene or abusive language
- Violent, disruptive or threatening behavior
- Shoving, pushing, or behaving in a disorderly manner
- Causing actual or potential damage to the vehicle

Span reserves the right to deny service (including removing the passenger from the bus) if the situation is determined to be unsafe for the passenger, other passengers, the driver or the public.

## **XI. TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

If a passenger does not follow guidelines and procedures involving the use of Span Denton County, services will be terminated as follows:

- If feasible a verbal warning will be given.
- If compliance is not achieved after the verbal warning, the passenger will receive a written warning in detail concerning the area of non-compliance and possible sanctions.
- If compliance is not achieved after the written warning, the passenger will be notified in writing that his/her use of all or a portion of Span services is terminated, with a statement of reasons for termination.

Span reserves the right to immediately terminate services without prior warning if a passenger poses a safety risk to himself/herself or any other person.

## **XII. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

1. Any individual has the option to appeal a suspension, termination or rate eligibility determination. Appeals must be presented in writing within 60 days. Span's Executive Director will first hear appeals. If the Executive Director upholds the determination, the individual may request that the matter be reviewed by a panel of Span board members designated by the Span Board Chair.
2. Once an individual requests an appeal, the Span board member panel will review all material submitted. Span service will not be suspended while the Span board panel is considering an appeal unless suspension or termination resulted from behavior that was determined to pose a risk to the passenger or others.
3. Span will notify the individual, in writing, of the Executive Director's or the board panel's ruling on all appeals. This notification will outline the ruling and the reasons for it.
4. Once the individual has been informed of the board's ruling, the determination will either be dismissed or imposed on the next day of service.
5. Span requires that all appeals must be made within 60 days of notification of sanctions or eligibility determination.
6. All decisions made by the Span board panel are considered final.



Span Employees and Span Board of Directors will strive to maintain an accommodation process that is cooperative rather than adversarial in nature, attempt to fulfill eligibility requests when possible and will document any and all attempts at reasonable accommodations.

### **XIII. TITLE VI COMPLAINTS**

A Title VI Complaint may be filed by any individual or individuals who allege they have been subjected to discrimination or adverse impact under any Span program or activity based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Span follows the Texas Department of Transportation's Title VI complaint process. Complaint forms and informational flyers are available from Span's Title VI Officer (Executive Director) at Span's office (940-382-2224) or from TxDOT ([www.TxDOT.gov](http://www.TxDOT.gov), 1-866-480-2518). Complaints may be mailed to Span's office in Denton or directly to TxDOT's Office of Civil Rights, 125 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78701.

### **XIV. DEFINITIONS**

**Aide** – An aide is a social services attendant or personal care assistant who accompanies a passenger to assist the passenger in utilizing Span's transportation service.

**Companion** – A companion is anyone *other than an aide* who travels with a disability-certified passenger.

**Demand Response Service** – Non-fixed-route shared transportation service utilizing vans or buses with passengers boarding and alighting at pre-arranged times and locations within the system's service area.

**Disability** -- The Americans with Disabilities Act utilizes a three-pronged definition of disability. An individual with a disability is any person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

An individual must satisfy at least one of the three prongs of the above definition in order to be considered an individual with a disability.

**Mobility Device** – A mechanism such as a wheelchair, a walker or a scooter, designed to aid passengers with mobility impairments. They can be either manually operated or powered.

**Late Cancellation** – If a passenger cancels their trip on the day of service but does so **more than 3** hours before the pick-up time it will be considered a late cancellation.

**No Show** – A no-show occurs when a passenger fails to cancel their trip at least 3 hours before the scheduled pick-up time or board the Span vehicle within 5 minutes after it arrives within the 30-minute ready-time window.

**Ready Time Window** – A 30 minute window from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, during which a passenger should be ready for pick-up.

**Service Animals** – Animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind or who have low vision, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting a person who is having a seizure or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

**Service Area** – Span serves residents of Denton County that live outside of the Denton/Lewisville urbanized area (UZA). Span transports these residents to any location in Denton County. Areas inside the UZA may be served by Span under contract with individual cities or towns.

**Subscription Service** – An ongoing standing order is entered in Span's schedule for a passenger travelling to the same place at the same time each week.

**Wheelchair** – A mobility aid belonging to any class of 3 or 4-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by passengers with mobility impairments. They may be either operated manually or powered.

## **XV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Question:** *What if I run late at my appointment?*

**Answer:** It is suggested that riders over-estimate rather than under-estimate the travel and appointment times.

**Question:** *Do I have to call each day to schedule a trip if the times and days that I travel are the same week to week?*

**Answer:** No, subscription service is available when travel is at the same time and day each week. However, the passenger must call the evening before each trip to get the pick-up time, and when necessary, the passenger must remember to cancel a subscription ride to avoid a no-show being recorded. Three (3) cancellations within a 1-month period shall invalidate the subscription.

**Question:** *Will I be taken directly to and from my destination?*

**Answer:** Not necessarily. Span is public transportation and usually passengers share rides. Other passengers may be picked up and/or dropped off during your trip.

**Question:** What is the service area?

**Answer:** Span Denton County serves residents in those portions of Denton County shown on the attached map, and includes the following cities of Denton County: Argyle, Aubrey, Cross Roads, Hackberry, Hebron, Justin, Krugerville, Lakewood Village, Lincoln Park, Northlake, Oak Point, Paloma Creek Ponder, Pilot Point, Roanoke, Sanger and Trophy Club. Destinations for these residents may include any location in Denton County.

In addition, Span may enter into contracts with other cities/towns to provide service. Span currently operates under contract with the client cities of Coppell, Flower Mound, Little Elm and The Colony.

**Question:** How many grocery bags are allowed on the bus? (Cases of drinks and large bags of pet food are not allowed)

**Answer:** Span allows each passenger to carry a maximum of 2 standard size paper grocery bags (or equivalent volume thereof in plastic bags) while riding the bus. Passengers must be able to carry groceries on and off the bus in one trip.