

Vermillion Public Transit



Passenger Handbook

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Table of Contents

Service Plan	3
Scheduling Rides	3
A. Requesting service.....	3
B. Regularly scheduled rides	4
C. Scheduling trips.....	4
D. Door to door service	4
E. Canceling rides	5
F. No show policy	5
G. Seatbelt policy.....	5
Fares	6
A. Returned check policy.....	6
Passenger Responsibility	7
A. Refusing service.....	7
Complaint Process	7
ADA Policy	8
Title VI Policy	8
Services not offered by Vermillion Public Transit	9
Severe Weather Policy.....	9
A. Snowstorms	9
B. Severe Thunderstorms or Tornado Warnings	10
C. Other weather incidents	10
D. Helpful suggestions when riding transit.....	10
VPT Passenger Handbook Signature Page	11

VERMILLION PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

Vermillion Public Transit is a public transit service serving the Vermillion, Burbank and Meckling area. We also provide service to Sioux Falls, Monday – Friday.

All our service hours are open to the public and anyone can ride. Regular transit hours are:

Monday - Friday - 8:00am - 10:00pm

Saturday – 9:00am – 7:00pm

Sunday - 9:00am - 2:00pm

Transportation to Sioux Falls occurs on an as needed basis and a 24 hour notice is required. We will also pick up passengers who live in communities that are between Vermillion and Sioux Falls. We ask that passengers schedule their business between the hours of 11am and 3 pm.

No services will be provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday following Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

In the event that a holiday listed above would fall on a Saturday, there would be one bus running on the Friday before the holiday between 8:00am - 4:00pm. In the event the holiday falls on a Sunday, there would be one bus running on the Monday following the holiday between 8:00am - 4:00pm.

SCHEDULING RIDES

REQUESTING SERVICE:

We schedule rides on a first come, first served basis, so plan to schedule rides as far in advance as you can. We encourage you to schedule your rides at least one day in advance. This helps us to plan for the trip when we make our schedule for the next day. We also recommend that you schedule your ride so there is enough time to get to your destination on time. Buses may arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled pick up time or 10 minutes after the time, so we encourage you to plan accordingly. We ask that you plan to schedule your return trip at the time you make the initial ride with the dispatcher.

You will need to inform the dispatcher, when scheduling a ride, if you will be making more than one stop so we can plan for the ride. We make the routes the day before and will not have time to complete the extra trip once the schedule is set. Transit Operators are not able to wait for you at a location even if you will not be there very long.

To schedule a ride, call **624-7433** during office hours. Office hours are: Monday – Friday, 8:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 5:00pm. There is no one in the office between

12:00pm – 1:00pm. Please call to schedule rides before or after this time. The cell phone (202-0954) can be called during this time to request a pickup over the lunch hour, but no advance scheduling can be done.

REGULARY SCHEDULED RIDES:

A ride scheduled on a regular basis may be arranged with the dispatcher to be recurrent. You only need to make one call and the ride will be on the schedule until you call and tell the dispatcher that you no longer need the ride.

SCHEDULING TRIPS:

Vermillion Public Transit operates within a 20 minute window. Due to the nature of the service, arrival times will vary. Please allow a **20 minute** window of time for the bus to arrive.

- The bus may have an early arrival of up to **10 minutes**, or the possibility of a **10 minute** delay. This should be taken into account when scheduling a ride so that you will arrive on time for your appointment. We ask that you plan for an early arrival and be ready to go 10 minutes prior to your pick up.
- Upon arrival, all Transit Operators will wait for the passenger for **five minutes**. Once the five minutes is up, the operator will continue on his/her route and the ride will be marked a no-show. (This excludes boarding time.)
- In the event your appointment is completed early, you are encouraged to call and notify the Transit Dispatcher that you are available for an early return. If possible we will pick you up sooner, but for sure you will be picked up at your scheduled return time.
- Because rides are scheduled on a first come, first served basis, customers calling in for immediate rides may have a longer wait for the bus or may ride the bus longer than usual to reach their destination depending on the bus schedule.

DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE:

Vermillion Public Transit provides door to door service. Passengers can request door to door service when they call in to schedule their rides or ask the Transit Operator for assistance on the bus. When we transport children, the transit operator will not leave a child at a destination unattended. For children under the age of 10, an adult will be required to bring the child to the bus and meet the child at the destination.

The services are explained below:

1. Private homes:
 - Vermillion Public Transit Operators will not enter your private home for any reason.
 - Transit Operators may assist you from your exterior door to the vehicle and from the vehicle to your exterior door.

2. Business/Medical Facilities/Public Buildings:

- Vermillion Public Transit bus operators may assist you into and from the inside door. Due to extreme temperatures in entryways, bus operators may assist you through the second door when necessary. Transit Operators will not assist you past this point.
- When picking up from a business/medical facility, bus operators may go through the first door, but will not go past this point.
- It is the passenger's, personal attendant's or care provider's responsibility to ensure that passengers are waiting inside the door for their ride.
- Transit Operators will not enter nursing homes, medical facilities, shopping centers or businesses in an attempt to find you. You should be waiting at the designated pick-up point at least **ten minutes** before your pick-up time.
- Transit Operators will not assist you in transporting any recycling materials.
- The buses are unable to go through drive-thru lanes at the Post Office, banks or restaurants. You will need to be dropped off and schedule a return pick-up time as the bus operators cannot always wait for you to go in and return because they have other passengers waiting to be picked up.

CANCELING RIDES:

To cancel a ride, passengers must call the Vermillion Public Transit office at least 15 minutes before scheduled pick-up time. If you need to cancel a ride after office hours, you may call the cell phone at (605)-202-0954. If you need to cancel a ride after operation hours for the next day, leave a message on the answering machine (605)-624-7433. For rescheduling a ride, please contact the dispatcher during office hours.

NO SHOW POLICY:

We ask that you call as far in advance as you can to cancel a trip as the Transit Operators have a schedule to maintain and this becomes inconvenient for other passengers and transit. Passengers who are "no shows" are, in effect, causing higher fares and a less efficient system for the other passengers riding Vermillion Public Transit. We keep track of no shows and if this occurs on a regular basis, we will contact you to see if there is a misunderstanding with the schedule or service. If this continues to be a problem, we will discontinue service.

SEAT BELT POLICY:

All passengers of Vermillion Public Transit are encouraged to wear a seat belt. Passengers under the age of 18 are required to wear a seat belt, vest or car seat, if applicable. Vermillion Public Transit does not have infant car seats. Parents and/or guardians will be required to supply the appropriate seat for the child.

FARES

Cash Fares - In Vermillion city limit fares are currently \$2.50 for a one-way trip. Persons over 60 who cannot afford this fare may contact the dispatcher to make other arrangements. The number is 624-7433. Please contact the dispatcher to find out the current fares for transportation beyond 2 miles of city limits and to Sioux Falls. Please have the correct change ready when you board the bus. Transit Operators are not authorized to give cash refunds. They do carry one-way ticket passes that will be given in lieu of change.

VIP PASS – The VIP PASS is a monthly pass for unlimited rides within city limits. The cost of the pass is \$50.00 per month. This pass is nontransferable.

Ticket - Vermillion Public Transit also offers a pre-paid punch card for travel within city limits that may work better for the infrequent rider. The card is good for twenty (20) one-way rides and does not expire. The cost of the card is \$50.00.

VIP PASSES and tickets may be purchased from the Transit Operators or at the office. The address of the office is 604 ½ High St. To purchase a VIP PASS or ticket, please pay cash or make out a check to Vermillion Public Transit.

If you are a Medicaid recipient and need assistance paying for medical rides, we can bill Medicaid directly. You will need to contact the dispatcher in advance to confirm qualification and register for this service. Once qualification is determined, you will get a Medicaid Recipient Verification form from the Transit Operator before you go to the medical appointment. This form will need to be completely filled out and signed by all parties so we can bill Medicaid for the service. When you get a ride home from the appointment, return the form to the Transit Operator. It is the responsibility of the passenger to assure all signatures are on the form when given to the Transit Operator. If the form is incomplete, you will need to get the correct signatures or reimburse transit for the ride(s). If you have any questions, ask your Transit Operator or call the office.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY:

Service will be suspended until the insufficient funds are paid to Vermillion Public Transit. Future transactions with Vermillion Public Transit will be required to be in cash.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be on time for pick-ups
- Leave seats in the front for people who are less mobile
- Utilize all hand and safety rails
- No eating, drinking or smoking on the bus, please keep the vehicle clean
- Remain seated until the vehicle makes a complete stop
- If you have to cancel, do so as soon as possible so someone else can take your place
- Passenger and/or care providers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are properly dressed for their ride. This includes proper coats, hats, gloves and/or footwear. Transit Operators cannot assist passengers with their clothing.

REFUSING SERVICE:

Vermillion Public Transit reserves the right to refuse service to any passenger who displays:

- Seriously disruptive behavior
- violent behavior
- illegal conduct

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Filing a complaint

A customer may call the VPT office to report a complaint. VPT employees will work to resolve the complaint with the customer. If the complaint is not resolved:

Any person can file a signed, written complaint up to one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of the alleged incident. The complaint should include the following information:

- Complainant's name, mailing address and viable contact information
- How, when, where and why of the. Include the location, names and contact information of any witnesses
- Other information that is deemed significant

All complaints of a service or benefit provided by VPT will be directly addressed by VPT. VPT shall also provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities, or who are limited in their ability to communicate in English.

Additionally, VPT shall make every effort to address all complaints in an expeditious and thorough manner.

A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be mailed within seven days.

Please note that in responding to any requests for additional information, a complainant's failure to provide the requested information may result in the administrative closure of the complaint.

Notification of Complaint

VPT will send a final written response letter to the complainant. This written response may be drafted subject to review by the VPT attorney. In the letter notifying complainant that the complaint is not substantiated, the complainant is also advised of his or her right to 1) appeal within seven calendar days of receipt of the final written decision from VPT, and/or 2) file a complaint externally with the Department of Transportation, and/or the Federal Transit Administration. Every effort will be made to respond to complaints within 60 working days of receipt of such complaints, if not sooner.

ADA POLICY

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law July 26, 1990. The ADA is civil rights legislation which requires that persons with disabilities receive transportation services equal to those available to people without disabilities.

It is the policy of Vermillion Public Transit that, when viewed in their entirety, services, programs, facilities and communications provided by Vermillion Public Transit are readily accessible and useable to individuals with disabilities to the maximum extent possible. (49 CFR 37.105) For more information or to file a complaint, refer to the complete Vermillion Public Transit ADA Policy. You may request a copy of the policy by calling our office at 605-624-7433 or the full policy is posted on our website, www.sesdac.org.

TITLE VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin on programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

VPT is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.A.

For more information or to file a complaint, refer to the complete Vermillion Public Transit Title VI Plan. You may request a copy of the plan by calling our office at 605-624-7433 or the full policy is posted on our website, www.sesdac.org.

SERVICES NOT OFFERED BY VERMILLION PUBLIC TRANSIT:

Transit Operators will not enter private residences for any reason.

Transit Operators are not allowed to assist passengers in mobility devices up or down any steps or non ADA compliant ramps. If such a condition exists, passengers are responsible for arranging assistance from someone other than the Vermillion Public Transit operator.

Transit Operators will not run personal errands for anyone.

Transit Operators do not carry any cash for making change.

Transit Operators cannot accompany passengers during their medical appointments.

Transit Operators cannot schedule future rides, but may notify dispatcher of a return trip request. Please call the office to schedule rides.

Transit Operators will not transport recycling materials to the recycling center.

SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

SNOW STORMS:

When it snows, Vermillion Public Transit will run on a snow schedule. This means we will begin services when our lot has been plowed and we are able to move vehicles. We cannot guarantee that we will be running on schedule when this occurs.

In the event of a school closure, it will be the policy of Vermillion Public Transit to run the buses on emergency snow routes primarily and other streets as they are opened by the city plows. If your street, driveway or parking lot has been plowed, we will enter these areas. If your street is not plowed, we will pick you up and drop you off on the plowed street closest to your pick up or destination.

Vermillion Public Transit will close the bus service when one of the following events occurs:

- If the City of Vermillion declares no travel within Vermillion
- The Transit Director feels the weather is not conducive to traveling.

In the event of the snow schedule or the closing of the transit service, it will be announced on the following radio stations (106.3 FM and 1570 AM).

Please note, Vermillion Public Transit will only provide service to people whose streets are plowed and sidewalks are shoveled. If the passenger's destination is not clear, the passenger will take the responsibility of getting themselves the rest of the way or they will be returned to their home.

Winter Riding Tips:

- Be aware of weather conditions which may affect Vermillion Public Transit services.
- If streets are icy, allow extra travel time.
- Avoid delays by being on time and having correct fare or tickets ready.
- Clean footwear of snow and slush before boarding so it does not gather on the steps and floor of the bus, causing danger to others.
- Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before boarding or exiting.

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS OR A TORNADO WARNING:

The Transit Operators are trained to go to the nearest storm shelter when the city siren goes off indicating severe weather is approaching. They will assist their passengers into the shelter and remain there until the all clear has been issued.

The storm shelters in Vermillion are:

- National Guard Armory, 603 Princeton St.
- Vermillion Fire & EMS Station - 820 North Dakota St.

OTHER WEATHER INCIDENTS:

Transit Operators will be expected to use their own judgment when there are heavy rains and/or hail as to their ability to see the streets and traffic. When a Transit Operator feels he/she do not have adequate visibility, he/she is encouraged to pull over to the side of the road until visibility improves. The Transit Operator will notify the Transit Dispatcher immediately when this occurs. This way, the Transit Dispatcher will be able to let the passengers who are waiting for a ride know what is happening if they When we transport children, the transit operator will not leave a child on the bus unattended, therefore for children under the age of 10, an adult will be required to bring the child to the bus and meet the child at the destination.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS WHEN RIDING TRANSIT:

- Consider carrying an insulated grocery bag to place your frozen and refrigerated items into for returning from the grocery store. The bus may not be able to return for you as soon as you are done shopping.
- Check for personal items around your seat before exiting the vehicle.
- If you think you have left something in the vehicle, all lost and found items are taken to the office. Please contact the dispatcher for directions as to how to retrieve your item.
- Carry the correct change for the fare box.
- Call to schedule a ride as soon as you know you need it and schedule return rides at this time.



Vermillion Public Transit Passenger Handbook Signature Page

I have received, reviewed and understand the policies and guidelines in the Vermillion Public Transit Passenger Handbook. I further agree to abide by the policies and guidelines stated.

Name: _____ (print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If passenger is a minor, parents please sign.

I have received and reviewed with my child the Vermillion Public Transit Passenger Handbook. I further agree that my child and I will abide by the policies and guidelines stated.

Name: _____ (print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return page by mail to 604 ½ High St. or give to your Transit Operator.

Office use only:

Date Received: _____