

# Ride Assist Services – *Compassion in Action*

## Guidelines for Volunteer Drivers

**Driver Qualifications:** A volunteer driver must hold a current Virginia’s driver’s license, no DUI, have an acceptable DMV record, and have acceptable and current liability insurance on the vehicle to be used to transport passengers. He/she must have knowledge of the tri-counties area sufficient to navigate. A volunteer driver should possess sufficient strength and stamina to assist passengers if necessary to and from their vehicle (**however at this time due to COVID safety precautions, transportation will remain contactless**) and have a sincere desire and willingness to work with persons with disabilities and older adults.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** Volunteer drivers provide patient and courteous transportation service to medical appointments, grocery shopping, or for personal business such as banking, the post office or other errands. Volunteer drivers provide a service so that older adults may keep their independence.

- Time spent as a volunteer driver and miles driven while assisting passengers must be accurately recorded on the driver log provided by RAS.
- Driver will arrive on time for appointments and may need to instruct the passenger to fasten seat belts and provide other pertinent information about the trip.
- The volunteer driver’s vehicle must be maintained in good working order including a current state inspection sticker on the front windshield of the vehicle and current registration.
- A volunteer driver should operate his/her vehicle in a manner that ensures the health and safety of all passengers. If a rider wants to make a donation toward the program, a volunteer driver can collect donations to be turned in later to transportation coordinator.

**HOURS:** Volunteer working hours will depend on the demand for rides and the days or hours which the volunteer finds themselves available to fulfill rides. A standard ride spans a 2 hour window, from the time of client pick up.

### Office to Driver Procedure:

The Ride Assist Services Transportation Coordinator uses the Ride Scheduler program to notify drivers of available rides. When you receive the notice of available rides, and you are available to provide a requested ride, you will ‘accept’ that ride. If you click on the ‘Accept’ button, the ride will be assigned to you – no other driver will be able to take that ride.

Once you accept a driving assignment, the Transportation Coordinator will send you an email to confirm the ride is assigned to you and to thank you for accepting the appointment. Note: As the driver, you must then contact the rider-client to let them know that they will have a ride to their appointment.

### Driver to Client Contact Procedure:

1. Drivers need to call the client 2 times:

- a) First Call: Call the client the first day you are notified of an appointment to reassure the client that transportation will be provided and to confirm the transportation details (i.e., pick-up time, actual location- vestibule, front porch, side porch, etc. )  
*Describe your vehicle to the client (color and type) so they know what to watch for.*
- b) Second Call: Before leaving home to make the pick-up so as to be sure that the appointment has not been cancelled, that the client is ready and to suggest that the client be on the look-out for the driver.

2. Drivers should wear their RAS Volunteer Nametag and use the Driver Window Card for identification.
3. **It is important that rides given remain single purpose/destination.** However drivers are free to make an additional stop at a Powhatan County pharmacy for a client following a medical appointment only (at their discretion). Sometimes a client may ask to go to the grocery store as an additional stop. Please let the rider know that it must be a separate appointment.
4. (Optional) Any driver desiring to also accept wheelchair ride requests (flagged on each request if it's a wheelchair van ride) and utilize the RAS wheelchair van, will be trained to operate the lift, be provided with an \$11/hr stipend for wheelchair van rides given, and will only drive. No physical assistance outside the van will be provided by a driver; riders requiring wheelchair transportation must have a companion or caregiver accompany them for transportation if they need any assistance beyond entrance and exit from the van.
5. Any donation received from clients can be dropped off at the DSS office attn: Jayne Lloyd as you are able; we suggest not retaining any donation checks longer than 2 weeks out of courtesy to the donor.
6. Drivers should report any problems they encounter to RAS.  
Some examples are: changes in the client's condition, client canceling an appointment without notifying RAS, client not paying parking fees, etc)
7. If the client calls the driver at home to arrange transportation, the driver should ask the client to call Ride Assist Services 804-698-0438 to make transportation arrangements.
8. Trip Cancellations or Completion:

Trip Cancellations: If for any reason (school closing/weather, rider emergency, or driver emergency) the trip needs to be cancelled, please communicate with transportation coordinator.

Trip Completion: When the trip is completed, please enter the mileage in the Ride Scheduler trip log and save it. We will then know that the trip has been successfully completed.

### **Drivers, please note:**

In order to protect the privacy of our Drivers, it is a RAS Program policy NOT to give clients the Driver's phone numbers or last names. However, a Driver may choose to do that at his/her own discretion and the Driver's full name will be on their ID badge.

### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

During inclement weather, RAS follows the policy of the Powhatan County Schools. If schools are closed, the office is closed. No transportation will be provided for a scheduled appointment. However, there may be times when the schools are closed because of certain early morning conditions that may improve later during the day. In those cases, the Transportation Coordinator and the driver may determine that the situation is safe and will not put the driver or client at risk.

### **Drivers, please note:**

Upon notice of school closings, drivers should contact the client and let him/her know you will be unable to provide the service during bad weather. Ask the client to reschedule the appointment at a later time and to contact the RAS office 804-698-0438 with the new date when the office reopens.

In times where there is a declared weather emergency by the US weather service or by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Emergency Services, the RAS Program will suspend all activities until the emergency notice is lifted.

Our answering machine is critical to our operations. Please leave a message and know that your call will be returned promptly.

*If you have any suggestions that could improve the program, your comments are welcome and appreciated at any time. Please contact Jayne Lloyd 804-698-0438*