

WEST OAKLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Website: www.RideWOTA.org

Office located at:

205 W. Livingston Road

Highland, MI 48357

(248) 887-4979

(Back end of old church across from fire department)

STEPS TO BECOME A RIDER:

1. You must be a tax paying resident of Highland, White Lake, Waterford or Walled Lake, with proof of residency.
2. You must be either a senior (55+ years old) or disabled (18+ years old, with professional verification).
3. The following items are necessary to qualify:
 - a. WOTA Application Passenger Information Form,
 - b. Proof of residency (driver's license, current utility bill, etc.) with your name and address,
 - c. If disabled, a Professional Verification Form is to be completed by the doctor, counselor, etc. proving your disability,
 - d. The process will generally take 2-4 days to be registered once all documents have been received.

The forms referenced above can be completed online at: www.ridewota.org and then emailed to: info@ridewota.org. If you don't have internet access, forms are available at the WOTA office or can be mailed to you.

RULES TO FOLLOW ONCE YOU ARE A RIDER:

1. *WOTA is NOT meant to be your only means of transportation.*
2. ***NO ride is guaranteed.***
3. ***There will be times that we cannot accommodate your schedule.***
4. WOTA is demand response public transportation and schedules change daily based on rides that day, how many people are on the vehicle, traffic, weather, late passengers, issues with passengers, etc. We have no fixed routes. Please be patient and understand your ride will not be the same every time. We have different drivers and new routes daily.

5. Rides are based on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to:
 - a. Work Rides (available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Monday to Friday)
 - b. Medical Appointments
 - c. Shopping for food
 - d. Senior rides
 - e. Second stop rides (must be prescheduled)
 - f. Other types of rides are available but may not be able to be guaranteed at time of call. You may be put on a waitlist until the day before, if the schedule is busy. It is best to give dispatch a wide time frame to accommodate lower priority rides.
6. If your area's school system is closed due to weather, WOTA may be closed or may only accommodate work and medical appointment rides in your area. A message will be left on WOTA's phone message system, posted on the website: www.ridewota.org and on our Facebook page for you to check.
7. All driveways, walk-ways and private roads must be cleared.
8. WOTA gladly accepts donations by either:
 - a. Sealed envelopes with donations may be given to the drivers.
 - b. Checks can be sent to: WOTA, 205 W. Livingston Rd., Highland, MI 48357
A receipt with 501c3 number will be sent to you for your taxes.
9. **Hours of Operation:**
 - a. **Driver - Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.**
 - b. **Office – Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
10. **Scheduling Policy – Call (248) 887-4979**
 - a. **Scheduling Hours: Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.**
 - b. You may schedule up to 2 months in advance with up to 2 appointments per day. Note: second stops are lowest priority and will be permitted when time allows. You must schedule a second stop before your ride if you think you will need one, such as going to the doctor then stopping at the pharmacy afterwards. You can always cancel that second stop. There is a \$2.50 charge for additional stops.
 - c. **Must call 48 hours ahead of appointment**, no later than 3 p.m. 2 days prior. You may schedule up to 2 months in advance.
 - d. Weekends do NOT count in hour limit so appointments made after 3pm on Friday will be for the following Tuesday or later.
 - e. Riders must clearly identify:
 - i. Destination address and phone number.

- ii. Specific times: always give appointment time, dispatcher will determine your pickup time.
- iii. Number of passengers (ALL passengers must be 18+ and registered).
- iv. Specify if lift equipped vehicle is required.
- f. **Voicemail is not available to schedule rides.** You must speak to a dispatcher between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- g. Dispatcher will give you a time for pick up when you schedule your ride and will not call back unless you are on a waitlist.
- h. You must remember your time and day of pick up and be ready and waiting 15 minutes in advance of pickup time. We have a 15-minute window of time either before or after a scheduled time that you may be picked up. If you are not ready for pickup when the driver arrives, you may be left and it will be counted against you as a no-show. Continued tardiness or not cancelling will result in warnings and possible loss of service.
- i. Driver will wait up to 5 minutes for rider acknowledgement and a call will be attempted before leaving. If the driver arrives and you must be delayed, call dispatch at (248) 887-4979 and notify them of the delay. If the driver can wait s/he will, if not another driver may/may not be sent.
- j. Standing appointments may be scheduled. Remember to call and cancel if not going.
- k. WOTA will not schedule a return ride from any procedure that involves anesthesia.

11. **Cancellation Policy:**

- a. You may call (248) 887-4979 to cancel rides 24 hours a day.
- b. Voicemail is available to cancel rides at any time.
- c. **You must cancel at least 4 hours ahead of your scheduled time or it will be considered a no-show.**
- d. If you have 3 no-shows (or late cancels) in a one-month period, this may result in a loss of riding privileges and being put on probationary status for 30 days.

12. **Fare Policy:**

- a. The amount charged per ride (one way) is \$2.50
- b. If rider is not ready when the bus arrives, the bus will leave and the rider will be charged \$2.50 for a no-show. If dispatch can send another bus to pick up the rider, they will be charged \$2.50 again for that ride. All riders must be ready for their ride 15 minutes AHEAD of scheduled pick up times.
- c. There is a \$2.50 charge for each time you get on the vehicle. So, if you are scheduled for two stops you will have to pay two fares, plus your return home.
- d. Late cancellations (less than 4 hours) will not be charged but will count as one of the three late/no-shows allowed in one month. Three no-shows or late cancellations in one month may lose service the following month. The Director will make determinations regarding extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

- e. Aids or companions ride free and MUST be registered.

13. How to Pay for your ride:

- a. Rides can be paid with checks, pre-paid tickets or exact fare only. **No change will be given by drivers.** To purchase pre-paid tickets contact the office and request a ticket packet, they are available as individual tickets for \$2.50 or buy 10 Get 1 Free Packs for \$25.00. All packets must be paid upfront and will be mailed. Refunds will not be given for lost tickets once received. There is no cash value for tickets once purchased.
- b. **Credit Limit:** A credit limit of up to \$20.00 will be allowed for each passenger or one month for workers and regular riders (ie: scheduled for PT or other pre-scheduled routine appointments). Once a passenger has reached the limit, no ride can be scheduled until the balance has been paid down. *Any balance due over \$10 will be invoiced monthly and you will have until the end of the month to pay the balance. If the payment is not received by due date, no ride can be scheduled until the invoice payment is made.*
- c. **Credit:** Credits can be paid by cash or check by mail or coming into the office from 8am-4pm (Monday through Friday) at 205 W. Livingston Rd., Highland, MI 48357. Payment for credits can be given to the driver in a sealed envelope with the rider's name on it.

SPECIAL NEEDS GUIDELINES:

- a. WOTA provides handicap transportation with wheelchair lifts Monday through Friday.
- b. Please use the same method for arranging special needs transportation that is outlined above. Simply request a handicap equipped vehicle when reservations are made.
- c. Please specify when scheduling if you have a walker, cane, scooter and/or travel cart AND if you need additional assistance in order to allow enough time between stops. Drivers CANNOT be at your location more than 10 minutes.
- d. WOTA drivers are instructed to assist riders from door of pickup (not within door) to door of destination. Drivers are instructed in wheelchair handling and will be responsible to transport the rider into the vehicle with the lift and properly secure the chair and passenger. Passengers must follow WOTA's lockdown procedures for wheelchairs and scooters or they will NOT be allowed to ride.
- e. Disabled persons who are not wheelchair-bound must be able to board and exit, and otherwise ride without assistance, and control behavior to not endanger self or others; otherwise, they must be accompanied by an aide capable of assisting or controlling.
- f. All pickup and drop off points must be handicapped accessible.
- g. WOTA drivers do not bring wheelchairs or similar devices down stairs or over door sills.
- h. Riders who cannot provide handicap accessible pick-up or drop-off points must furnish their own assistance to and from the vehicle.

- i. Riders in wheelchairs must have their wheelchairs locked down and they **MUST** have a seat belt on them. Anyone refusing to be belted will be escorted off the vehicle and the emergency contact will be notified.

OTHER RULES AND GUIDELINES:

1. The driver can only take the passenger to the destination that was scheduled with the dispatcher. **Drivers cannot make scheduling adjustments;** these must be done ahead of time with dispatch.
2. WOTA does not allow transportation for medical emergencies. Call 911.
3. WOTA drivers are not permitted to handle or deliver any medications of the riders.
4. Companion riders are allowed to ride on WOTA vehicles free of charge but they **MUST** have a registration form on file with the dispatch office prior to riding.
5. No guns, knives or weapons of any kind will be permitted on our vehicles.
6. No hazardous, explosive or corrosive materials will be permitted on our vehicles.
7. WOTA does not transport any animals (except for service dogs), furniture or appliances.
8. WOTA drivers will assist passengers on and off the vehicles, as needed. Please report any driver that does not assist you if needed and requested.
9. A one (1) cart limit of groceries is allowed per person on WOTA vehicles.
10. If going further than your township, you must wear your seat belt while on the WOTA vehicle.
11. No smoking or use of electronic cigarettes is allowed on the WOTA vehicle.
12. No open containers or consumption of food and drink is allowed on the bus.
13. If a passenger is verbally or physically abusing or harassing any WOTA passenger and/or employee, that passenger is a cause for an unsafe condition and subject to probation and/or a loss of service immediately. Passengers will be immediately returned home or will not have a return ride home from destination.
14. If a passenger does not use proper hygiene and it affects the driver or other passengers, they will be issued a warning and if it occurs again, they will not be allowed to ride for one week. If it occurs again, the probation will be extended to 30 days with possible loss of service.
15. No alcohol or drugs can be used on the vehicles at any time. Any passenger visibly inebriated will be escorted off the vehicle immediately.
16. Passengers are to refrain from advising, bullying, yelling, harassing or being argumentative with the driver, dispatchers and other riders. Such behavior will result in a warning and/or an immediate loss of service if the action is severe. Drivers, dispatchers and other riders are always to be treated with respect.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

a. Informal Complaint

- i. A customer who has a complaint may call the dispatch office to try to resolve the matter.
- ii. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the customer may contact the Director via telephone. The Director will investigate and decide how to resolve the matter.

b. Formal Complaint

- i. If the customer has gone through the informal complaint process and is not satisfied, the customer may file a written complaint with the Director within five (5) business days of the conclusion of the informal process.
- ii. The Director will, within five (5) business days of receiving the written complaint, conduct a hearing with the complainant, their representative, and any staff involved in the matter in order to seek equitable resolution of the matter. The results of this hearing will be communicated in writing to the complainant within five (5) business days of the hearing.
- iii. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, s/he may appeal through a signed, written statement to the WOTA Board within five (5) business days of the receipt of the Director's response in Step 2. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the WOTA Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representative within forty (40) days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each concerned party within ten (10) business days of this meeting.

WOTA STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. To pick-up riders within 15 minutes of scheduled time, to notify rider and/or office of anticipated pick-up if not within a 15-minute window. The driver is not responsible for delays due to weather or traffic but does need to notify the office as soon as s/he suspects a delay.
- b. To provide safety-related assistance for boarding and exiting.
- c. To provide a generally safe and comfortable ride.
- d. To provide excellent and courteous customer service.
- e. To report any unusual or unauthorized activity.

NOTE: *If your status is listed as a **regular rider** in our system and you do not call to cancel your ride, do not come out when the driver **calls**, and **do not** answer your phone, we reserve the right to call for a non-emergent welfare check to ensure your safety and well-being.*