

Harris County Precinct 4  
Transportation Department

# **Trip Coordinator Handbook**



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Revised 10/13/22



**Harris County Precinct 4**  
Commissioner R. Jack Cagle

Dear New Trip Coordinator,

Congratulations on your new adventure as a trip coordinator! Precinct 4 Commissioner R. Jack Cagle is pleased to provide day trips and transportation services to Harris County Precinct 4 residents 50 and older.

Annually, Precinct 4 transports more than 400 senior adult groups on day trips to a variety of activities including festivals, museums, plays, concerts, theatrical and sporting venues, and special attractions that occur in and around Southeast Texas.

I wish you and your group many miles of happy traveling! Your comments, suggestions, and questions regarding this service are always welcome. Please feel free to contact me at 713-274-4050 if I may be of help in any way.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Perez*

Director, Harris County Precinct 4  
Recreation Division & Community  
Centers

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Harris County Precinct 4 provides resource information, advocacy, volunteer opportunities, and educational and recreational group transportation to residents who are 50 years of age and older.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Harris County Precinct 4  
Transportation Department  
P. O. Box 1433  
Tomball, Texas 77377

**713-274-4050**  
Monday – Friday  
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**After hours, on weekends, or in the event of an emergency,  
Call any of the following:**

Pam Beucler, Transportation Manager  
pbeucler@hcp4.net  
**832-712-0347**

Manuel Calderon, Administrative Assistance  
mcalderon@hcp4.net  
**832-405-8834**

Peggy Peyton, Administrative Assistant and MultiCare Liaison  
ppeyton@hcp4.net  
**713-703-4799**

## PRECINCT 4 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

**In the unlikely event an emergency requires a rapid evacuation of the bus, we recommend those with mobility issues have a companion on the trip.**

- Precinct 4 travels Tuesday through Sunday with departures at 7 a.m. or later.
- You may travel up to 150 miles from your pickup location, with a maximum total of 10 hours.
- To keep our buses pristine, please advise your group that only water may be consumed on the bus. Eating, drinking (other than water), and chewing gum are not permitted.
- If passengers wish to remain on the bus unattended, they must be accompanied by a friend or the trip coordinator. To ensure the safety of all, the bus driver will turn off the engine at all planned stops.
- All passengers must stay seated with seat belts fastened while the bus is in motion.
- Passengers unable to climb the steps to enter or exit the bus without assistance must use the lift.
- Precinct 4 bus drivers are unable to provide individual assistance to passengers.
- Passengers traveling with oxygen tanks must place the tank and extra tank in a carry-on bag. The carry-on bag must always remain with the passenger.
- Passengers may not travel seated in a transport chair while the bus is in motion.
- All passengers **MUST** provide an emergency contact in the event of a medical emergency. Failure to provide emergency contact will forfeit ridership. **No exceptions!**
- **Under no circumstances can a transport chair go on the lift.** If a passenger using a transport chair says they are too weak to stand on the lift, they will need to call their emergency contact to come pick them up.
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- Precinct 4 bus drivers are Harris County employees. Under the Texas Penal Code, Chapter 36-Bribery and Corrupt Influence section, governmental employees are not allowed to accept tips of any kind, especially cash, no matter how small the amount. It's the law!
- However, Precinct 4 bus drivers are allowed to accept the following only when transporting a group:
  - Lunch or dinner when dining with a group. Refreshments at rest stop/s.
  - Tickets to events, e.g. Astros games, the theater, concerts, museums, movies, etc.
  - A nominal "cash advance" (\$20 maximum) for lunch/dinner expenses when the group's itinerary does not include a planned meal. For example, a cash advance can be given to a bus driver at baseball games/sporting events, the Kemah Boardwalk, shopping malls, The Strand in Galveston, etc. Drivers will return any change and a receipt.

#### **PLEASE DO NOT**

- Provide cash to Precinct 4 bus drivers when lunch/dinner is included in the trip.
- Provide cash to Precinct 4 bus drivers for expenses that did not occur. Please remember to ask for the change and a receipt for all cash advances. Drivers are required to return the change from cash advances to the trip coordinators since any amount of money they keep above the actual expenses is considered a tip.
- **Give the bus driver cash at the end of the bus trip, attempt to place cash in their pockets, or leave cash behind for the driver to find.**

#### **NOTICE TO GUN HOLDERS**

- Weapons may not be left on transportation vehicles provided by Precinct 4
- Take into consideration the destination on your travel itinerary whereby weapons may be prohibited.

**It is the sole responsibility of the gun holder to be informed.**

# INFORMATION FOR TRIP COORDINATORS

## Responsibilities for Trip Coordinators

- You **MUST** contact the transportation office **BEFORE** scheduling a Houston area driving tour with a tour guide.
- Designate at least one alternate trip coordinator for the group in the event that you are unable to accompany your group on a trip.
- Ensure that all contact information on file remains current.
- Ensure all trip destinations are accessible by bus.
- Arrange for admission tickets, parking fees, and meals for the bus driver.
- Inform all passengers that buses do not have restrooms and rest stops can be made at any time upon request.
- Encourage passengers to bring a bottle of water.
- Verify wheelchair and walker storage capacity for available seating.
- The excess use of alcohol is discouraged while on a day trip.
- Fire blankets are for emergency use only.
- Passengers should bring a sweater to wear while inside the bus.
- Not all motorized wheelchairs can be safely transported on Precinct 4 buses. Contact the transportation office if you have questions about a wheelchair.

## ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

- Trip coordinators must be 18 years of age or older.
- Call the Transportation Department at **713-274-4050** if you have any questions about the policies or responsibilities of a trip coordinator.



### Exceptions for passengers under the age of 50

- Caregiver over the age of 18.
- An adult child with special needs over the age of 18 traveling with a parent.
- A religious leader and spouse, limit one couple per trip.
- A person who is the group leader or a spouse of someone over the age of 50.

## **PASSENGERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

- All passengers must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- **DO NOT** plug any medical device into the charging ports by the driver on our buses. Those ports are for the driver's equipment.
- Any medical device that weighs over five pounds should be kept on the floor at the feet of the user (unless equipped with a should strap, in which case, they can hold it on their shoulder) – this prevents the medical device from becoming a projectile or blocking the aisle.
- All medical devices in use while the bus is in motion must be in the possession of the user and must have their own, stand-alone power source. Constituents may bring additional batteries, and these may be kept on the bus while at events.
- Not all motorized wheelchairs can be safely transported on Precinct 4 buses. Contact the transportation office if you have questions about a wheelchair.
- Precinct 4 bus drivers are unable to provide individual assistance to passengers

## MOBILITY DEVICES



**Under no circumstances can a transport chair go on the lift.**

If a passenger using a transport chair says they are too weak to stand on the lift, they will need to call their emergency contact to come pick them up.

Transport chairs **CANNOT** be safely secured for transport.



Allowed on the lift.

However, the passenger must transfer to a bus seat if they are in a scooter with the handlebar in front.



These wheelchairs all have their **four securement points** and can safely be secured. However, the passenger must transfer to a bus seat if they are in the scooter with the handlebar in front.

## REGISTERING YOUR GROUP

Trip coordinators must submit a **Trip Coordinator and Group Information Form** when registering a new group, or any time there is a change.

- 1) To submit the form online, please go to:  
<https://www.hcp4.net/daytrips/>
- 2) Select the – **Trip Coordinator and Group Information Form** blue box (located mid-page - far right)
- 3) Fill out the form, click **REVIEW**, if the information is correct, then click **SUBMIT** to complete your request(s).
- 4) To print and mail, email, or fax the form, click on the Printable Forms link underneath the blue boxes. Click on Trip Coordinator and Group Information Form. Print the form, fill it out, and send it in.

## RESERVING THE BUSES

Trip coordinators may reserve buses up to one year in advance. Groups are allotted buses on a first-come, first-serve basis and may reserve one bus per month.

Please go to <https://www.hcp4.net/daytrips/> to reserve your buses.

- 1) Select the - **Transportation Bus Reservation Form** blue box
- 2) Fill out the **Transportation Bus Reservation Form**, click review, if the information is correct, click **SUBMIT** to complete your request(s).
- 3) You will receive immediate confirmation that your reservation request has been submitted. You can expect confirmation of the dates reserved within 7 - 10 business days after submitting the online form. This will contain your confirmation number for the trip. Always use this confirmation number from the final email when contacting the transportation department.

**You can expect confirmation of the dates reserved within 7 - 10 business days after submitting the online form.**

## TRIP ITINERARY FORM

- Trip coordinators are required to submit a **Trip Itinerary Form (TIF) 30 days prior** to departure.
- Please go to <https://www.hcp4.net/daytrips/> to submit your Trip Itinerary Form.
- Click on the blue box that reads **Trip Itinerary Form** (located mid-page, far right).
  - 1) Fill out the form online.
  - 2) At the bottom you will click on **REVIEW**.
  - 3) After reviewing, click **SUBMIT**.

Please note the following when planning your trip

- You **MUST** contact the transportation office **BEFORE** scheduling a Houston area driving tour with a tour guide.
- No overnight or out-of-state trips are permitted.
- Travel to racetracks, bingo halls, or gambling establishments are not permitted.
- The pick-up and return point must be the same location and located within Harris County Precinct 4's geographical boundaries.
- Transportation is provided as a round-trip service and all passengers must travel with the group for the duration of the trip.

## **SUBMITTING THE TRIP ITINERARY**

Once the TIF is complete, the trip coordinator can submit the form by any of the following:

- 1) Online – Input information, click **Review**, if correct then click **SUBMIT** located at the bottom of the TIF.
- 2) By mail to the Transportation Department at P.O. Box 1433, Tomball, Texas 77377
- 3) By fax to 713-437-8517
- 4) By e-mail to pbeucler@hcp4.net, ppeyton@hcp4.net, and mcalderson@hcp4.net

**Failure to submit a TIF 30 days prior to the departure date may result in the trip being canceled.**

## **CONFIRMATION EMAIL**

After the Transportation Department receives the **Trip Itinerary Form (TIF)**, a confirmation letter will be e-mailed to the trip coordinator. Upon receipt of the confirmation letter, the trip coordinator should review all information included.

**Please, notify the Transportation Department immediately at 713-274-4050 if any of the trip information listed on the confirmation email is not correct.**

## CONFIRM THE PASSENGER COUNT

Three to five days prior to departure, the trip coordinator must confirm the maximum number of passengers traveling by calling the Transportation Department at **713-274-4050**.

- Do not exceed the number of passengers traveling after confirming the passenger count.
- Verify the assigned trip coordinator for the trip. Notify the Transportation Department of any changes prior to departure.

## TRIP CANCELLATIONS

If a trip must be canceled, call the Transportation Department immediately at **713-274-4050** during normal business hours. If you need to cancel the trip after normal business hours or on the weekends, contact one of the following:

- 1) Pam Beucler, 832-712-0347
- 2) Manuel Calderon, 832-405-8834
- 3) Peggy Peyton, 713-703-4799

## PASSENGER SIGN-IN SHEET

The passenger sign-in sheet will be emailed to you with your trip itinerary for your convenience. The form must be completed before the bus departs.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- Should **NOT** be – someone on the trip.
- Should **BE** – someone who can travel out of town to pick you up if you are ill or injured and cannot complete the trip.



## BUS FLEET

All buses transporting Precinct 4 travel groups must meet the following minimum number of passengers. Our 26 and 40 passenger buses have lifts.

**Our 14 passenger buses can only travel a 60-mile radius from your pickup location**

- 14 Passenger Bus – Minimum 10 Passengers
- 26 Passenger Bus – Minimum 13 Passengers
- 40 Passenger Bus – Minimum 20 Passengers

## QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRIP

While discussing reservations with a destination representative, always provide them with information/history about the group, i.e. average age of the group, physical limitations of passengers, etcetera. Always ask for the very best accommodations for the group. The following questions will help plan the best possible trip for your group

**Where does the bus/driver drop off and pick up passengers?**

- ✓ Is it close to the entrance?

**Where does the bus park?**

- ✓ Are there parking fees?

**How much walking is required?**

- ✓ What is the walking surface: paved, gravel, dirt, grass, etcetera.?

**Is the facility at the destination wheelchair-accessible?**

- ✓ Is there a place to sit down and rest if someone does not wish to take the tour? Is there a place for them to wait for the group?
- ✓ Are restrooms easily accessible?

**How early should we arrive?**

- ✓ Will you receive a written confirmation?

- ✓ Will anyone meet us? If so, get the person's name.

**Is there a senior adult discount?**

- ✓ When is the money due?
- ✓ Is a deposit necessary to hold the tickets, reservation, etc.?
- ✓ How should the check be made out?
- ✓ Will they accept a personal check?
- ✓ To whom and where do you send the money?
- ✓ Will they provide individual checks for meals?

**Is the bus driver's meal complementary?**

- ✓ Always record the name of the person making the reservation and the date the reservation is made.

## **BUS DRIVER INTERACTIONS**

- Drivers are responsible for the safe operation of the bus as well as the safe loading and unloading of passengers.
- Drivers have the sole discretion to decide whether to travel under a porte-cochere, to enter a parking lot or not, the best location to load and unload, and so forth – anything dealing with the safety of the bus and the passengers aboard.
- If confused as to why a driver makes a particular choice, please feel free to ask the driver to explain the rationale; however, **the driver's decision is final.**

## **WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU!**

The Transportation office is always available here to assist with trip planning details. Please do not hesitate to call us!

**Wishing You Many Miles of Happy Traveling!**