



Ride Assist Services of Powhatan County
Compassion in Action

3908 Old Buckingham Rd, Suite 2, Powhatan VA 23139

(804) 698-0438

RAServices.PVA@gmail.com

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Manual

About Us

Powhatan Department of Social Services works in cooperation with volunteers to provide for the transportation needs of our county age 60 and above and unable to drive for basic needs. Many seniors in Powhatan County need transportation in order to stay in their homes. Transportation is subject to availability.

RAS Ride Assist Services

The objective of the RAS is to assist those seniors who are no longer be able to drive. The program will allow seniors to live independently and stay in their homes as long as possible. RAS does not duplicate any transportation services that may be provided through an individual's health care. Ride Assist Services is generally described as follows:

- Transportation for seniors of age 60+ who want to continue to live independently, but are unable to drive for: medical/dental appointments, bank, post office, community agency, grocery store, pharmacy.
- Volunteer drivers must qualify for the program and will use their own vehicles for the RAS program unless choosing to provide lift van transportation with the RAS van in which case lift and wheelchair securement training will be provided.
- RAS will provide additional liability coverage for the volunteer drivers during the time of service.
- Volunteer drivers may provide a guiding hand to assist during the entry and exit from the vehicle.
- Ride requests will be received via telephone, email or other means at least five (5) business days in advance of the ride to be requested. Transportation Coordinator will then speak with the rider to confirm all details to avoid any misinformation before request is placed in system. Please read **Ride Scheduling** below in its entirety for further details necessary.
- All vehicle passengers are required to wear a provided occupant restraint system. If any client has a medical condition making it unsafe for them to use a seat / lap belt and shoulder harness, a doctor's note must be provided confirming that wearing a lap belt and/or shoulder harness may produce a health risk for the client.

Lift Van Policies:

- **Lift van clients will request lift van rides 2 weeks in advance. Transportation Coordinator will set up the request and communicate with driving team to notify them of the request.**
- **RAS drivers utilizing lift van will drive only. If a client is in need of assistance apart from lift van entry, securing mobility device, and van exit, client is required to have a companion or caregiver with them for the duration of the ride for assistance.**
- **All mobility devices are required to be secured or transportation will be declined. Therefore, the operator may decline to provide service to a rider who refuses to allow his or her mobility device to be secured.**
- **Passengers who use a mobility device with a steering column will transfer to a vehicle seat.**

Rider Eligibility

The Ride Assist Services serves those seniors who are age 60 or over and live in Powhatan County. RAS is focused on those who can no longer drive, but wish to stay in their home and continue to enjoy their neighborhood. To qualify for Ride Assist Services transportation, one must be (1) Powhatan County resident 60 years of age or older and (2) unable to drive due to physical limitations. An eligible individual can register who has a diagnosis prohibiting driving (ex: pneumonia/advised not to drive by doctor), or for only non anesthesia procedures related to a diagnosis rendering rider unable to drive. Registered riders must be able to make and keep track of their own arrangements (ride requests and related appointments).

Warning will be communicated when a rider (1) does not call RAS cancel a ride request previously made with RAS when their appointment or schedule changes, or (2) does not pay toll or parking fees associated with their trip, or (3) is unable to keep track of arrangements made. In an effort to honor the time given by our volunteer team, upon the third such instance, the rider will be removed from the program. (See RAS Rider Guidelines)

Trip Purpose Definitions

Rides will generally be for the following Trip Purposes:

1. All rides are subject to availability.
2. Medical: Includes all medical appointments that are not considered emergencies, life threatening, or for care regarding contagious or communicable condition. Appointments that qualify for transportation should be scheduled with the doctor's office (for example) between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.
3. Personal business and Support services: Examples include rides to a bank, or an agency or organization that provides support services to the rider, i.e. Social Security Office, Veteran's Administration Offices, Resource Centers, local agencies and the local food pantry, etc.
4. Shopping Rides: This includes pharmacy and grocery shopping but can include a shopping trip to Walmart for other needs. (limit 2 per month per rider)
5. Other trips may be provided at the direction and approval of RAS.
6. Limit on all ride requests: ride requests will be allowed once in 7 day period.
7. All requests are mapped online, utilizing fastest route; [riders are responsible for any tolls and parking/entrance fees associated with your ride.](#)

Ride Scheduling

Accurate ride scheduling is crucial. A ride begins with a call to the RAS Transportation Coordinator. All of the basic personal information about the caller must be obtained and recorded. This will be used to determine Program eligibility and reference emergency information for the client. RAS uses the Ride-Scheduler database to store rider information and ride history which allows RAS to readily access information as needed.

When scheduling a ride Transportation Coordinator will make note of:

- The mobility aids used by the rider - canes, folding walkers, wheelchair, service animal
- The facility (destination location) name and address, days and times for requested pick-up and return

- At time of appointment creation, riders will ask for an **approximate length of time needed for the appointment** and provide this information with their ride request.

When scheduling the ride for medical appointments, consideration must be given to the arrival/appointment time so the pickup time is set to allow sufficient time for the trip. All rides are mapped and utilize fastest route; if this route involves tolls or any parking or entrance fees, this is the rider's responsibility. **All rides must be requested at least five (5) business days in advance of the appointment. Lift van transportation requests will be made 2 weeks in advance.** This will allow time for the Transportation Coordinator to inform the volunteer drivers of the request and schedule the ride.

Ride requests may be submitted via paper, email, or telephone. All rides are subject to availability; after a driver has agreed to provide the ride the driver will contact the client rider to confirm the trip. Any requests for rides or changes/cancellations for ride requests scheduled will be managed by the RAS Transportation Coordinator; clients will NOT call drivers directly.

Non-Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground 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).

***Powhatan DSS** is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transportation services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B. If you feel you are being denied participation in or being denied benefits of the transit services provided by **Powhatan DSS**, or otherwise being discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, our contact information is:*

Title VI Manager
Powhatan DSS
3908-2 Old Buckingham Road
Powhatan, VA 23139
804-598-5630

Confidentiality

All information related to volunteers or those who are served by Ride Assist Services is to be treated as confidential. This means that any materials seen or conversations heard regarding the Senior Clients will not be discussed or shared in any manner without the written consent of the individual. All volunteers will be required to sign a Code of Conduct during the Orientation which includes an agreement of confidentiality.

Volunteer Driver Eligibility and Vehicle Reviews

A safe and courteous driver is the most critical element in any volunteer program.

Volunteer Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a valid Virginia driver's license, no DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol) convictions, and plus points on their driving record. A driver must have the minimum insurance coverage required by the State of Virginia at the time their application as a volunteer driver. To qualify as a volunteer driver for the Ride Assist Services program, the driver must also provide RAS with their personal information and consent to have their driving record check and background check performed.

Although not required, drivers will be offered the opportunity to take advantage of the AARP Safe Driver training, provided by RAS when available.

The vehicles that volunteer drivers use will be reviewed for compliance with license requirements of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles as well as local ordinances. The vehicle must be well maintained and carry a current Virginia state vehicle inspection sticker.

Insurance

Lift Van drivers: Complete insurance coverage including liability is provided for drivers utilizing Powhatan County-owned vehicle such as the wheelchair van.

Drivers using their personal vehicles for rides other than wheelchair ride requests: Beyond the driver's personal liability, liability coverage provided by RAS applies to the driver during the rider-occupied time of their volunteer trip to take a senior to a medical appointment, to personal business or to their grocery store. The policy also covers RAS and the client with an appropriate level of coverage during the time of the ride. Coverage begins at the time volunteer driver picks up the senior client until the senior is returned home and does not apply to any time client does not occupy the driver's vehicle (for example while in their appointment).

Identification

For the assurance of RAS senior clients, each RAS volunteer driver will be issued an identification badge. This badge identifies the volunteer driver as a member of Ride Assist Services. It is to be worn at all times and must be displayed to the senior clients for their peace of mind.

Confidentiality of Volunteer Records

RAS will ensure that all volunteer records kept in a confidential manner. The names, addresses and other personal information will not be released to anyone for any reason. However, if the occasion arises, the volunteer may by written request ask for the release of the records.

RAS Volunteer Orientation

All RAS volunteers are required to complete an orientation interview prior to beginning work as a Ride Assist Services volunteer. It will include an overview of the program and volunteer responsibilities. It is our hope that each volunteer will gain a sense that they are a critical part of improvement to our community vitality.

Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs

RAS recognizes that alcoholism and drug addiction may affect some individuals who wish to become a volunteer. The use, abuse, or possession of illegally obtained drugs; the abuse of over-the-counter prescription drugs; or the use of alcohol while performing the work of a volunteer with Ride Assist Services is prohibited.

Further, Volunteer Drivers cannot accept a driving assignment during the time when they are taking a prescribed medication that may inhibit their ability to safely perform their volunteer duties.

Smoke-Free Policy

In recognition of the effects of smoking and secondary smoke on the health of volunteer drivers and our senior clients, all aspects of the Ride Assist Services must be SMOKE FREE.

RAS volunteer drivers cannot smoke in their vehicles while transporting RAS senior clients. Many seniors with allergies and respiratory problems such as COPD may have a reaction to an environment where smoking has occurred. So as part of the vehicle review, if there is a strong smoke odor in the vehicle, RAS may decline its use in transporting their senior clients. Senior clients are not permitted to smoke during the times they are being transported by RAS- this applies from the time of client pick-up until the client is returned home.

Inclement Weather Procedures

During inclement weather, the Ride Assist Services will follow the policy of the Powhatan County Schools. If schools are closed, RAS 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 road conditions that may improve later during the day. In those cases, the Transportation Coordinator and the driver may determine that the situation is safe to resume services.

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 RAS (804-698-0438) with the new date when the office reopens.

Medical Emergencies

A medical emergency may occur during the time a Volunteer Driver is providing a ride to a senior client. As an example; a client may experience chest pains, breathing difficulty, seizure, choking, a reaction to their medication, or medical problems related to diabetes. Ride Assist Services will make every effort to be aware of the medical issues of our clients, but should a medical emergency occur, the driver must pull out of traffic, stop their vehicle, and call Emergency 911. If an Emergency call is necessary, then follow the instruction from the 911 Operator and render any first aid you are qualified and trained to give. Call the RAS Transportation Coordinator and notify them of the Medical Emergency.

Incident/Accident Reporting

Any incident that occurs during the trip that may involve possible rider injury should be reported to the RAS Transportation Coordinator immediately by phone. For example, the rider may stumble or fall when leaving their home or when walking between the vehicle and the destination. Even if there are no obvious injuries, the incident must be reported.

If the vehicle is involved in a collision, it must first be reported to the police and emergency services by calling 911. The accident must also be reported to the RAS Transportation Coordinator immediately by phone. The Coordinator needs to know if there are injuries and whether anyone requires medical attention. The Volunteer Driver Incident/Accident Report is provided in a follow up packet to each Driver. If there is any smoke in or on vehicle visible to driver, driver will evacuate rider before calling 911.

Volunteer Risk Protection

The Code of Virginia offers certain protections for volunteers who serve others through non-profit organization like Ride Assist Services. The Statute covers the director and those who carry out the activities of the organization.

An uncompensated officer or director who serves a non-profit or community association is not liable for damages. A volunteer fire department or emergency medical services company who has contracted or is utilized by the town, county or city is exempt from suit for damages done while providing service. A volunteer health care provider is not liable for civil damages. Various Good Samaritans, including lay people, are not liable for acts or omissions in providing emergency care. Hospice volunteers, court appointed special advocate volunteers, zoning volunteers and school volunteers who notify parents of a student's absence, are not liable for civil damages for acts or omissions done in the performance of duty.

V.A. Code Ann. § 13.1-870.1, Non-profit directors

An officer or director who serves a non-profit corporation or community association without compensation is not liable for damages in any proceeding.

Exceptions: liability coverage will not be afforded if the officer or director engaged in willful misconduct or knowingly violated the law.

Liability Coverage

VaRISK 2 is a voluntary, comprehensive, liability self-insurance plan uniquely suited to the needs of Virginia's cities, towns, counties, public schools, and every type of district, commission, board, authority, and other specified organizations. In accordance with § 2.2-1839, the plan provides coverage for tort liability, law enforcement liability, public officials liability, and medical malpractice, depending on the needs of the entity. This coverage applies to drivers utilizing their personal vehicles to provide rides.