



FAQs

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE EAST LYME SENIOR CENTER

Who can ride with us?

We provide a transportation service to any resident of the Town who is 60 or older or under 60 with a disability which prevents them from driving. You must be able to board and disembark from our vehicles with minimal assistance. To use the vehicle with the wheelchair lift, you must be able to maneuver to the vehicle. If you are not able, you can have someone travel with you that can assist. When in doubt, the Senior Center will determine if someone requires more assistance than can be provided by the drivers.

How do I apply for the service?



There is an application that all potential riders must complete before service can be provided. This is needed so questions or concerns can be addressed before transportation services begin. The same application is renewed annually. This ensures that our information remains accurate.



What does the service provide?

Our drivers are non-medical personnel. The Senior Center currently uses 2 handicapped accessible 14 passenger buses (12 seats and 2 wheelchair areas). We maintain 1 handicapped accessible bus as a backup vehicle. Our service is NOT a fixed route – you call with your request, and we will come to you. However, our service is only door to door. Our drivers cannot enter your home. The drivers provide minimal assistance, if needed, from your door to the bus and from the bus to the door of your departure location. The driver does not remain with you during your appointment.

Where can I go?

Our service will provide a ride to any destination within the Town Limits of East Lyme. In addition, we offer a ride every Monday and Fridays to the New London/Waterford area for shopping or medical appointments. We also provide rides for medical appointments to Parkway South and Vista Drive.

When can I go?

Our service operates Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30am to 4:00pm barring any holidays, inclement weather, or vehicle malfunctions. For in-town appointments, please do not schedule anything before 9am or after 3pm. For our Monday run, please schedule appointments between 10am and 11:30am.

What kind of destinations are we talking about?

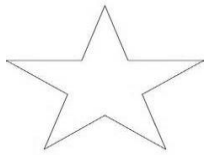
We provide rides for physician appointments, outpatient physical therapy, outpatient testing (lab work, x-rays, etc.), grocery shopping, general shopping, errands (bank, Town Hall), hairdresser appointments, activities at the Community Center (Senior Center, Library), personal needs, etc.



How do I get a ride?

Call the Senior Center at 860-739-5859 **at least 24 hours** in advance of your transportation need. Calling on the day you need a ride is likely to be denied. You can also stop in the office to make your reservation or have a family member or friend make the arrangements. When you call for a ride, please know the date and time of your appointment, the name of the location and its address, if you will have a companion riding with you, and if you require the lift to access the vehicle. Passengers who feel they cannot safely climb the stairs may utilize the wheelchair lift to safely board the bus, with assistance from the bus driver. You must have a destination.

It is **strongly** recommended that appointments be given to the office as soon as they are known but please, no more than two months in advance. Transportation requests are handled on a first come, first served basis but the Senior Center office does prioritize ride requests. The ride priorities are as follows:



1. Medical and dental appointments
2. Other appointments that are time sensitive such as the hairdresser
3. Lunch and Senior Center programs
4. Social visits, personal business, and other requests
5. Grocery shopping is on scheduled days – see below.

Please keep in mind that there will be times when a request cannot be accommodated because of the number of rides already scheduled. Our office will work with you to come up with an alternative plan. It is important that you tell us if an appointment needs to be re-scheduled or cancelled. The Senior Center office has an answering machine so you can leave a message about the change if we are not here to answer the call.

What happens on the day of my ride?



It depends on what your request is.

For appointments in Town

If you have an appointment in town, please be ready 30 minutes in advance of your scheduled appointment time. If we must pick you up earlier than that, we will contact you as early as possible on the day of the appointment. Once you are done with your appointment, call the Senior Center office to let us know you are ready for pick up. We will alert the driver and get to you within a 30-minute window. If we are delayed, we will contact you, so you know we have not forgotten you. It is always helpful for you to bring something to do while you wait. Remember, we are not just transporting you!

For the New London/Waterford run on Monday

The driver leaves the Senior Center at 8:45am to begin picking up passengers. Everyone who is on this run will be going into the New London/Waterford area together. Every week, our passenger list changes so everyone needs to be ready by 8:45am. You can request up to 2 stops but please let us know your main destination. If we can accommodate 2 stops, we will. It normally takes the driver about an hour to pick everyone up before leaving town. If you are making any appointments in this area, please make them between 10am to 11:30am. For passengers that have an appointment, once you are finished, call the Senior Center office. We will notify the driver that you are ready. For all other passengers, the driver will notify you when they will be back to pick you up. Be sure you also understand WHERE your pickup location is.



For the shopping runs on Tuesday and Thursday

For passengers on the Tuesday morning shopping run, the driver begins pickups at 9am. Every week our passenger list changes so everyone needs to be ready by 9am. You can request up to 3 stops but please let us know your main destination. If we can manage 3 stops, we will.

For passengers on the Tuesday afternoon shopping run, the driver begins pickups at 12:30pm. Every week our passenger list changes so everyone needs to be ready by 12:30pm. You can request up to 3 stops but please let us know your main destination. If we can manage 3 stops, we will.

For passengers on Thursday afternoon shopping run, the driver begins pickups at 8:45am. Every week our passenger list changes, so everyone needs to be ready by 8:45am. You may request up to 3 stops but please let us know your main destination. If we can manage 3 stops, we will.

When you call for your spot on the shopping run, be sure to inform the Senior Center office of all stops you need to make. Please be courteous to your other passengers. For example, if you need to run into the bank, have your deposit or withdrawal slip already made out. If you need to run into the pharmacy for a prescription, call ahead of time to ensure that it is ready. At all times, the driver will let you know when the bus will return and where your pickup location will be.

All passengers are asked to limit the number of shopping bags to 4. While the drivers can assist, it is not their responsibility to carry your bags so please only buy what you can personally handle. You will need to set the shopping bags on the inside seat next to you and on the floor below the inside seat next to you.

For every pickup, please keep an eye out for the Senior Center vehicle. If the driver does not see you come out, they will blow the horn. If the driver still does not see you, they will call the Senior Center office and ask us to phone you. If there is no response to the phone call, the driver will move on. The Senior Center will make a follow-up phone call to make sure everything is all right.

Passengers may use as much time as necessary to safely board/disembark from the bus.

Please note the transit schedule is subject to change. The Senior Center office will contact any passenger registered for our service who is affected by any change in the schedule.

What are my responsibilities?

- *Be ready for us. Be sure to call us if something changes.
- *You need to ensure that we have a clear path to you. This includes doorways, sidewalks as well as driveways.
- *Please refrain from wearing strong perfume or cologne. Please be presentable and clean.
- *Inform the Office if you are travelling with a service animal.
- *Passengers in need of oxygen are permitted to travel on Senior/Disabled Transportation with their respirator, portable oxygen tanks, or any other equipment necessary for their health and safety.
- *This service is for everyone. When we are very busy, we may not be as prompt as you would prefer.
- *You must remain seated when the bus is in motion. You must wear your seat belt. We can help you, if needed.
- *Respect the drivers and understand they have a responsibility to transport you safely. There are going to be times when they cannot chat with you.
- *Don't call the drivers directly or ask them to make changes. We receive a lot of requests and work very hard to keep them organized. When the drivers leave the Senior Center, they have a plan. Making changes "on the fly" does not work.



What happens if the weather is bad?

We will not operate vehicles when road conditions are unsafe. Any cancellations at our end will be listed on Channel 3 and Channel 8, and the local radio stations. The Senior Center answering machine will have an up-to-date message if transportation is cancelled.

How much does this cost?

The Senior Center provides transportation regardless of your ability to pay. If you can afford it, there is a donation box in the office. You can drop off any amount during our business hours. Do **not** give money to the drivers. The Senior Center also mails an annual appeal letter to all registered clients. Any amount is greatly appreciated. Please note, the transportation service receives most of its funding from the Town of East Lyme.

Can the Senior Center refuse to provide transportation?

The Senior Center is here to assist the residents in Town. However, there are times when we must refuse the provision of a ride or revoke someone's privileges. If you do not uphold your responsibilities listed that can be cause for refusal of service. In addition, we may refuse transportation for the following reasons:

You are ill or have an acute sickness. Once you are better, we can help you re-schedule your ride.

During a 6-month period, you fail to show up for a scheduled ride 3 times. During a 6-month period, you are late 3 times for a scheduled ride. During a 6-month period, you did not inform the office of a cancelled scheduled ride 3 times. We understand there are times when people forget, however if a pattern develops, you will be notified of our concerns. If the practice continues, you will lose your privilege for 1 month.

In the judgment of the driver, you display objectionable behavior (such as but not limited to, being under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, smoking in the vehicles, engage in any type of violent activity, participate in any form of harassing behavior). You will be given a warning about this behavior. If it happens again, you will no longer be allowed to ride on the Town vehicles.

You are in possession of a weapon or use something as if it is a weapon. No one is ever allowed to be in possession of a weapon or to threaten anyone while riding the Town vehicles. If you are found to be in possession of a weapon, we will immediately ask you to disembark from the vehicle and you will no longer be allowed to ride on the Town vehicles.

If you feel that your transportation privileges have been improperly revoked, you may request, in writing, a meeting with one of the Board Members of the East Lyme Commission on Aging. direct this request to the Chairman of the East Lyme Commission on Aging. The request must be received within ten working days. of the revocation of services. The Commission on Aging Board Member will respond, in writing, by setting up a hearing with the passenger within 2 weeks of the receipt of the request. At the hearing, the passengers will be asked to present their version of events and can have witnesses, if they choose, available. The Commission on Aging will be provided with a written narrative of events by the Director of the Senior Center.

This is not an all-inclusive list. There can be times when something happens that is not listed above that can potentially affect your status with our transportation service. The Senior Center office will relay to you our concerns if something does come up.

Do you have a suggestion for us? Complaint?

We want to hear from you. You can always call the Senior Center office at 860-739-5859 or write us a letter at: East Lyme Senior Center – 37 Society Road, Niantic, CT 06357.



Revised 9/2023