

## Service Animals Policy

Whitfield County Transit shall permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities in vehicles and facilities” pursuant to (§ 37.167(d)).

A service animal is defined as:

*“Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.”*

Whitfield County Transit does not and cannot have a policy requiring riders to provide documentation for their service animal before boarding a bus or train or entering a facility; however, personnel may ask riders two questions: (1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Service animals (e.g., a guide dog) ride at no additional charge but must be properly controlled. They must ride on the floor, or, if appropriate, on the lap of the customer. They may not use vehicle seats. Customers are responsible for the behavior and hygiene needs of their animals. Service can be refused or discontinued if a service animal is seriously disruptive.

Other service animal conditions described below:

Whitfield County Transit may refuse to transport service animals that are deemed to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of drivers or other riders, create a seriously disruptive atmosphere, or are otherwise not under the rider’s control. For example, a rider with a service dog is responsible for ensuring the dog does not bite the driver or other riders. Conversely, a dog that barks occasionally would likely not be considered out of the owner’s control.

A passenger’s request that the transit driver take charge of a service animal may be denied. Caring for a service animal is the responsibility of the passenger or a PCA.

Whitfield County Transit does not prescribe limits on the number of service animals that accompany riders on a single trip. Different service animals may provide different services to a rider during trips or at the rider’s destination.

Whitfield County Transit may ask riders for notification of their intent to ride with a service animal in order to help ensure adequate space is available for the animal. (Whitfield County Transit will maintain such information in riders’ files.)

Other riders’ or agency personnel’s allergies to dogs or other animals are not grounds for Whitfield County Transit denying service to a person accompanied by a service animal. Federal regulations explicitly state that service animals must be allowed to accompany individuals on vehicles and in facilities. Encountering a service animal in the transit or other environment is an expected part of being in public

