



# Sussex County Skylands Ride



## Customer Guide



*"Serving Sussex County with Pride"*

*“Sussex County Skylands Ride (SCSR) is dedicated to  
improving the mobility of its customers  
in a safe, courteous and reliable manner.”*

This Customer Guide provides information on the transportation services provided by Sussex County Skylands Ride (SCSR). Skylands Ride provides Deviated Fixed Route, Demand Response and Assisted Transportation Services. This guide provides information on passenger expectations, rights, requirements, and prohibited behaviors, SCSR policies, grievance procedure, and overall program information. One of the main goals of Sussex County Skylands Ride is to operate in a safe, accessible, responsible, and customer-focused manner.

In addition, there is also contact information on New Jersey Transit services to this area as well as other agency services, and municipal senior citizen programs in the County.

We are here to assist you in any way we can. If you need more information or have questions, please contact us at:

(973) 579-0480

(TTY-973-948-0797).

Sussex County Skylands Ride  
One Spring Street  
Newton, NJ 07860



Web: [www.sussex.nj.us](http://www.sussex.nj.us)

Click on Public Transportation

## ABOUT SUSSEX COUNTY SKYLANDS RIDE

Sussex County Skylands Ride was established in 1981 as a Federal Highway Demonstration Project to offer rural public transportation to the residents of the County. Over the years the SCSR has evolved into a multi-faceted operation serving a number of programs and public sectors. The service began with two buses and four staff members and has grown to operate 25 fleet vehicles and employ 30 staff. Skylands Ride buses average a combined total of approximately 750,000 miles driven on county roads each year, providing about 113,000 rides to Sussex County residents.

SCSR service is divided into two major categories: public deviated fixed route transit (Public Connect) and paratransit or demand response transit. These services are operated over the course of a 14 hour day from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the exception of the County Holidays listed below. Public Connect Service is provided 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on Saturdays.

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Columbus Day
Lincoln's Birthday	Veterans Day
President's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday	Day after Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Juneteenth	Christmas Day
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	

# SCSR SERVICES AT A GLANCE

## ***Public Deviated Fixed Route Transit (Public Connect)***

- Available to the General Public
- Two (2) circular routes within Sussex County\*
- Monday – Friday 5:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday service 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.
- Fare: \$1.00/one-way trip – exact change only
- Monthly bus passes available for \$20.00 per month
- Route Deviation Program available
- All vehicles are accessible
- Personal Assistants, service animals & portable oxygen accommodated

### Route Deviation Policy:

- 1.) Route deviation service is available to the general public up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on either side of the established route where accessible for an additional fare of \$1.00. Senior citizen and individuals with disabilities discounts apply.
- 2.) Customers must call the Skylands Ride office one day in advance. However same day requests will be honored when possible.

## ***Paratransit/Demand Response Transit***

- Senior Citizens and Individuals with Disabilities
- Monday – Friday, 5:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- No fare, donations only; \$1.50 in County & \$3.00 out-of-County
- Trip reservation required; 48 business hrs. notice; call (973) 579-0480 (then press 1)
- All vehicles are accessible
- Companions, service animals & portable oxygen accommodated
- Assisted Transportation program is available by request for Sussex County Senior Citizens who meet eligibility criteria.
- Veterans Out of County Medical Services (including Lyons, E. Orange, and Castle Point VA's)
- Transportation to the Netcong Train Station

### **Eligible trips within the County and within 5 miles within county borders:**

Nutrition, dialysis, medical appointments, pharmacy, shopping, personal care, banking, community and social services, education/training, employment, recreation etc.

### **Out of County beyond 5 miles:**

Non-emergency medical appointments: dialysis, therapy, radiation treatments, mental health, specialized hospitals, Veterans facilities, etc.

# CUSTOMER BILL OF RIGHTS

## Sussex County Skylands Ride customers have the right to:

1. Courteous service at all times
2. Clean and safe vehicles
3. On time service, conditions permitting
4. Special assistance in boarding and exiting the bus.

All customers and/or representatives receiving services through Sussex County Skylands Ride are entitled to submit grievances without fear of retaliation or endangerment of their eligibility to receive services. A copy of the written grievance procedure is available upon request from the Skylands Ride office at (973) 579-0480 and is also available on the County website [www.sussex.nj.us](http://www.sussex.nj.us)

## REQUIREMENTS

### Customers must call the Skylands Ride Office for:

1. **Registration:** Name, address, telephone number and other basic information will be entered into the computer system including mobility/disability needs and appropriate identification numbers, if applicable.
2. **Trip Requests:** Trips must be scheduled no more than 7 days in advance and no less than 48 business hours before requested trip. Name, address and telephone number of the destination will also be asked. Trips are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis.
3. **Pick-up Time:** An approximate pick-up time will be provided when the ride is scheduled. It is requested that passengers be ready 60 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time and proceed to the bus when it arrives. Due to scheduling demands, the driver can only wait five minutes beyond the scheduled pick-up time.
4. **Cancellations:** If a trip needs to be cancelled, passengers must call Transit during the office hours of 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the day before the scheduled trip. Excessive cancellations and no-shows (including cancellations at the door) will result in suspension of service. **See policy below.**

**No-show Policy:** 1) Two no-shows within 90 days will result in a written warning to the customer. 2) The third no-show within the same 90 days will result in a two week suspension of service, with written notice to include information on our grievance procedure. 3) The fourth no-show within the same 90 days will result in a one month suspension of service, with written notice to include information on our grievance procedure. If there are additional no-shows within the 90 day period, there will be a six month suspension of service. Further no-show will result in six month suspensions of service.

**Cancellation Policy:** 1) Individual cancellations of five days in one month will result in a written warning to the customer. 2) Cancellations of 10 days in a 90 day period will result in a two week suspension of service, with a written notice to include information on our grievance procedure. 3) Cancellations of 15 days in a 90 day period

will result in a one month suspension of service, with a written notice to include information on our grievance procedure. 4.) If there are additional cancellations within the 90 day period, there will be a six month suspension of service. 5) Further cancellations will result in six month suspensions of service.

**Note:** 1) Cancellation of standing orders for multiple trips is considered a temporary discontinuation and not a cancellation. 2) Weather-related cancellations are exempt from this policy.

**Behavior Policy:** Passengers who exhibit behavior which is unsafe, abusive, threatening, violent, illegal, harmful in any way towards the driver or other passengers, including damage to any county property including the bus, and any violations of the Safety/Noise and abusive language/conduct travel requirements or Prohibited Passenger Conduct will be subject to immediate expulsion from the bus as well as be subject to a period of suspension. For the first incident a passenger will be subject to a two week suspension, for the second incident a passenger will be subject to a one month suspension, for the third incident a passenger will be subject to a three month suspension and for the fourth incident a passenger will be subject to a six month suspension. Further incidents will result in increased suspension terms. Depending upon the circumstances of the incident and the specific behavior exhibited, a suspension term may be for an extended period of time.

5. **Assistance:** If you require assistance in boarding, tell the Skylands Ride Office when you call to schedule the trip. Customers must, however, be able to travel independently or with a Personal Assistant. Bus attendants are not provided. Drivers can assist passengers in boarding and exiting the vehicle. Customers traveling with oxygen equipment are responsible for their own equipment.

**Other travel requirements:**

1. **Packages:** Drivers can assist in loading and unloading packages. All packages must be able to be safely stowed out of the aisles. There is a limit of **five (5)** parcels per trip. For example, a case of water counts as a parcel, as does each bag.
2. **Safety/Noise and abusive language/conduct:** Excessive noise, unsafe, distracting behavior or abusive language or conduct will result in immediate expulsion from the vehicle. For safety reasons, we ask that you do not talk to the driver while the bus is in motion.
3. **Seatbelts:** Seatbelts shall be worn at all times.
4. **Service animals:** Service animals are welcome on all vehicles. No other animals are permitted.
5. **Fares/Donations:** Public Connect fare is \$1.00 per one-way. There is no fare for paratransit. The suggested donations for paratransit are \$1.50 per one-way trip in County and \$3.00 per one-way trip out-of-County (envelopes provided).

## **Prohibited Passenger Conduct**

- No tipping the driver
- No smoking or vaping
- No consumption of alcohol
- No illegal substance of any kind
- No eating or drinking (water is ok)
- No use of cell phones
- No defacing or damaging County property
- No inappropriate, disruptive, abusive or unsafe behavior directed at the driver or other riders
- No swearing or offensive behavior
- No disposing or depositing of garbage, bottles, or containers on the vehicle
- No throwing of any objects out any window or door
- No radio playing or video devices
- No pets, other than service animals
- No standing while the vehicle is in motion
- No entering the vehicle through the rear door unless authorized
- No possession of any explosives, flammable liquid or car batteries
- No weapons or firearms, with the exception of law enforcement officers
- No intentional interference with the Driver and the operation of the vehicle
- Passengers are not permitted to use the 2-way radio – except in an emergency

***\*\*Sussex County Skylands Ride reserves the right to record and monitor activity within and around the buses for the safety of the drivers and all of the passengers including but not limited to the use of interior and exterior bus cameras.\*\****



Sussex County Skylands Ride Services  
Funded in part by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and NJ Transit

- NJ-JARC (New Jersey Jobs Access Reverse Commute)
- FTA Section 5311 for Rural Areas
- FTA Section 5310 Enhance Mobility for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities
- Medicaid
- Municipalities
  - Hardyston Twp.
  - Vernon Twp.
- Newton Hospital
- Project Self Sufficiency
- SCDRTAP (Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program)
- Title III, Older Americans Act
- Veterans Affairs
- WorkFirst New Jersey

**Other Services**

Medicaid Transportation	(973) 383-3600 x 5179
Municipal Senior Shuttles	
Byram Twp.	(973) 347-2500
Hopatcong Borough	(973) 770-1200
Town of Newton	(973) 383-3521
Sparta Twp.	(973) 729-2383

**Out of County Connections**

Lakeland Bus Lines	Service to New York City from
PO Box 898	Newton and Sparta
425 E. Blackwell St.	
Dover, NJ 07802-0898	
(973) 366-0600	
<a href="http://www.lakelandbus.com">www.lakelandbus.com</a>	

New Jersey Transit	Bus: Rt. 194 from Stockholm to New York City Bus
One Penn Plaza East	Wheels Route from Augusta to Parsippany
Newark, NJ 07105	Rail: Morris & Essex Line from Dover & Netcong

**Sussex County Skylands Ride  
Title VI  
Complaint Procedure**

All customers and/or representatives receiving services through Sussex County Skylands Ride are entitled to redress of Title VI complaints without fear of retaliation or endangerment of their eligibility to receive services. The County of Sussex, Skylands Ride operates programs without regard to Race, Creed, Color, National Origin, Ancestry, Nationality, Ethnicity, Marital or Domestic Partnership or Civil Union Status, Sex, Gender Identity or Expression, Affectional or Sexual Orientation, or Disability. To file a Title VI complaint, or for more information on Sussex County Skylands Ride obligations under Title VI write to: Diana DiRezze, Administrator, Department of Central and Shared Services, One Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860. Transportation services provided by this agency are in whole or part funded through federal funds. A complaint can be signed and mailed to: Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington DC 20590. A complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

All complaints and grievances are recorded in writing via an Incident Report. Procedure upon receiving a Title VI complaint:

The County of Sussex, Skylands Ride is strongly committed to providing transit services without discrimination. The complaint process involves steps with an emphasis on resolution of the issue. The complaint is investigated. The Complainant is given 30 days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case.

If the investigator is not contacted by the Complainant or does not receive the additional information within 30 days, Sussex County Skylands Ride can administratively close the case. A case can be administratively closed also if the Complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After the investigator's review of the complaint, one of two letters will be issued to the Complainant: a closure letter or a letter of findings (LOF). A closure letter summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed.

A letter of findings summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains the remedy action that will occur. If Complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has 10 days.

**Title VI Discrimination Complaints**

Diana DiRezze, Administrator, Department of Central and Shared Services  
County of Sussex  
One Spring Street  
Newton, NJ 07860

Any resident may view Title VI complaints against Sussex County Skylands Ride by sending a written request to: Teresa Lyons, Clerk of the Board, County of Sussex, One Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860.

## **Sussex County Skylands Ride Grievance Procedure**

All customers and/or representatives receiving services through Sussex County Skylands Ride are entitled to submit grievances without fear of retaliation or endangerment of their eligibility to receive services.

All complaints and grievances are recorded in writing via an Incident Report.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

1. Customer or representative brings grievance to Supervising Omnibus Operator. If the issue is resolved, no further action is taken.
2. If the issue is not resolved by the Supervising Omnibus Operator, the customer is referred to the Program Coordinator for resolution. If resolved, no further action is taken.
3. If the customer feels the issue remains unresolved, s/he is referred to the Division Director, who investigates the concern and takes appropriate action.
4. Any customer or representative who feels that his/her problems/issues have not been resolved may submit their grievance to the Administrator of the Sussex County Department of Human Services (address below), who will provide a written response within ten (10) business days. Title VI discrimination complaints should be filed with the Director of Administration, County of Sussex, (address below) who will present recommendations to the Administrator of the Sussex County Department of Human Services, including proposed corrections actions for any complaint deemed valid.

### **Grievances**

Carol A. Novrit, Administrator  
County of Sussex Department of Human Services  
One Spring St.  
Newton, NJ 07860

5. All actions are recorded in writing either on or attached to the Incident Report.
6. Within ten (10) business days of receiving the written response from the Administrator of the Sussex County Department of Human Services, the customer or representative may request a review of the decision by the appropriate office at the State of New Jersey. For services provided under the Older Americans Act and through the Sussex County Division of Senior Services, review requests are submitted in writing to the Assistant Commissioner, NJ Division of Aging and Community Services, PO Box 807, Trenton, NJ 08625-0807. Discrimination complaints are submitted to the New Jersey Division of Civil Rights, 31 Clinton St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Newark, NJ 07102.
7. The alleging customer or his/her representative may appeal any decision within 30 days of notification. Appeals should be directed to the Administrator of the Sussex County Department of Human Services, who will respond within 30 days.

## ADA Complaint Policy for Skylands Ride

### **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is landmark federal legislation that opens up services and employment opportunities to the millions of Americans with disabilities. The ADA affects access to employment; state and local government programs and services; transportation, and access to places of public accommodation such as businesses, non-profit service providers; and telecommunications.

### **County of Sussex ADA COMMITMENT AND COMPLIANCE**

The County of Sussex is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its services on the basis on their disability as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

County of Sussex management, and all supervisors and employees share direct responsibility for carrying out agency's commitment to the ADA. County of Sussex, Department of Health and Human Services ensures accountability in this commitment, and supports all parts of the organization in meeting their respective ADA obligations. Sussex County Department of Health and Human Services coordinates internally with all appropriate offices in the investigation of complaints of discrimination, and takes a lead role in responding to requests for information about agency's civil rights obligations and operations.

### **ADA Complaints**

If you wish to file an ADA complaint of discrimination with County of Sussex, please contact Sussex County Department of Health and Human Services via 973-579-0559 ext. 1227 or at Sussex County Administrative Center, One Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860, or use our online form (if applicable).

### **What Happens to my ADA Complaint of Discrimination to County of Sussex?**

All ADA complaints of discrimination received by the County of Sussex are routed to local area management for prompt investigation and resolution. All complaints received will be investigated, so long as the complaint is received within 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination. The County of Sussex will provide appropriate assistance (online and otherwise) to complainants who are limited in their ability to communicate in English or require accommodation. Complainants will be requested to leave contact information for follow-up about their complaints.

The County of Sussex aims to complete investigations into all complaints received, within 90 days of receipt. In instances where additional information is needed to complete an investigation, the investigator will contact the complainant using the contact information provided. Failure of the complainant to provide contact information or any requested additional information may result in a delay in resolution, or the administrative closure of the complaint. The County of Sussex has a zero tolerance policy on discrimination and will take appropriate corrective measures in all instances where a violation of agency's non-discrimination policy has been established.

Once a complaint investigation is complete, complainants will receive a notice of finding via their preferred/available mode of contact (phone, E-mail, U.S. post, etc.). If no contact information is

provided, a note regarding the outcome of the investigation will be saved on file for a minimum of three years. Complainants can contact agency's Customer Service at any time to check on the status of the complaint.

**Filing a Complaint Directly to the Federal Transit Administration:**

A complainant may choose to file an ADA complaint with the Federal Transit Administration by contacting the Administration at:

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Civil Rights  
Attention: Complaint Team  
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Further questions about County of Sussex's ADA Obligations**

For additional information on the County of Sussex non-discrimination obligations and other responsibilities related to ADA, please call 973-579-0559 ext. 1227 or write to:

Sussex County Administrative Center  
One Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860

## **County of Sussex/Skylands Ride REASONABLE MODIFICATION**

The County of Sussex recognizes that disabilities are as diverse as the individuals they serve and recognizes the need to make reasonable modifications to its policies, regarding assistance offered to passengers who may require additional assistance to use its services.

Under Title II of the ADA, state and local governments are required to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures where necessary to avoid discrimination.

For those riders who require additional assistance, the County of Sussex will endeavor to accommodate all reasonable modification requests for such assistance by following procedures outlined below:

1. Riders must inform Skylands Ride/Office of Transit of the need and specific type of additional assistance requested at the time ride reservation is made.
2. Reservationist will advise Dispatcher of the specific rider need/request. Dispatcher will log the information within the client information system and determine the resources required to accommodate rider.
3. The Dispatcher will evaluate the request and report to the Program Coordinator whether the request is reasonable to perform.
4. If the Program Coordinator deems the service requested to be unreasonable to perform or to repeat on a regular basis, he/she must cite specific reasoning to support the finding and inform the Division Director.
5. If the Department Administrator concurs with the finding of the Division Director, the rider must be so informed via phone call at least 48 hours before the requested/scheduled trip. The finding must also be communicated to the rider expeditiously by written correspondence.
6. Riders may appeal any such decisions by following established ADA grievance procedures. Complaints that a County program, service or activity is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Department Administrator, Sussex County Department of Health and Human Services via phone at (973) 579-0559 ext. 1227 or mail at Sussex County Administrative Center, One Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860.

A Complainant may also file a complaint with the US Department of Transportation by contacting the Department at: US Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights,

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Civil Rights  
Attention: Complaint Team  
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590



**2021 Sussex County  
Board of County Commissioners**

Dawn Fantasia, Director  
Anthony Fasano, Deputy Director  
Chris Carney  
Sylvia Petillo  
Herbert Yardley

For further information, contact the Sussex County Skylands Ride at:  
(973) 579-0480  
TTY – (973) 948-0797

**Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provide that no entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service. To make a reasonable accommodation request, please call (973) 579-0480; TTY 973-948-0797.**

This is a publication of Sussex County Skylands Ride  
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Sussex County Skylands Ride Services  
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