

DISPATCHER FAQS

1. What days and times are Dispatchers on duty?

Tuesday and Thursday – 10 AM to 3 PM

Dispatchers will go to their Dashboard Profile section and transfer the phone to their number as follows: Tuesday Dispatcher will forward to themselves at 8 AM on Monday and back to Admin at noon on Wednesday. Thursday Dispatcher will forward to themselves at noon on Wednesday and back to Admin at 5 PM on Friday.

2. Who monitors STARS calls and email when no Dispatcher is on Duty?

Tuesday Dispatcher monitors STARS from 8 AM Monday until noon on Wednesday

Thursday Dispatcher monitors STARS from Noon Wednesday until 5 PM on Friday.

Weekend Dispatch Dispatchers will set the phones back to the ADMIN setting after their shift on Friday and all calls will go to the Admin voicemail. Assigned monitor will deal with emergency calls only on the weekend and will forward all voicemail messages to the Tuesday Dispatcher for their action if it is not an emergency/immediate need. Passengers are aware of our Dispatcher hours and should not be calling on weekends unless it is urgent.

3. How do I monitor?

When STARS receives a call that is unanswered, an email with a voice transcription and an mp3 voice file attached is sent to our STARS email and the Dispatcher on Duty. Dispatchers can only monitor by forwarding the phone to themselves during your monitoring period and letting the STARS calls go to voicemail. **You will return non-urgent calls during your regular Dispatcher Hours.** If a call needing more immediate attention is received, please return it when you hear the voicemail.

The voicemail email will then be sent to your email address and to the spedsta@starsride.org email address. This is monitored by Rennie, Tom, Frank and Toni.

4. What if I get a call before or after Dispatcher hours?

If you get a call, let it go to voicemail and then decide if the passenger needs immediate help and if they do, return their call. Generally, we do not want to encourage passengers to call in hours other than those posted, but it does happen.

5. What if the caller leaves a message in Spanish?

We have Spanish speaking dispatchers who will call the passenger and book the ride. You will need to contact one of them and forward the email/voicemail to them so they can call the potential passenger and book the ride. Spanish-speaking dispatchers are:

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Mark Reed - mreed52@gmail.com

Laura West - laurawest1955@gmail.com

Wendy Birnbaum – wendybirnbaum@yahoo.com

They all have accounts so you can find their phone number in their profiles by going to Spedsta and Add/Edit Passenger and select their name.

6. How will we know passengers are Spanish Speakers and how will we put it in their profiles for drivers?

Rides for Spanish-speakers are generally booked by a clinic or family member. The booking dispatcher will add that the rider speaks Spanish to the ride notes and will also ask for an English-speaking contact for confirming the ride.

7. How often will I be a Dispatcher?

You set your own schedule based on your availability, but you can generally expect once or twice a month. Spanish speaking Dispatchers will only be used to book Spanish speakers for rides unless they decide they want to take regular Dispatcher Shifts.

8. How does my scheduling work?

The Dispatch Manager coordinates the schedule. The Google Calendar:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=Y19oOGppcWFlcmVwMDhndmk3dDZ0ZHZxNmVwMEBncm91cC5jYWxlbnRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t> is where you will sign up for Dispatch days.

Once your training is completed you will be given access and will be able to make entries.

9. Do I have my own Dispatcher Account?

Yes. Once your training is done and background check completed you will be given a login id (your email) and password. Your email address may only be used once in Spedsta so if you are a driver, you will need a second email account to be logged in with a Passenger/Dispatcher Profile. (Just the way the software works!)

10. What kind of information do I gather on Passengers and how do I update their profile?

Please refer to the Ride and Delivery Information Sheet to gather information. This information corresponds to Passenger Profile fields you will need to complete.

11. Do I book directly online or use a paper information sheet first?

When you first start booking rides it may be easier to use the information sheets to write down the information and then go online to book. These are designed to help guide you in booking a ride. You do not need to keep the form after it is entered. But,

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there may be instances you want to refer back to our notes so hanging on to them for a bit is not a bad idea.

Ask Passengers if they are in the system already and if yes, ask if their information has changed since they last booked a ride. If it has, be sure to **edit** their passenger account. **ALWAYS verify their mobility information and update their profiles to reflect their needs.**

If Passengers are not in the system, you will need to gather all information and **create** an account for them.

12. Do I need to annotate which rides I have booked? Yes, dispatchers, please put “Booked by (and your name)” in Ride Notes #1 for each ride. That way, if questions arise, we will know who has spoken with the passenger.

13. How do I manage Passenger expectations about getting a ride?

We work to fulfill all ride requests, but since it is sometimes not possible, Dispatchers will tell each Passenger:

“Please understand that rides are based on volunteer driver availability. If you have not received a call from a driver by 3 pm the day before your appointment, please make alternate arrangements or reschedule your appointment and ride. We always do our best to make sure you get to your appointment.”

This disclaimer in no way changes our notification process when a ride must be canceled.

14. How will passengers contact me?

By phone. You will transfer the STARS phone number to yourself at the beginning of your monitoring/shift by going to your Dispatcher Profile Page. At the end of your shift, you will transfer it back to the main Admin/STARS number. When the setting is to Admin/STARS all calls will go to the Admin/STARS voicemail and an email with text transcription and mp3 file will be sent to spedsta@starsride.org.

15. What happens when I cannot answer my phone because I am working with another Passenger?

The caller will hear a voicemail message asking them to leave a message. They will leave a voicemail for you which will be forwarded via an email with text transcription and mp3 file to your email account and to the Admin spedsta@starsride.org email account. If you reject the phone call, it will go to your personal voicemail, so just let the call ring through to be answered by STARS. **Dispatchers are responsible for responding to all email voicemails received during their shift.**

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16. What kinds of rides may be booked? (See Ride Information Sheets to guide information gathering)

Medical – Non-emergency medical rides are the basis of our current service. We ask for at least 48-hour notice with volunteer drive hours 8 AM to 5PM door to door. We are unable to book rides more than 30 days out.

17. What can I do if Passengers ask me to book a shopping ride? Cascade East Transit offers rides to Passengers using Dial-A-Ride services. You may tell Passengers CET can be reached at 541-385-8680 or www.CascadeEastTransit.com. The Shopper Shuttle is only Thursday.

18. Can Passengers get curb-to-curb Dial-A-Ride Service? Yes, but only on Tuesday and only within Sisters. They can book up to 24 hours in advance and will be picked up at their residence IF they are in a Dial-A-Ride Service area. You may tell Passengers CET can be reached at 541-385-8680 or www.CascadeEastTransit.com for more information.

19. Why are we asking for Veteran Status? Veterans can get free rides curb-to-curb for **medical** appointments from CET. This may be useful if we do not have drivers available for our veterans. They may also call 541-385-8680 or go to www.CascadeEastTransit.com to find out more. Veterans have to have valid documentation and be enrolled in their service before they can get a ride.

20. Do I ask Passengers about their vaccination status"? Yes, dispatchers will ask passengers booking a ride: "Would you like to share your **vaccination status**?" Then, in Special Notes 1 in the **passenger's profile** (same place as Emergency Contact) dispatchers will log: Vaccinated, Not Vaccinated, or Vaccination Status Not Disclosed.

21. Do we provide rides for Passengers who require sedation?

Yes, **but the Passenger must be accompanied by a companion** who will also sign the Liability Waiver. Dispatchers will clearly spell out the passenger will be getting sedation in the "Comments" when booking the ride and include companion name. Both the rider and the companion must have liability waivers.

Drivers do not help passengers in and out of cars or into their homes, so any impairing medication requires a companion.

22. Do we provide rides for Passengers who require memory care?

Yes, **but the Passenger must be accompanied by a companion** who will also sign the Liability Waiver. Dispatchers will clearly spell out the memory care status in the "Comments" when booking the ride and include the companion's name.

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23. Can I book rides for mothers with children?

Yes, but we cannot provide a ride to a child that requires or chooses to use a child seat or booster seat because we don't want our drivers to have any responsibility for the proper installation of the child seat or booster, even if the parent offers to install it.

The law states the child must be 8 years of age or 4'9" tall or taller to not require a child seat or booster. It is rare for a 7-year-old child to be that tall (less than 1% of children), so practically, this limits nearly all children to 8+ years of age.

Oregon Law:

Child Restraints – **Children** must be restrained in an approved **child** safety **seat** until they weigh 40 pounds. ... **Child** passengers over 40 pounds or who reach the upper weight limit of their **car seat's** harness system, must be restrained in a **booster seat** until they are 4'9" tall or 8 years of age.

24. Can I book a ride with multiple stops for medical appointments? Yes, but stops must be clearly explained in the Comments Box for Drivers to see. Dispatchers should also explain to Passengers that long rides with multiple stops may make it more difficult to find a driver.

25. Can I book a ride for a Passenger when called by a third party like a clinic or health care coordinator? Yes, but we prefer passengers to book their own rides. Volunteers in Medicine specifically, may call to book rides for non-English speaking patients.

Third Party Passenger Ride Scheduling with STARS. Staff/Representative will:

- Call 541-904-5545 between 10am and 3pm Tuesday and Thursday to talk with a dispatcher.
- Request rides no less than 48 hours prior to the appointment, but the more lead time is better to ensure we find a driver.
- Provide their name and phone number to the dispatcher.
- Be clear about whether the driver confirms the ride by calling staff/representative or the passenger directly.
- Assume responsibility for the passenger. If drivers are instructed to call the staff/representative to confirm the ride has been accepted, **it is the staff/representative's responsibility to convey this information to the passenger and confirm the ride details.**
- Assume responsibility for the ride. If a staff/representative schedules a ride and an appointment is canceled, or a passenger is unable to go, the staff/representative is responsible for notifying STARS. If changes or cancellations become necessary over the weekend, the staff/representative must call the STARS number and leave a message and a weekend monitor will return the call.

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26. Do Passengers need to have emergency contact information?

Yes, although they may not be prepared to give it to you when they call to book the ride. In this case you will need to go ahead and get their information, set up their account, book their ride and tell them to call you back with their emergency contact information. If they do not call you back, you will need to call them and ask again. We ask for emergency contacts for multiple reasons including medical emergencies, pets left alone, accidents, appointment delays, hospitalizations, etc.

27. Do I need to tell passengers about the Health Protocol and need to sign the Liability Release?

Yes, particularly if they are a new passenger. If they have ridden with STARS before you may simply ask them if they understand those requirements.

Both documents are on <https://starsride.org/volunteer/drive-for-us> as part of the Driver's Training and Reference Documents.

28. Do I have to book return trips?

No. All trips are considered round trips. If there is ever a one-way trip needed, it must be noted in the comment section, so the Driver knows the requirement.

29. How do I communicate with Drivers?

ALWAYS communicate with Drivers through the SPEDSTA **Direct Messaging** function in Admin Tools so we can have a record of transactions. If the communication is related to a specific ride and it has been confirmed by a driver, use the ACTION box for that ride and use the email function.

30. What is Direct Messaging?

It is a function in Admin Tools that allows Dispatchers to send email to drivers. Dispatchers will primarily use it to alert drivers of short lead rides needed. This email will ask them to reply to the STARS email which you will not be monitoring so if you want them to reply to your email you will need to **put it in the text of your message**.

31. What are short leads and why are they important?

Short lead ride requests occur when passengers are within our 48-hour window, but our time to find a driver is limited. It is STARS Policy not to book rides less than 48 hours in advance. Even 48 hours may not allow enough time to get a driver to confirm the ride so sending a direct message to let drivers know the ride is requested is important.

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32. What is the difference between a short-lead booking and a short-lead requested ride?

A “short-lead booking” is when a Dispatcher takes the call, and the Passenger is only giving a short notice that they require a ride. A broadcast message will not be received by drivers until the next day, so the direct message is sent to give drivers more time.

A “short-lead requested ride” is a ride that drivers have not confirmed, and it is within 48 hours of occurring. (Requested Rides highlighted in ORANGE on your dashboard are rides needing drivers within the next 2 days.) Direct messages sent in this case are to alert drivers that if the ride is not confirmed, the passenger will be called, and their ride will be canceled due to the lack of a driver unless a driver confirms before 3 PM on the weekday before the ride.

33. What should I tell Passengers when they book short-lead rides?

Tell them short-lead rides are more difficult to fill, drivers may not be available, to consider alternatives in case we can't find a driver, and that we will try our best to get them a ride. If a driver is not found by 3 PM the day before their appointment, the ride will be canceled, and the passenger notified to rebook their appointment or find alternate transportation. It is the dispatcher's task to get a driver or call and cancel the ride with the passenger.

34. What do I do if there is a short-lead requested ride on the dashboard when my shift begins?

Send a direct message to all Drives alerting them there is a ride on the dashboard that has not been confirmed and a driver is needed. Dispatchers should be dealing with short-lead rides before their shift ends and if no driver is found, alert the on-coming dispatcher that the DM has been sent.

35. What do I do at the end of my shift if there is a short-lead ride that I alerted drivers about that has not been confirmed by a driver?

If you are the monitor, you will need to find a driver or call the passenger and tell them no driver is available. The deadline is 3 PM the day prior to their ride.

36. Can I call Drivers to ask them if they are available for short-lead rides?

Yes, you are part of the eyes and ears on short-lead rides and if you have time in your dispatch shift to make sure short-leads are confirmed, you can call drivers just to make sure they have seen the request.

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37. If I have questions, who do I call?

Dispatching: Tom Gonsiewski 503-810-2747 tom@starsride.org

Drivers: Toni Landis 541-480-4803 toni@starsride.org

Software: Frank Flannery 541-638-0567 frank@starsride.org

Program Manager: Rennie Morrell 542-610-2098 rennie@starsride.org

STARS Number: ADMIN 541-904-5545 spedsta@starsride.org

38. How are rides canceled?

Refer to the handout on canceling rides.

39. What if someone asks me how to volunteer as a Driver or Dispatcher?

All volunteers must complete an online application, complete training, and undergo a background check. Those interested in applying can complete an application at <https://starsride.org/volunteer> or they can email volunteer@starsride.org for more information. They will be contacted about training once an application is received.

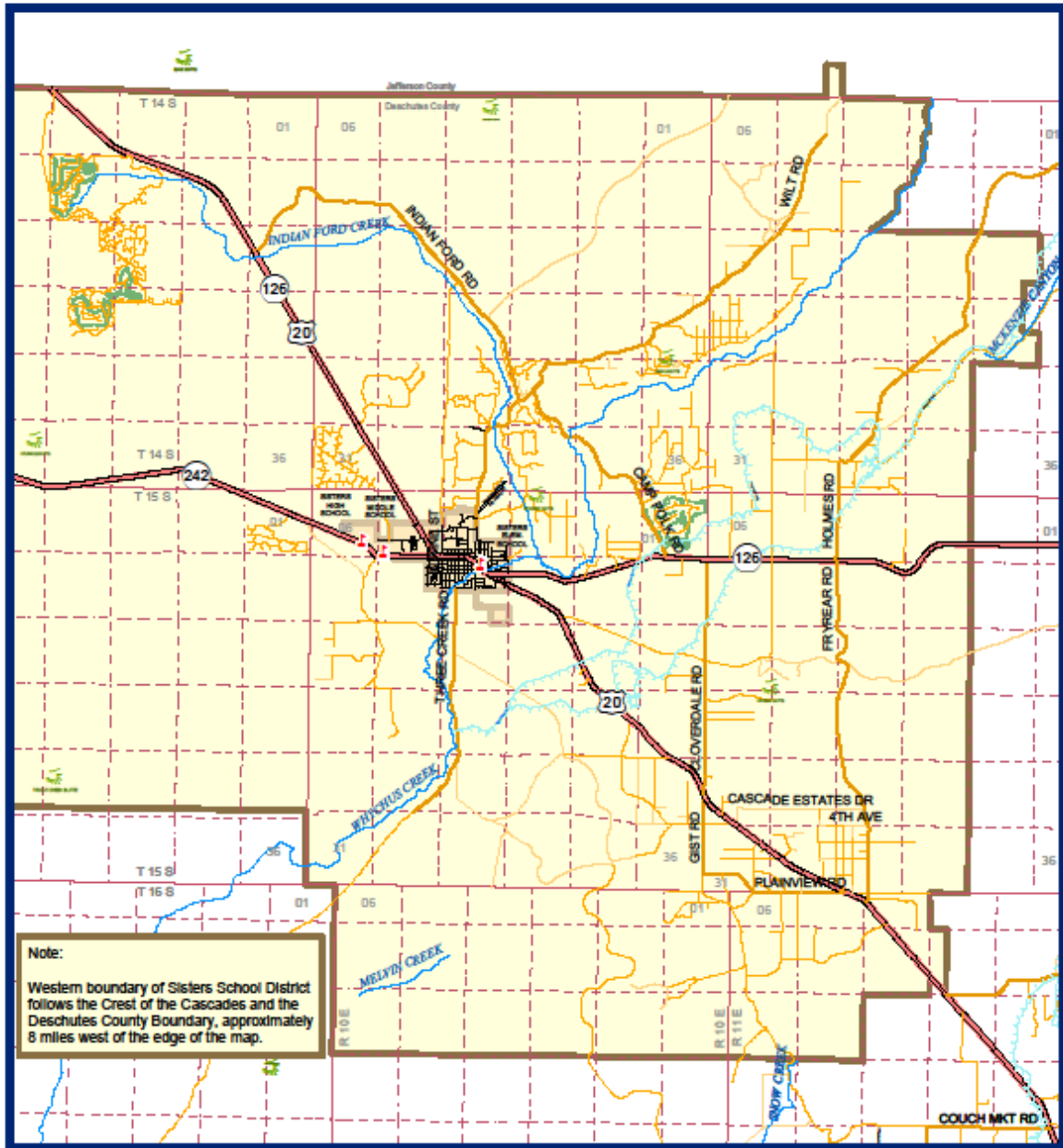
40. What is STARS geographical service area for passengers?

At this time, Passengers must live within Deschutes County and the Sisters School District to take full advantage of STARS services.

The service area includes Black Butte Ranch, but those rides may be more difficult to get drivers to confirm and will need to be watched carefully.

When booking Camp Sherman and Black Butte Ranch Rides, Dispatchers will also need to tell prospective Passengers that rides are based on driver's acceptance and because of the distance may not always be possible. We will continue to look for drivers in those geographical areas so we can accommodate everyone in Sisters Country who needs a ride.

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SISTERS SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP

