

F.I.S.H. Policies for Clients

Approved July, 2019

F.I.S.H. rides should be used as a last resort option: It is important for clients to have tried to arrange transportation with family, friends, and other resources prior to calling F.I.S.H.

ALL requests for rides MUST be made by calling the F.I.S.H. line (978-443-2145).

Requests must be made a MINIMUM of one full week in advance of the appointment (preferably earlier, if possible). For example, a ride request for a Wednesday must be made by Tuesday of the prior week.

Rides must take place between 9AM and 4PM, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays), when the Senior Center is open and staffed. To accommodate this:

Appointments in the Metrowest area must take place 10:00 AM -3:00 PM.

Appointments in the Boston area must take place between 11:00 AM -2:00 PM.

Keep in mind that Friday afternoon appointments are difficult to fill.

All clients must provide the following to the F.I.S.H. Coordinator:

Individual contact number and Emergency Contact number

Whether the client uses a mobility device (i.e. wheelchair, walker). (Note: If the client cannot ambulate and transfer independently, the client will be referred to other transportation services.)

F.I.S.H. can provide rides to clients that utilize transport chairs (4 small wheels, light-weight, easily collapsible) if and only if the client is accompanied by an able-bodied adult that can lift the transport chair into/out of the driver's car and can push the client in the transport chair.

F.I.S.H. cannot provide rides to clients using wheelchairs due to safety concerns.

F.I.S.H. cannot provide the ride to the client if the driver is unable to finalize details of the ride directly with the client via telephone.

There are no guarantees that F.I.S.H. will be able to arrange a volunteer driver for the client: If F.I.S.H. cannot find a driver for the client, he/she will be called three days prior to the appointment so that the client can make other arrangements.

If the ride is no longer needed, the client must call the F.I.S.H. line (978-443-2145) to inform the F.I.S.H. Coordinator, as soon as this is known. The F.I.S.H. Coordinator, in turn, will inform the driver:

Failure to inform F.I.S.H. of the cancellation will result in the driver arriving at the client's house at the set date and time. If the driver doesn't find the client there as expected, the driver will call the Senior Center. The Senior Center will attempt to reach the client or an emergency contact, and may need to call the Police to do a wellness check. It is vital that the client inform F.I.S.H. if he/she is no longer in need of the arranged ride.

If a client frequently fails to notify the F.I.S.H. line of ride requests no longer needed, F.I.S.H. reserves the right to prohibit use of the service by the client.

No side trips are allowed: The driver only provides transportation to and from the medical facility where the appointment takes place.

F.I.S.H. reserves the right to cap the number of rides per month given to a client that has frequent use of FISH services.

The client is responsible for all tolls and parking fees (including transponder toll).

F.I.S.H. drivers may not accept money for their service. If a client would like to make a donation, send a check made out to the "Friends of Sudbury Senior Citizens, Inc." in honor of FISH.

The FISH PROCESS

- Resident calls the F.I.S.H. answering line (978-443-2145) to request a ride.
- Resident leaves name, phone, date, time and destination of appointment.
- F.I.S.H. Coordinator returns call to the client within 24 hours to confirm details of the appointment.
- Once weekly, F.I.S.H. Coordinator emails all F.I.S.H. drivers with available rides.
- Driver “accepts” request(s) by return email (hit “reply,” not “reply all”) or call to the F.I.S.H. Coordinator (via F.I.S.H. line). If driver does not want to take on any of the requests, reply “no thanks.”
- F.I.S.H. Coordinator then assigns the ride to a driver and emails the driver with specifics of the ride/appointment, as well as the contact info of the client.
- Once assigned to a ride, driver then calls client to let the client know that he/she will be the driver. During this call, the driver should: verify the date, time and location of the appointment with the client, set up a pick-up time and exact location for the pick-up, check to be sure that the client will not have any problem getting into the vehicle, and confirm if the client has any particular special needs, such as using a wheelchair.
- Driver makes a reminder phone call to the client the day before the appointment, letting them know the pick-up time and location, and reminding them to bring their handicapped placard if they have one.
- Driver provides transportation to and from* the appointment.
- Driver must notify ASAP the F.I.S.H. Coordinator if any problem arises during the drive.
- If no one answers the door when the driver arrives to pick up the client, the driver should first try calling the client. If the client does not answer the phone, the driver should call the F.I.S.H. Coordinator (via FISH line) **AND** the Senior Center (978-443-3055) and ask to speak to Debra Galloway or Janet Lipkin.

* Some rides are one-way due to the expected length of the appt. For longer appts, there might be 2 drivers, one for drop-off, one for pick-up.