

The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. ADA Policies

It is the policy of The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. to abide by all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, including all programs, services, activities, operations and relationships with—and accommodations/modifications of—employees, client-customers, and the general public, including but not limited to those stated below.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that individuals with disabilities receive the same level of service as non-disabled individuals. Services that are “separate but equal” are not acceptable. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

All recipients must keep federally funded equipment and facilities in good operating condition. Recipients must have policies and procedures to maintain vehicles. Recipients must maintain, in operative condition, those features of facilities, vehicles, and other capital equipment that are required to make them accessible. ADA accessibility features must be repaired promptly if they are damaged or out of order. Recipients must establish a system of regular and frequent maintenance checks of lifts sufficient to determine if they are operative.

Specific transportation provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, include but are not limited to the following requirements:

Equivalent service: As required by the ADA, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. has a sufficient number of, or access to, wheelchair accessible vehicles in our fleet regardless of employment status to ensure that individuals needing an accessible vehicle have equivalent access to our transportation services as ambulatory individuals.

Maintenance of Accessible Features on Vehicles: As required by the ADA, the accessible features on our vehicles are maintained in operative condition so that individuals needing these features receive equivalent service to individuals not needing those features. Accessibility features are repaired promptly if they are damaged or out of order. Drivers are required to report lift and ramp failures promptly.

Transporting and securing wheelchairs: A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for, and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. will transport passengers with wheelchairs, even in circumstances when the wheelchair cannot be secured to the driver’s satisfaction, unless the wheelchair exceeds the size or weight capacity of the wheelchair lift or ramp. A rider may request to board separately from their wheelchair to avoid exceeding the weigh capacity of the lift. These requests should be granted. However, it is incumbent upon the rider to safely maneuver their wheelchair on to the lowered lift. Drivers are not expected nor should they operate the controls of a power wheelchair.

Adequate Time for Vehicle Boarding and Disembarking: As required by the ADA, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. provides adequate time for boarding and disembarking our vehicles for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. permits individuals with disabilities who do not use wheelchairs, including standees, to use a vehicle’s lift or ramp to board and/or disembark the vehicle.

Use of Portable Oxygen/Respirator Equipment: As required by the ADA, individuals using our transportation service may bring respirator, portable oxygen equipment, and/or other life support equipment on board our vehicles, as long as they do not violate the law or rules relating to the transportation of hazardous materials. All equipment must be small enough to fit into our vehicles safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits. Passengers must secure the equipment by means such as carrying the equipment using a shoulder strap or securing the equipment to a wheelchair or a seat.

Service Animals: As required by the ADA under 49 CFR 37.3, 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, have access to our vehicles.

In accordance with 49 CFR Part 37, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. transportation program allows trained service animals to accompany passengers with disabilities. The driver will not ask for proof of the qualifications of the animal but may ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform. The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. does not impose species or breed restrictions. However, any animal which is not under the passenger's control, or which becomes a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers may be restricted from riding. Emotional support animals or "comfort" animals are not service animals within the context of the US DOT regulations.

Training in Wheelchair Securement, Sensitivity to Passengers: As required by the ADA, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. trains its personnel to operate vehicles and equipment safely, assist passengers properly, and treat individuals with disabilities who use the service in a respectful and courteous way. Personnel are required to successfully complete the required the NH DOT mandated "Passenger Assistance Training" program (see <http://rlsandassoc.com/events/passenger-assistance-techniques-pat-nhrtap-concord-aug-5-2023/>) prior to being released to drive for The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. Following the initial 8-hour training, drivers are required to maintain their skill by attending mandatory refresher trainings.

Driver use of, and assistance with, Accessibility Equipment: As required by the ADA, The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. personnel make use of all available accessibility equipment when needed and provide a reasonable level of assistance to passengers as necessary and upon request with lifts, ramps, and securement devices. Upon request, standees may use the accessibility equipment to enter the vehicles as well.

ADA complaints: The Lakes Region Mental Health Center, Inc. discrimination related customer service complaints, including those associated with ADA regulations, are reported to the NHDOT Civil Rights Office and complaint documentation is maintained on file for one year. ADA related service complaint logs are kept on file for five years, per USDOT regulations. To file an ADA complaint, you may obtain an ADA Complaint form from the Lakes Region Mental Health Center Website at: www.lrmhc.org

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