



Le Sueur County, MN

Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Board Meeting

Item 5

9:30 a.m. Jim Goltart (5 min)

RE: Veterans Van Policy Update

RE: Budget Carryover Discussion

Staff Contact:

LE SUEUR COUNTY

VETERANS SERVICE

TRANSPORTATION

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

REVISED NOVEMBER 6, 2018

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POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is the policy of Le Sueur County that transportation will be provided to veterans who are qualified and approved by the Director of Veterans Service Office. The Director will approve or disapprove all requests for transportation to and from the Veterans Administration Facilities, medical or administrative, unless over-ruled by the Le Sueur County Commissioners. **All Veterans will be charged \$10.00 to ride the Veterans Van.**

Travel will be provided on even numbered days only. Veterans are required to meet the van at one of the four pick-up sites: the LeCenter Municipal Parking Lot, which is located south of the Meat Market on Park Ave.; or, Waterville Phil Mart Store; or, the American Legion Club in Montgomery; or the New Prague Park Ballroom. Parking is available in the parking lots. If the Veteran is unavailable to meet at one of the Departure Sites, then the Veteran must contact the County Veterans Service Office to make other arrangements.

APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments must be scheduled after 8:00 a.m. and before 2:00 p.m. on even numbered days. The Veteran must call the Veterans Service Office at least two to three weeks prior to their appointment or as soon as they are notified of a future appointment.

DEPARTURE:

The Veterans Service Van will depart from Le Center approximately 1-½ hours prior to the first scheduled appointment. Each veteran scheduled will be notified the business day prior as to the time of departure. Each veteran is required to be at the *Departure Site* 10 minutes prior to the notified departure time.

NO SHOW:

Veterans must notify the Veterans Service Office if they are not going to need the services of the van. By failing to notify the VSO creates a delay in departure and leaves a vacant seat that could have been utilized. A second episode of “No Show” will result in loss of eligibility for the van travel.

RETURN FROM THE VA:

All veterans must maintain verbal or visual contact with the driver after completing an appointment(s). Waiting areas are available at the VA Hospital for veterans to assemble for departure. Veterans will not leave the hospital grounds without notifying the driver with a request and having a reason and time of return that must be kept.

TRANSPORTATION RULES

1. The van driver is not to lift or attend medically to any passenger.
2. The van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies and to pickup and discharge passengers. Passengers are not allowed to request the driver make side trips to take care of personal business.
3. Passengers are not permitted to smoke, drink alcohol, use foul language or bring weapons, drugs or any illegal substance on the van. Further, the van driver may not provide transportation to any veteran who is intoxicated, abusive or poses a threat to the driver or other passengers on the van.
4. Passengers should not engage in any activity that will distract the driver's attention.
5. Passengers are required to wear seatbelts at all times. Any passenger refusing to wear his/her seatbelt will be denied transportation on the van. Wearing of the seatbelt is a State Law.
6. All trash must be removed from the van at the completion of each trip.
7. Passengers are **NOT** allowed to call the drivers to arrange pick-up, change pick-up times or locations. The **Director of Veterans Service must approve all changes to the van schedule.**

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WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL DECISION

The Director of Veterans Service Office and driver are responsible for determining if the van will or will not make a scheduled trip. Passenger safety comes first. The Director after consulting with the driver may determine inclement weather may create a safety hazard and decide to cancel the trip, or that mechanical problems require the scheduled trip to be canceled.

The following lists (by no means complete) are factors to assist the Veterans Service Officer and driver in making the decision.

- Schools Closing
- Weather Warnings
- Highways closed and State Officials requesting no travel
- Severe forecast within 6 hours

The final decision to cancel the scheduled trip rests with the Director of Veterans Service Office. If a trip is canceled, the veterans will have their appointments canceled and rescheduled by the Veterans Service Office.

A decision by the driver to depart the VA Hospital prior to the completion of all appointments because of expected severe weather would be honored. The Veterans Service Office will again make rescheduling of appointments.

ILLNESS ENROUTE

The possibility exists that illness may occur during travel. The driver must be aware of alternate hospitals and medical clinics available on the route of travel. Cellular telephone, roadside phone or Highway Patrol/Police assistance should be considered if distance to the VA Hospital, or any hospital/clinic is excessive. See page 10 for telephone numbers.

The driver may refuse to transport any veteran who he/she feels is too ill to ride the van. In the event the driver feels someone is too ill to ride they will contact the Director of Veterans Service Office for a final decision. The Director of Veterans Service may request a written statement from a physician stating that it's permissible for the veteran to travel. Should the Director determine a physician's statement is necessary, transportation will be refused until the statement is received.

ACCIDENT / BREAKDOWN /SAFETY EQUIPMENT

The mandatory use of seat belts will ensure minimum injuries should an accident occur.

Any accident occurring on the way to or from the VA Hospital will be reported to the appropriate police agency. If there are injuries, appropriate medical personnel should be requested. After notifying police authorities and medical personnel, the driver should then contact the Director of Veterans Service.

If there is a vehicle breakdown, the driver should contact the County Veterans Service Officer for further instructions.

The Director of Veterans Service will arrange for transportation of veterans not injured by calling the VA Travel Desk and requesting a care cab pick-up at the accident/breakdown. This will occur only after all injured veterans requiring transportation by ambulance are transported. When calling the VA Travel Section, inform them of the number of veterans requiring travel and any injuries of minor nature that may require special handling (bruises, scrapes, etc.).

Emergency equipment located in the van consists of a First Aid Kit, Warning Reflectors, Fire Extinguisher, a Hurl Kit and one blanket for warmth and shock prevention.

TRAVEL PAY COLLECTION AND RECEIPT

1. **Veterans utilizing the van will be charged \$10.00 per trip to the Minneapolis VA Hospital. This fee will be collected at the beginning of each trip by the van driver.** In the event that a veteran is unable to pay to ride the veterans van, the Director of Veterans Service may waive the fee. Drivers are required to document all travel pay in the travel folder and provide each veteran with a receipt.
2. Additional donations are encouraged and appreciated. In this regard the driver should periodically make it known that the Van Program is intended to be self-sustaining and that the average cost per trip amounts to **\$200.00** with consideration given to all expenses including gas and maintenance. That average excludes the generous donation of monies used for the purchase of the vans by the Veterans Service Organizations.
3. If you meet the below criteria, you may be eligible for VA travel benefits associated with obtaining VA health care services. **Veterans who qualify for travel pay can submit their receipt to the VA on their own.** The VA will **ONLY** reimburse the amount paid to the Le Sueur County Veterans Van. (Example: \$10.00 fee) The only way that they VA would reimburse more would be if you drove yourself.
4. You qualify for Travel Pay if:
 - You have a service-connected rating of 30 percent or more
 - You are traveling for treatment of a service-connected condition
 - You receive a VA pension
 - You are traveling for a scheduled compensation or pension examination
 - Your income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate
 - Your medical condition requires an ambulance or a specially equipped van, you are unable to defray the cost, and the travel is pre-authorized (authorization is not required for emergencies if a delay would be hazardous to life or health)

ADMISSIONS / RETURNS / PASSES

Veterans scheduled for admittance to the VA Hospital for lengthy medical procedures have priority for transportation. A seat will be made available for that veteran. The VA Hospital has patient representatives who will assist the veterans' personal needs. Caution must be observed in keeping funds or other valuables in the rooms/wards.

The VA Social Service Workers will assist the veteran in obtaining transportation home following medical discharge.

Patients being discharged may be transported on the van during the van's trip back to its home city only if space is available. The patient must be ready to leave when the van departs the VA Medical Center.

The VA Hospital provides an opportunity for hospitalized veterans to depart the VA Hospital for a weekend/holiday pass. Usually this occurs late any Friday to the following Monday. Since travel is available on even numbered days only, return to home and/or readmission cannot be provided for in a single weekend. Veterans must consider this when accepting a pass. It is recommended that travel be certain, both to and from the VA Hospital prior to departure on an authorized pass.

Veterans receiving an irregular discharge (against medical advice) will be returned to their residence and further transportation will be denied unless the circumstances are beyond the veterans' control. The Director of Veterans Service on an individual basis will handle requests of this nature.

Veterans scheduled for weekend admittance, who may require transportation, must make those arrangements with the County Veterans Service Office as soon as notified of the date of the admittance. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis and a decision to transport the veteran will be made by the Director of Veterans Service.

DEPENDENTS TRAVEL

Individuals other than a veteran will be permitted to ride in the van only when there is room in the van, free of charge, and only for the following reasons.

- A spouse or other responsible person is needed to assist the veteran either physically or to clearly give and receive medical information for the veteran.
- The individual is volunteering at the VA Hospital or giving blood.

LIST OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS

UTILIZE “911” FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Hospitals
- Ambulance / Rescue Squad
- Police / Sheriff
- Minnesota State Highway Patrol
- Fire

LE SUEUR COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

507- 357-4440

VA HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION:

612-467-2768

WEATHER INFORMATION:

MINDOT - TOLL FREE: 1-800-542-0220

NOTE: This number provides geographic weather reports for North, South, Central and Metro area as well as statewide.

MINDOT - ST PAUL: 612-296-3076

LE SUEUR COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

507-357-8279

Jim Goltart: Director, Veterans Service

Home: 507-934-6855

Cellular: 507-420-1937

DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensure that the Van is inspected prior to each trip.
2. Ensure that every passenger utilizes his/her seatbelt at all times.
3. Do not allow any intoxicated individual into the van.
4. Notify the County Veterans Service Office if you are going to be unable to drive for an extended period of time.
5. If you are scheduled to drive and are unable to, notify the County Veterans Service Office so a replacement may be found.
6. Ensure that passengers are aware of the travel pay policy and collect the pay from the veterans. This travel pay will then be turned into the Veterans Service Office.
7. Report any problems or mishaps to the County Veterans Service Office immediately.
8. Check in with the VA Hospital to determine if any Le Sueur County Veterans are currently in-patients at the VA Hospital and then notify the County Veterans Service Office.
9. If a veterans calls the driver to arrange a pick-up, change pick-up times or locations the driver will have the veteran call the Director of Veterans Service for approval. At no time will the driver change the van schedule without first consulting with the Director of Veterans Service or his designee.

AUTO INSPECTION PROCEDURES

1. Approach vehicle; look for leaks of coolant, fuel or lubricants under vehicle. Note body condition.
2. Under hood, check battery water level, oil level, last oil change date, transmission fluid level, belt and hose condition and adjustment.
3. Start engine for warm up. Check abnormal noise, gauges for normal readings. Steering wheel for excess play.
4. Depress brake pedal for excessive travel, mushy or hard feel.
5. Check horn, windshield wipers. Turn on all lights including emergency flasher. Check high and low beams.
6. Check tires inflation and tread.
7. Check emergency equipment including fire extinguisher, first aid kit, emergency triangles, spare tire, and jack.
8. Walk around the vehicle checking lights and reflectors.
9. Recheck all gauges, fasten seat belt, turn off lights, and check parking/emergency brake.
10. Make test stop within the first block of driving. Check operation of transmission.