



# Passenger Code of Conduct

## **POLICY**

Kingsport Area Transit Service (KATS) is concerned about the security and safety of the traveling public and transit operators. We believe that it is the obligation of each and every member of the traveling public to contribute to the safety of KATS, ADA vehicles, bus shelters, bus stops, and the KATS office by refraining from inappropriate behavior/conduct, threats, violence and/or any activities that may provoke violence. KATS buses and facilities are for everyone; however, some activities that disrupt the safety, order, or rights of other passengers will not be tolerated. To this end, a standard of conduct is expected from every patron of the KATS service, whether on a transit vehicle, bus shelter, or at a transit stop. Any time inappropriate behavior is exhibited on transit properties, the person(s) may lose the privilege of using KATS service. Safety is everyone's responsibility and we require anyone that witnesses inappropriate behavior in or around transit facilities to report it to the KATS office before boarding or after boarding any vehicle.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Violence:** Physical force employed so as to violate, damage, abuse, injure, or strike in any manner.

**Threat:** An expression or action showing intent to inflict harm such as gesturing signs, or warnings of violence, or the announcement of any types of violence as a possibility.

**Inappropriate Behavior:** Any conduct that does not demonstrate respect for the safety and welfare of themselves and/or others or that interferes with the orderly provision of transportation services.

A KATS vehicle operator may use their sole discretion in determining the level of violations for any/all other inappropriate behavior(s)/conduct that are not listed below. Video / audio surveillance may also be utilized in any event to make a determination on the behavior or conduct in question.

## **Passenger General Responsibilities:**

- Have the correct fare ready when boarding the bus
- Stand back from the curb at least two feet
- Board the bus as quickly as possible and take a seat. If no seats are available, stand behind the yellow line and use the overhead handrails
- Notify the operator if you need assistance such as kneeling the bus, using the ramp or if you become ill
- If standing on a crowded bus, move to the rear of the bus to make room for others
- Vacate reserved seating near the front when seniors and people with disabilities board
- Do not take more than one seat
- Check that you have your belongings before you exit the bus.
- Wear shoes and shirts at all times
- Speak quietly when talking to others or using cell phones

- Children should remain seated at all times.
- Use trash receptacles at Transit Centers and bus stops, do not leave papers or trash on the bus
- Only carry those packages and belongings that can be carried onto the bus in ONE trip. Be sure all packages are stored safely, out of the aisles and within your control.
- For your safety, seatbelts are provided on all vehicles. Any passenger sitting in the first row MUST wear a seatbelt.

Notice: It is not the role of the vehicle operator to respond to medical or confrontational situations. They will call an operations supervisor or emergency responder for appropriate attention to the issue. The role of the vehicle operator is to safely operate the bus and de-escalate situations. Please take the time to report anything unusual or unsatisfactory to the vehicle operator.

### **SMOKING:**

No smoking on the bus, inside or within 20 feet of bus shelters, transit centers and all public facilities. Smoking in these locations is against the law. **(TN Law is 25 feet)** KATS has a designated smoking area. Cigarette butts must be placed in the receptacle provided. Cigarette liter is prohibited and will be treated as major violation.

The following represents only a partial list of unacceptable behaviors and conduct, and is not intended to be all inclusive, which will not be tolerated and may result in ejection from a bus or transit facility by the Kingsport Police Department or a KATS employee. Report incidents to KATS' customer service at 423-224-2613.

**TYPICAL MINOR VIOLATIONS** (may result in suspension of a passenger's privileges to use the KATS bus system.

- Talking too loudly
- Trying to distract driver's attention
- Crossing the "white standee line" before the transit vehicle stops
- Loud music
- Inconsiderate cell phone usage
- Discourteous treatment of passengers or transit drivers
- Eating or drinking on transit vehicle
- Not being responsible for your personal items
- Discarding litter in non-designated receptacles
- Hanging on bars or handrails
- Lying down on the seats or placing your feet across the seats

**TYPICAL MAJOR VIOLATIONS** (may result in temporary or permanent suspension of a passenger's privileges to use the KATS bus system.

- Physical violence, intimidation and/or harassment toward another passenger or transit driver is strictly prohibited.
- Participation in illegal activity, including but not limited to sale, distribution, possession of stolen property or use, possession, manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, purchasing, transferring or being under the influence of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or other intoxicants at any time on in or around transit facilities/properties)
- Possession of weapon on or around transit facilities/properties

- Pushing and jostling when getting on or off the transit vehicle
- Sexual touch or inappropriate comment(s)
- No shirts / shoes
- Unacceptable attire including offensive slogans, pictures, profanity and nude or seminude pictures, offensive gestures or suggestive cartoons
- Damaging or destroying transit facilities/properties or the personal property of another passenger or transit driver
- Drinking alcoholic beverages or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs to the extent of being publicly intoxicated.
- Entering or failing to depart a KAS transit vehicle when ordered not to do so by the vehicle operator, operations supervisor or security officer
- Language intentionally used to threaten or intimidate another passenger or transit driver
- Use of profane language, racial slurs, racial/ethnic name calling, displaying racist behaviors
- Throwing objects in transit vehicle or out of windows. Littering and creating unsanitary conditions is cause for removal. Not placing cigarette butts in provided receptacle.
- Use of tobacco, smoking or vaping on a transit vehicle
- Excreting any bodily fluid upon another person or a transit vehicle such as spitting, urinating, defecating or exposing one's genitals.
- Failure to follow direction from the transit driver
- Unsanitary health conditions and/or personal hygiene including but not limited to bodily fluids, open wounds and any types blood borne pathogens.
- Bringing animals, other than service animals on the bus.
- Panhandling or aggressive loitering

KATS strives to maintain the integrity of our service by consistently providing an atmosphere that is safe and clean. We ask that you respect the driver and other passengers by observing personal hygiene and not wearing excessively strong perfumes. Passengers failing to maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene may be subject to suspension.

**HYGIENE:** A passenger may not be allowed on a vehicle if his or her body odor or physical hygiene will disturb the reasonable comfort of other passengers or Transit Staff. Odors may include but are not limited to scents related to unlaundered clothing, lack of bathing, animal related odors, and excessive perfumes. A passenger will be given notice and an opportunity to correct the odor or hygiene problem prior to suspension resulting in discontinued riding privileges for certain set periods of time, unless in the judgment of the Transit staff, that person places existing passengers in extreme discomfort or is considered a health risk to others. Passengers with mobility devices must maintain such devices in a state of cleanliness. Passengers requiring a catheter must maintain the catheter in an enclosed space free from public view.

**PROCEDURE:** A range of consequences and/or actions will be used to address non-compliance with appropriate Passenger Rider Conduct. KATS staff is responsible for writing up an incident report about inappropriate behavior on transit facilities/properties. Transit drivers are responsible for reporting any incidents that take place while in their presence. KATS will determine the level of violation and consequences and/or actions that includes one or any combination of the following:

**Minor Violations of conduct rules may be handled as follows:**

**First Offense** - Verbal warning by vehicle operator, security officer or KATS official to correct behavior and report to office.

**Second Offense**- The offender(s) will be put off the transit vehicle. If a passenger is put off the transit vehicle, the passenger is suspended from riding privileges on any transit vehicle for the remainder of the day. Anytime a passenger is put off the bus their bus fare shall be forfeited and if the passenger suspended is seen riding another transit vehicle during the suspension period it will be considered trespassing and law enforcement will be called to handle the situation. An incident report will be completed. If the offender(s) is under the age of 18 years old, and is to be put off of the transit vehicle, law enforcement will be called for law enforcement transport.

**Third and Subsequent Offenses** – Will follow the consequences of a first major violation.

### **Major Violations of conduct rules are handled as follows:**

**First Offense** - Riding privileges can be suspended from the transit system at the discretion of KATS. When suspended, the offender(s) is not allowed to ride any transit vehicle or be on any transit properties. Anytime a passenger is put off the bus their bus fare shall be forfeited and if the passenger suspended is seen riding another transit vehicle during the suspension period it will be considered trespassing and law enforcement will be called to handle the situation.

The transit driver will contact his/her supervisor with any/all major violations. Law enforcement may be called. When a passenger exhibits inappropriate behavior on a transit vehicle or transit properties/facilities, transit personnel will complete an incident report. Transit manager prepares a written letter of suspension for transit riding privileges. The letter should state why the passenger was suspended, any documented history of disruptive behavior, and the length of the suspension. In the event that an individual has conducted a major violation that is determined to be (acts of physical violence, possession of any weapons, drug activities, or any damage to KATS property) that individuals' privilege to use the KATS service will be revoked.

**Second and Subsequent Offenses** – When a passenger returns from a suspension, the returning passenger's behavior will be closely monitored. If there is another documented incident of disruptive behavior, the passenger may be suspended for an additional period of time and/or have all transit riding privileges permanently terminated.

**Appeal** : Any person suspended or excluded from KATS services or facilities, or that person's representative, may appeal the suspension or exclusion. Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the KATS office within ten (10) days of the date of this letter. All requests must be signed and dated when filed by an individual or representative.

## **Safety Tips for Pedestrians**

### **Be safe and be seen: make yourself visible to drivers**

- Wear bright/light colored clothing and reflective materials.
- Carry a flashlight when walking at night.
- Cross in a well-lit area at night.
- Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.
- **Be smart and alert: avoid dangerous behaviors**
- Always walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.

- Stay sober; walking while impaired increases your chance of being struck.
- Don't assume vehicles will stop; make eye contact with drivers, don't just look at the vehicle. If a driver is on a cell phone, they may not be paying enough attention to drive safely.
- Don't rely solely on pedestrian signals; look before you cross the road.
- Be alert to engine noise or backup lights on cars when in parking lots and near on-street parking spaces.
- **Be careful at crossings: look before you step**
- Cross streets at marked crosswalks or intersections, if possible.
- Obey traffic signals such as WALK/DON'T WALK signs.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing a street.
- Watch for turning vehicles; make sure the driver sees you and will stop for you.
- Look across ALL lanes you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. Just because one motorist stops, do not presume drivers in other lanes can see you and will stop for you.
- Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone while crossing.