

BLUEBIRD TOUR PROGRAM POLICY MANUAL 2019

A Program of the Prince William
Area Agency on Aging
Operated By
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www.pwcgov.org/bluebird

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Introduction

Welcome! The Bluebird Tour Program is a program of the Prince William Area Agency on Aging ("Agency"), operated by Quality Tour Transport, Inc. ("QTT"), and has been serving Prince William County ("County") and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park for over 30 years. **The Bluebird Tour Program exists to provide life enriching travel experiences for all residents age 55 and older who reside in Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.**

Tour schedules are printed three times per year and are available at many locations throughout the County: the Agency's Administrative Office, Manassas Senior Center, Woodbridge Senior Center, libraries, recreation centers and retirement communities. Schedules are also available online at www.pwcgov.org/bluebird or at <http://www.dctrails.com/>.

Committee

The Bluebird Travel Advisory Committee ("Committee") is comprised of Bluebird Tour Program participants that are interested in the Bluebird Tour Program. The Committee is an ambassador for the program, providing riders with information about the program. The Committee advises the Agency and QTT on policies and trip suggestions. Committee members may serve as volunteer escorts for the program on one-day trips or on other trips when requested by QTT.

Meetings

The Committee meets three times a year and meetings are open to the public with open citizen time at the end of the meeting.

Participants

- a. **Age:** The Bluebird Tour Program serves persons 55 and older and their spouses (regardless of age) in Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. No one under the age of 18 may participate in the Tour Program unless otherwise stated in a tour description.
- b. **Health Status:** A participant must be sufficiently mentally and physically independent to participate in the program. If a participant has significant or debilitating deficits in either area they must bring a companion with them in order to assist them with any deficiencies. Participants must be able to:
 - negotiate required walking, either by themselves or with their own prearranged assistance of a family member or friend;

- demonstrate adequate hearing/listening/communication skills;
- manage medications on their own; and
- be away from home for the duration of the trip .

At its discretion and prior to the trip, the Agency may require a participant to provide authorization from his/her physician to participate on a trip. If necessary, the Agency may prohibit individuals from participating on trips because of perceived mental or physical deficiencies which may interfere with that individual's and other participants' ability to enjoy trips. If a participant falls ill on a trip and can no longer continue with the tour, it is the responsibility of the participant or the participant's family to secure transportation home.

- c. **Wheelchair Use:** If the participant is planning to bring a wheelchair on a trip, he/she must bring another person to serve as an assistant (over the age of 18). Participants must advise QTT of his/her need for a wheelchair at the time of reservation so reasonable accommodations can be made.
- d. **Motorized Scooters:** Participants must advise QTT of his/her need to use a motorized scooter on a trip at the time of reservation so reasonable accommodations can be made. Drivers and trip escorts are not authorized to lift motorized scooters in and out of the luggage bays. If a motor scooter is required the driver will use the lift to load the scooter into the coach and the scooter will be strapped down.
- e. **Cell Phone:** Talking on a cell phone by participants is not allowed on the coach, except in the event of an emergency. The coach will stop approximately every two to three hours for a rest stop; please wait until you are at the rest stop to make any phone calls.
- f. **Electronic Devices:** The use of electronic devices such as tablets, DVD players, etc. is permitted on the coach. When a participant is using an electronic device that makes noise; headphones must be used so as not to disturb others.

Hotline

The Bluebird Travel Hotline has been established to better serve the participants. The Hotline provides up-to-date information on schedules, tours and inclement weather. 703-792-RIDE (7433)

Charter Service

A fully licensed and insured charter service will be used for all tours. Prince William County and its employees, agents and volunteers assume no responsibility for the acts or omissions of contractors or claims for injury or damage sustained by, through or as a result of participation in a "Bluebird Tour."

Trips

There are approximately 80-100 trip days planned each year. The tours are categorized as follows: educational, recreational, historical, theatre and/or shopping.

Departure

- a. **One-Day Tours:** Be sure to check the departure times and locations for day tours. Plan to arrive 15 minutes earlier than the departure time so you can check in with the Tour Escort. The coach will wait five minutes after the scheduled departure time, if a participant has not arrived. After the five-minute grace period, the tour will continue as scheduled.
- b. **Overnight Tours:** Participants must arrive at the departure location 20 minutes prior to departure time for an overnight tour in order to allow enough time to load luggage in the luggage compartment. There will be rest stops made approximately every two to three hours on overnight tours. Please check the itinerary that is mailed to you for the most current tour information; on occasion the departure times may change.
- c. **Missed Tours:** If a participant misses the tour, there will be no refund given for that tour (day or overnight).

Tour suggestions are always appreciated and can be written on your Tour Analysis Form at the completion of a tour.

Fees

The fees for tours are comprised of the transportation fee and the vendor fees. The transportation fees include the cost of the charter service. The vendor fees include the actual cost of entertainment, meals, attractions, hotels, etc.

Reservations

Reservations can be made by calling QTT at 703-339-0333. Reservation dates are listed in the Bluebird Tour schedules. On reservation day, reservations can be made for three additional persons. If your travel companion does not live in Prince William County, or the cities of Manassas or Manassas Park, or if a participant is not yet 55 years of age (unless the participant is your spouse), you cannot make a reservation for them on

reservation day. There is a three calendar days waiting period from a reservation date for individuals who would like to participate in tours but are not residents of Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. If seats are available three days after a reservation date, anyone over the age of 18 may participate.

Participants must inform QTT at the time of reservation if the coach wheelchair lift and space for a wheelchair or motorized scooter will be needed and when an accessible or first floor hotel room is needed.

When the office is closed on the initial reservation day due to inclement weather or emergency, reservations will resume on the next day the office is open.

Payment

All payments for tours should be made to QTT. To ensure a reservation, all fees for one-day tours must be paid in full, two weeks after a reservation has been confirmed. For most overnight tours, fees can be paid in installments. Please ask QTT staff for a payment schedule when making reservations for an overnight tour. Tour monies should not be paid to the Tour Escort.

Payment is accepted by check, cash, money order or credit card. Please stop by QTT's office if paying by cash. Do not send cash in the mail. Mail the check, money order or credit card payments to: Quality Tour Transport, Inc., P.O. Box 1520, Lorton, VA 22079. If paying by check, please indicate the trip date on the check.

Cancellations

Agency/QTT reserve the right to cancel the trip/tour if there are not 20 paid reservations for a one-day tour and 30 paid reservations for an overnight tour. If a trip is cancelled due to low enrollment, a refund will be given without penalty. A standby list will be maintained for all tours.

Participants should call QTT to report their own cancellation as soon as possible. This however, does not always guarantee a refund or credit unless the participant finds a replacement or there is someone on the standby list who can replace them and is confirmed by QTT.

Note: If there is a standby list, QTT will call the next individual on the list. No attempt will be made to fill a seat if a participant cancellation is received after 12:00 p.m. on the day before a tour.

Refunds

Requests for refunds must be made to QTT. If approved, a refund will be processed. Refunds are processed on the 1st and the 15th of each month. A \$5.00 cancellation fee for a one-day tour and a \$10.00 cancellation fee for an

overnight tour will be charged.

A refund will only be granted if there is someone on the standby list to take the place of a participant or if a refund from the vendor can be secured.

Participants should consider purchasing commercial trip insurance.

Safety

For participant safety, it is recommended that the "buddy system" be used. Participants are encouraged to stay in groups with at least one other participant while away from the group. It is required that all participants remain seated while the coach is in motion. For safety reason, all participants must get off of the coach at each destination.

Consumption of alcohol is not allowed on the motor coach.

Inclement Weather

If Prince William County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, day tours will be cancelled. Day tours are also cancelled when Prince William County Government employees have "Unscheduled Leave" due to inclement weather. Overnight tours may be cancelled due to inclement weather. The decision to cancel will be made by Agency staff and QTT staff. Overnight tour cancellations will be on the tour hotline two-hours before the tour is to depart.

For notification of cancelled tours on holidays and weekends, call **(703) 792-RIDE (7433)** for a recorded message up to two hours before the tour is to depart from the first pick-up location. **It is the participant's responsibility to call the Bluebird Travel Hotline to find out if a tour has been cancelled due to inclement weather.** If money has been paid out to a vendor for a tour that has been cancelled due to inclement weather, a refund will only be given if QTT can secure a refund from the vendor or if money has not already been paid out. Attempts are made to reschedule a tour when it is cancelled due to inclement weather. If a tour can be rescheduled and an individual is unable to participate in the new date, a refund will only be given if there is a refund secured from the vendor or there is someone on the standby list to take the seat.

In the event that there is inclement weather while a tour is taking place and additional day(s)/night(s) on the road are necessary, the cost of the lodging and meals will be at the expense of the participants. It is at the discretion of the Tour Escort and/or Driver to decide when a tour will be postponed due to inclement weather while a tour is taking place.

The Agency reserves the right to make the decision to run a tour outside of the policy stated above if it is in the best interest of the participants.

Emergencies

If a medical emergency should occur, the involved participant should immediately request that the coach be stopped, and should call 911, the local emergency number and/or his/her health care provider. The driver and/or the Tour Escort will contact appropriate medical personal and local authorities as necessary. **It is the participants' responsibility to carry pertinent medical and emergency contact information with them at all times.** Depending on the situation, the Tour Escort will follow the instructions of family member(s) or the emergency contact person. Once a participant's situation is stable, the tour will continue as scheduled.

Departure Locations (Subject to Change)

One-day tours depart from two locations: in Manassas at the Wawa on Liberia Avenue (9401 Liberia Avenue, Manassas, VA 20110); and in Woodbridge at the Featherstone Shopping Center located at the corner of Featherstone Road and Route 1. Participants may not leave their vehicles at these two locations overnight.

Overnight tours also depart from two locations: in Manassas from the parking lot adjacent to the Manassas Senior Center (the public parking lot next door to the senior center), 9320 Mosby Street, Manassas, VA 20110; and in Woodbridge from the Dr. A.J. Ferlazzo Building, 15941 Donald Curtis Drive, Woodbridge, VA 22191.

Participants park at these locations at their own risk of loss or damage.

Luggage

Luggage space is limited. Each participant may bring one suitcase no larger than 27 inches in length. In addition, participants may take one small carryon bag which may be stored in the overhead bin, under the seat, or on the lap. Purchases made on a tour must be able to be carried on by the participant, or fit in his/her luggage, overhead bin, or beneath his/her seat. Please understand that all purchases made by participants that are carried on or stored on the coach are at the participant's own risk. Prince William County and Quality Tour Transport, Inc. will not take responsibility for lost or broken items.

Seating

On day-tours, the participants who board in Manassas will sit on the left side of the coach behind the driver. Participants who board in Woodbridge sit on the right side of the coach. This policy is in place to assure front of the coach seating for both departure locations. On overnight tours, a seating chart will be mailed to each participant along with the itinerary for the overnight tour.

If a tour participant is in need of more than one seat while riding the coach, it must be requested at the time of reservation. If more than one seat is requested, the participant will be charged the transportation fee for the extra seat(s).

Gratuity

The price of the trips **does not** include gratuities for commercial coach drivers or escorts.