**Attachment**

**SUWANNEE VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (SVTA)**

**COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

**OFFICIAL SERVICE COMPLAINT**

Service complaints are routine incidents that occur on a daily basis, and can be reported to the driver, dispatcher, or other individuals involved with daily SVTA operations. However, for a service complaint to be “Official”, it MUST be reported to the SVTA Director of Operations and it must be in writing within 15 calendar days following the date of occurrence. Forms for this purpose are contained in this procedure, and may be obtained by contacting SVTA administrative offices. Official Complaint forms may be received via email, fax, or picked up in person. Official written complaints are typically addressed and resolved within a reasonable time period suitable to the complainant. The complaint and grievance process for Medicaid related services provided by SVTA is different, and covered under SVTA’s Medicaid Beneficiary Handbook for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties, OR by the procedure by any one of the four (4) future Medicaid managed medical care providers.

The SVTA Director of Operations will maintain a log documenting each complaint. SVTA will conduct a review of each complaint, and based on evidence collected, note for the record if the complaint is found by SVTA to be valid or if the complaint is unfounded or not valid. At the LCB’s quarterly meeting, SVTA will provide the LCB a summary of all complaints received and actions taken.

Service Complaints may include but are not limited to:

■ Late trips (late pickup, drop-off or missed appointment)

■ No-show by transportation operator

■ No-show by client

■ Client behavior

■ Driver behavior

■ Passenger discomfort

■ Service denial (refused service to client without an explanation as to why, i.e., lack of Transportation Disadvantaged funds, etc. The CTC desires to have the opportunity to address these complaints, but recognizes the rider’s right to complain directly to the state ombudsman. The CTC must make every effort to quickly and completely address every complaint, and include the complete details of resolution on the report.

**FILING A COMPLAINT WITH THE SVTA**

A rider of the Suwannee Valley Transit Authority (SVTA) may file an official written complaint in writing within 15 calendar days about their experience with SVTA.

The Complainant must file the official complaint in writing. Written official complaints can be sent to:

Larry Sessions, Administrator

1907 Voyles St, SW

Live Oak Florida, 32064

(386) 362-5332 PH

(386) 219-0157 FAX

Larry.

by mail, FAX, or emailed to the SVTA Administrator. Although oral complaints or compliments may be called into SVTA at (386) 362-5332 during normal business hours, the ONLY complaints that will be logged, researched and reported are the official written complaints to the SVTA Director of Operations.

Written complaints may be anonymous. However, for a complaint to be official, the complainant must provide the following:

1. The full name and complete address of the complainant;

2. A statement of the grounds for the grievance and be supplemented by supporting documentation and detailed information such as pickup and drop-off addresses/locations, date of service, times, made in a clear and concise manner;

3. An explanation of the relief desired by the Complainant.

Upon receiving the official written complaint, the SVTA Director of Operations will make reasonable efforts to contact the Complainant no later than the end of the next business day. The Director of Operations will make three documented attempts to contact the complainant. After the third attempt, if no contact is made, the complainant will need to call back if they wish to pursue the official complaint. SVTA has a time limit of fifteen (15) calendar days upon which to accept an official written complaint, but the sooner the official written complaint is filed after the incident, the better SVTA can respond with appropriate resolutions.

Upon receiving the official written complaint, the Director of Operations will:

1) Contact all parties involved to obtain statements; and

2) Research the complaint and gather all relevant evidence that may be available; and

3) Review and evaluate the evidence; and

4) Based on the evidence collected, formulate a decision and a recommendation

5) Issue a report.

The Director will forward the report to the Administrator of SVTA for a ruling and/or determination.

Suwannee Valley Transit Authority will respond to the complainant within thirty (30) calendar days after the filing of the official complaint.

Suwannee Valley Transit Authority will render the findings in writing and notify the complainant, giving to the complainant an explanation of the facts that lead to Suwannee Valley Transit Authority's decision and, if applicable, information as to what actions were taken to bring about a resolution.

Based on the findings, if appropriate, SVTA will review its policies and procedures to see if adjustments are justified.

SVTA will maintain a complaint log for official written complaints. The SVTA complaint log is ‘public information’ and will be released to any requestor as such. All documents pertaining to the grievance process will be made available, upon request, in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.

The SVTA complaint log will be a part of the SVTA packet sent to the Local Coordinating Board’s quarterly meetings.

**SUSPENSION RECONSIDERATION HEARING (For Non-Sponsored Program Only)**

If a Non-sponsored program public rider has been issued a notice of suspension by Suwannee Valley Transit Authority, they have fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of issuance of suspension notice to request a reconsideration hearing on the suspension. If a reconsideration hearing is requested, the hearing will be held by the Local Coordinating Board Grievance Subcommittee. Service suspensions for other Agency programs (like Medicaid) will follow the terms and conditions related to the Agency/Program contract for services, if applicable.

Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and delivered to:

Suwannee Valley Transit Authority, Administrator

1907 Voyles Street, SW

Live Oak, FL 32064

And

NCFRPC

Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Local Coordinating Board Grievance Subcommittee

2009 N.W. 67 Place, Suite A

Gainesville, Florida 32653-1603

The written request must include the name, address and telephone number of the person who is requesting the hearing and a statement as to why his or her riding privileges should not be suspended. If the request is not received within fifteen (15) calendar days from the issue date of the suspension, the suspension will not be heard.

Upon receipt of letter requesting the reconsideration hearing, a hearing shall be held within 15 calendar days. The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council will advise the person requesting the reconsideration hearing by return correspondence of the date, time and location of the hearing.

The person will be given the opportunity to present the reasons why they believe the suspension should not take place. The Local Coordinating Board Grievance Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the LCB on whether or not to uphold the suspension. The Grievance Subcommittee's recommendation will be reviewed, adjusted as needed, and re-issued by the Local Coordinating Board to the SVTA Administration. The SVTA Administration will make a decision whether or not to uphold the LCB’s recommendation. A written statement of the recommendation and a written statement of the SVTA decision whether or not to uphold the suspension shall be forwarded to the person requesting the hearing within seven (7) calendar days after the recommendation by the LCB to SVTA.

**FILING A GRIEVANCE WITH THE SVTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Additionally, where appropriate, an interested party may also file a grievance with Suwannee Valley Transit Authority’s Board of Directors. The only matters subject to consideration as a grievance are those which have unsatisfactorily been processes as an official written complaint. Such grievance shall be an issue within the purview of the Suwannee Valley Transit Authority and the Chairman of the Board’s approval to hear the matter. The SVTA administration shall report, in a format of its choosing, any and all official written complaints filed by riders of the SVTA or of subcontractors to the LCB. The report shall provide complete details and include all action to resolve the complaint.

**Complaint/Grievance FLOW CHART**

**SVTA Official Complaint/Grievance Form**

**Page 1 of Date Received by:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section I: Complainant/Grievant** | |
| Name: | |
| Physical Address: | |
| Mailing Address (if different): | |
| Contact Phone #: | Email: |
| **Section II: Person and Organization the Complaint/Grievance is about** | |
| Organization: | |
| Person(s): | |
| Telephone number (if known): | |
| **Section III: Complaint/Grievance** | |
| Explain as clear as possible what your complaint/grievance is. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) involved (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witnesses. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form or attach other relevant information.  Date of Problem, Complaint or Grievance (Day, Month, Year): \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  My complaint/grievance is: | |

Under the penalties of perjury, I hereby certify the above statements to be true. Signature and date required below.

Signature Date

**Please submit this form in person, or mail to the address below:**

SVTA, Administrator

1907 Voyles St, SW

Live Oak, Florida, 32064