fish *A volunteer organization since 1972*

Phoner Information

WHAT ARE FISH PHONERS?

FISH phoners are important volunteers in our mission to provide rides for Lexington residents to medical appointments. Destinations include Lexington and vicinity, including Boston. You receive ride requests from the answering service two days before the appointments, then contact the scheduled drivers. Finally, you call the answering service to report the assignments.

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT AND SCHEDULING

How much time? Phoners usually sign up for one day a month, for a typical commitment of about two to three hours a month.

Scheduling. The schedule is arranged on a month-by-month basis. You can specify a particular volunteer day; for example, the second Tuesday of each month. Alternatively, you can request that the FISH phoner coordinator contact you each month to schedule your volunteer day. **You'll receive the monthly schedule by email (submit your email address to feslerj@gmail.com), or if you prefer, in the mail.**

Rescheduling. If you need to reschedule your phoning day, you are expected to swap with another phoner (refer to the schedule) and notify the phoner coordinator Mary Burnell (781-862-2023) and John Howard (jhh@alum.mit.edu) or Jim Fesler (feslerj@gmail.com).

YOUR PHONER DAY

Receive the requests. Shortly after **1:35pm** on your calling day, you will receive an email with the client requests from the answering service. **Important note:** If for any reason you are unable to complete your duties on your scheduled day, please notify the Phoner Coordinator immediately.

The requests include the following information for each client:

- **name**
- **address**
- **phone number**
- **pick-up time**
- **appointment time**
- **destination**
- **time of return**
- **possible delay.** Is the client having a procedure that might result in a delay, such as cataract surgery?
- **any special conditions.** For example, does the client use a wheelchair or have other ambulatory concerns? Will the client bring a companion?

FINDING YOUR DRIVERS

Refer to the monthly schedule. Note the drive date for phoners in the Preferences column, ex. "Calling Fri 2/20 drivers". This date is two operating days later. Go to that date on the schedule to see your driver names and contact information.

MATCH DRIVERS TO CLIENTS

The monthly schedule specifies **L** for local drivers (to destinations in Lexington and vicinity) and **B** for drivers willing to drive to Boston. Other driver preferences are listed. Plan driving assignments based on time and destination. The names and phone numbers for the drivers you will contact appear two FISH Operating Days after your name on the monthly schedule (see FISH OPERATING DAYS). You may ask drivers to take more than one assignment on a given day.

Tip: If you can print the client email and the schedule page showing your driver information, you will have all the information you need. Highlight or circle your driver names and contact information. Then write the name of the driver you are assigning beside each client name, or make a separate list to match clients and driver.

CONTACT THE DRIVERS

Call or email (see below) the drivers with the assignments. Give each driver all the client's information and remind the driver to confirm the ride with the client. If there's no answer, try later or leave a voicemail with the client's information, while making sure to tell the driver to call you back to confirm the assignment. *Drivers may decline a driving assignment for any reason. The driver's decision is final and must be respected.*

UNASSIGNED DRIVERS

If there are drivers who have not been assigned a client because there were extra drivers, or there were no client requests for that day, be sure to call or email the drivers to say they will not be needed on their drive day.

EMAILING THE DRIVERS

For each driver, copy and paste the assigned client information from the email list, and be sure to ask the driver to confirm to you that they will accept the request. As you get responses from the drivers, check off their names on the schedule. If the driver does not answer the email within a few hours, call him/her. Be sure to leave a voice message if the driver does not answer the call.

REPORT ASSIGNMENTS TO THE ANSWERING SERVICE

After the drivers have accepted the requests, call the OD Answering Service (781-861-9300) and leave a message to report each driver's name for all the clients. **Note:** If responses from drivers are late coming in, you may call more than once and up until 9pm that evening.

NOT ENOUGH DRIVERS?

If you're unable to reach a driver by early evening, or you have more rides than scheduled drivers can handle, refer to the current back-up driver list or the membership directory.

Tip: Send a group email to the backup list

Go to the Backup Driver List (attached to the bottom of the client email). Prepare an email as follows:

To: your email address

Bcc: Backup drivers email addresses copied from List (use bcc so you won't be showing everyone's address).

Subject: FISH DRIVER NEEDED

Message: Ask for a volunteer to drive a client. Include the date, time and drop off location. When you get a positive response, you can send the client details copied from the initial email or call with the information. Be sure to report the driver's name to the Answering Service and let the others on the backup list know that you've found a driver.

CAN'T FIND A DRIVER FOR EVERYONE?

If, after making a diligent effort, you still can't fill a ride request, contact the client as quickly and tactfully as possible so he/she can make other arrangements.

QUESTIONS?

Always feel free to call the phoner coordinator, listed in the membership directory and monthly schedule, if you ever have any questions or concerns.

FISH OPERATING DAYS

When FISH is closed, no rides are available. FISH is closed on Saturdays and Sundays, weekday holidays, and Fridays in June, July and August. Skip the days FISH is closed when counting two FISH operating days.

For example:

- If you are the phoner on Monday, March 1, you'll call drivers scheduled for Wednesday, March 3.
- If you are the phoner on Thursday, May 27, you'll call drivers scheduled for Tuesday, June 1 (due to the Memorial Day holiday May 31).

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSED DAYS

FISH is closed on weekends and **Fridays in June, July and August.** Additionally, FISH does not operate on the following weekday holidays in 2027.

- January 1
- January 18
- February 15
- April 19
- May 31
- July 5
- September 6
- October 11
- November 11
- November 24 & 25
- December 24
- December 31

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