

SOMERS SENIOR CENTER

Policies & Procedures Manual



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HOURS OF OPERATION

The Somers Senior Center hours of operation are as follows:

Monday	8:00am-3:00pm
Tuesday	8:00am-3:00pm
Wednesday	8:00am-3:00pm
Thursday	8:00am-3:00pm
Friday	CLOSED

Occasional programs may be scheduled during evening and/or weekend hours and will be advertised in the Somers Senior Center Newsletter.

HOLIDAYS

The Town of Somers observes the following holidays, and the Somers Senior Center will be closed on these days:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Washington's Birthday
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Juneteenth Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Day

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Somers Senior Center follows the Somers Public Schools with regards to weather related closures/delays. If schools are delayed or closed, programs/events at the Somers Senior Center as well as Dial-a-Ride transportation will be delayed/canceled. Please tune into WFSB Channel 3 or NBC30 and look for "Somers Senior Center" for up-to-date information on delays/closings.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Somers Recreation and Leisure Services Department is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information provided by participants and clients. The Department is compliant with all applicable laws and regulations relating to such information.

All information obtained from participants is for use by Somers Senior Center staff only. Participants' personal information will not be provided to anyone who is not an employee of the Town of Somers, except in the case of a medical emergency.

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The Town of Somers Recreation and Leisure Services Department is comprised of Somers Recreation, the Senior Center, and Dial-A-Ride Senior/Disabled Transportation. Laws and regulations as they pertain to privacy and confidentiality apply to all information provided by individuals utilizing Recreation Services, Dial-A-Ride Senior/Disabled Transportation as well as the Somers Senior Center.

ELIGIBILITY

Participation Requirements

1. Unless otherwise noted, individuals must be age 55 or older to participate in Senior Center activities or to utilize items designated for Senior Center participants.
If an individual meets the age requirement for participation but has a spouse/partner who does not, the spouse/partner will be permitted to participate but must abide by all participation requirements.
Please note that age requirements for utilization of Senior/Disabled transportation and/or participation in Senior Center trips may differ.
2. Participants are required to check-in at the registration kiosk upon entering the Senior Center.
3. Individuals must be independent and oriented. At the discretion of the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services or Senior Center Supervisor, those who are not independent and oriented may be required to have an aide accompany them while they are on Senior Center grounds or utilizing transportation services. An aide could be a home-health aide, companion, caregiver, or family member. Staff members are not permitted to provide hands-on assistance. If a person requiring an aide is attending a program/event/trip that requires a fee, the same fee shall apply to the aide. Individuals who require an aide must be accompanied by them at all times while on the Senior Center grounds. In the event the aide does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the individual unattended, staff members will immediately contact the emergency contact person on file and the emergency contact will be required to come to the Senior Center to assist the individual. On-going failure to provide necessary assistance to the individual may result in their inability to participate in the future.
4. Individuals with assistance needs that cannot be managed by their aide may be unable to participate. These may include, but are not limited to:

Wandering	Unmanageable incontinence, ongoing
Prescription drug monitoring	Contagious disease
Drug/Alcohol abuse	Abusive/harmful behavior
Regularly occurring seizures	Cognitive impairment
Inability to ambulate independently	Poor personal hygiene
Behavioral health issues	Inability to feed oneself
Inability to toilet independently	
5. If necessary, minor age children may accompany an individual to the senior center on an occasional basis upon approval from Director of Recreation and Leisure Services or Senior Center Supervisor. Minors must be adequately supervised at all times.

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For any individual who is deemed not to have met any of the above requirements, the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services or Senior Center Supervisor shall meet with the individual and/or his or her family. Whenever possible, areas for assistance will be identified, solutions will be offered, and a plan of action will be established. Failure to comply with the recommended action plan will result in the individual's inability to participate in the future.

Programs/Events/Trips

Participants must sign up for all scheduled programs, trips, and events.

If one cannot attend a particular program or event after having signed up, a phone call to the center to indicate cancellation is required.

If you are unable to attend a trip for which you have signed up, you must notify the senior center as soon as possible. Payments for trips are typically non-refundable unless travel insurance has been purchased or a substitute can be found. Payments will be reimbursed only if the trip is cancelled.

Programs/events/trips may have a deadline to sign-up. Due to space constraints, sign-up for Somers residents may begin earlier than sign-up for non-residents.

Participants are advised to pay close attention to sign-up start dates, deadlines, and payment details for each individual program/event/trip.

MEMBER REGISTRATION

All Somers Senior Center participants must complete a registration form. This form includes, but is not limited to, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, emergency contact information and general health information. This information is being collected for the benefit of participants in the event of an emergency. It will also help improve communications with participants such as reminder calls to ensure you don't miss any programs/events/trips for which you are signed up.

There is no fee to become a member. Members will be assigned a "My Senior Center" Key Tag. The first Key Tag is free of charge. However, if a Key Tag needs to be replaced, there will be a replacement fee of \$2.00 per occurrence.

All registered members are required to sign in with their "My Senior Center" Key Tag and list any programs/trips/events they will be attending that day. This system is used to document attendance. This data is extremely valuable and important to demonstrate growth and need which is necessary for obtaining funding and grants.

Members will be required to update their registration information on a bi-annual basis. Information collected from Somers Senior Center participants is confidential.

CONDUCT POLICY

The Somers Senior Center ("Senior Center") is a facility where individuals age 55 and older meet to participate in social, educational, wellness-oriented, and support-service activities to enhance and enrich their lives. In order to create a positive environment and sense of community within the Senior Center, all individuals who enter the Senior Center (participants, visitors, volunteers, guest speakers/entertainers, etc.) should always conduct themselves appropriately and treat each other

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and the staff with courtesy, respect, and cooperation. This is a zero-tolerance facility as it relates to individuals' inappropriate conduct, behavior, and/or actions. To ensure a safe, respectful, and positive environment, the following Code of Conduct has been created. A copy of this Code of Conduct will be posted in the Senior Center.

As part of the registration process, all Senior Center participants will be made aware of this Code of Conduct. Copies of this policy will be made available at the Senior Center and will be provided to individuals upon request.

This Code of Conduct has been reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee for Seniors, the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services, the Board of Selectmen, and the Town Attorney. Any future changes to this policy will also follow this approval process. The Director of Recreation and Leisure Services or Senior Center Supervisor may exclude any person who repeatedly and/or intentionally does not follow this Code of Conduct while at the Senior Center or when involved in any activities or trips offered by or associated with the Senior Center. Actions leading to exclusion include, but are not limited to:

1. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person, except in self-defense.
2. Violating the Senior Center's alcohol and drug-free policy on its property by using, selling, receiving, distributing, possessing, being under the influence of or being otherwise impaired by alcohol or any illegal drug, or abusing prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Notwithstanding the above, persons shall not be excluded for the lawful use of medical marijuana, if such use is: authorized by a health care provider; not otherwise prohibited by any federal law applicable to the Senior Center and/or does not restrict the Senior Center's ability to obtain federal funding; and is strictly confined to lawful use outside of the Senior Center's premises and does not cause the person to be under the influence at the Senior Center.
3. Unlawful harassment of a verbal, written, visual or physical nature (including making derogatory, demeaning, negative or disparaging remarks to or about another person) based on any individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran/military status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information, or any other legally protected status.
4. Discriminating against (i.e., treating someone differently) due to that person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran/military status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information, or any other legally protected status.
5. Possessing (whether concealed or openly displayed) any type of a firearm, knife, or any dangerous object (including, but not limited to, explosives and components, fireworks, or any incendiary items or devices).

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6. Abusive, aggressive, disrespectful, violent and/or bullying behavior towards other people at the Senior Center (including staff). This could be verbal, written, visual or physical in nature.
7. Threatening of any type relative to the building, property, or any of its occupants or their possessions and property at any time.
8. Conduct that creates excessively loud or disruptive noise.
9. Using obscene, vulgar, or profane language or gestures.
10. Touching or engaging in any unwanted physical contact with another person.
11. Coercing or badgering others for money or transportation or to buy any goods or services.
12. Willful destruction of property (building and/or furnishings or the property of other people). No alterations, changes or additions to the building are permitted. Creating a hazard on property or in the building that could cause harm to people.
13. Theft of any kind.
14. Obstructing or restricting the usual use of entrances, rooms, or parking lot that impedes people from their duties, participating in activities, or receiving services.
15. Administering polls/surveys, distributing flyers or literature, or selling of goods or services without prior approval from the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services. The Director of Recreation and Leisure Services shall not unreasonably restrict requests for polls or surveys, distribution of flyers or literature, or sales of goods or services; provided, however, that any such requests are related to events and/or services provided by the Town of Somers or for an approved Town supported function. Any request denied by the Director may be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for an appeal. The decision of the Board of Selectmen shall be final.
16. Refusing to register and sign-in on the Center's registration system. Access to Senior Center facilities and participation in functions and/or events requires registration on the Center's registration system. The Director of Recreation and Leisure Services or Senior Center Supervisor may restrict any participant who fails to register from access to the facility, or any function and/or event.
17. Introducing additional furniture or free-standing signs into the Senior Center without prior approval from the Senior Center Supervisor.
18. Erratic and/or unsafe driving, disregarding posted signs and speed limit, parking in areas not designated as parking spaces or in areas designated that disrupt or block traffic flow, parking in designated Handicap parking spaces without handicap permit in the Senior Center parking lot.

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19. Creating unnecessary alarm by falsely reporting (verbally or in writing) a threat or other hazardous statement (including, but not limited to, false fire alarms, reporting of accident, threat, hazard, medical emergency, etc.).
20. Repeated and/or intentional disregard for this Code of Conduct.
21. Smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes, e-cigarettes, etc. in the building.
22. Failure to maintain proper personal hygiene or having strong colognes or perfumes which adversely affect the health of others due to allergies, etc.

Filing a Complaint Regarding the Conduct of Another Individual:

If an individual at the Senior Center feels threatened or in harm's way due to the conduct, action, or behavior of another person or feels such is disruptive/inappropriate, this should be immediately brought to the attention of a staff member. If an individual is witness to a violation of the Code of Conduct, that person should immediately notify a staff member. All conversations will be handled discreetly and confidentially to the extent possible.

Disciplinary Procedures for Misconduct:

Should staff become aware of or observe a violation of the Code of Conduct, the following procedures will be initiated:

First Offense

Verbal Warning: A verbal warning is issued when staff deems a person's conduct, behavior, or action to be unacceptable or in violation of the Code of Conduct. The person will be told by staff that the specific conduct, behavior, or action is unacceptable, must stop, and cannot happen again. Such conversation, as well as any additional action taken, will be documented in the Senior Center's files. If the conduct, behavior, or action continues, the staff has the authority to ask the person to leave the building immediately. If the person refuses to leave the building, the Somers Resident State Trooper will be called. The Trooper will receive a copy of the above documentation.

Second Offense

Written Warning/Short-term Exclusion: With a witness present, staff will address the person about the specific unacceptable conduct, behavior, or action. The conversation (including the consequences) will be put in writing and a copy given to the individual or sent via certified mail. The individual will be asked to sign a form acknowledging receipt of the above document. If the person refuses to sign, such a notation will be placed in the files. Use of Senior Center property, participating in programs, activities, events; and use of transportation services will be "off limits" for a period of one (1) week. The person will be asked to leave the building immediately. If the person refuses to leave the building, the staff has the authority to call the Somers Resident State Trooper. A copy of the written notice will be sent/given to the Somers Resident State Trooper.

Third Offense

Long-term or Permanent Exclusion: If a person's conduct, behavior, or actions continues to be unacceptable, staff will instruct the person to leave the premises immediately. Should the person refuse to leave, the Somers Resident State Trooper will be called. A written notice will be sent via

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certified mail to the individual documenting the problem(s), specifying the length of time the Senior Center property, programs, activities, events, and transportation services will be off limits.

Should the Somers Resident State Trooper become involved, a copy of such document will also be sent to the Trooper. The Director of Recreation and Leisure Services will determine the appropriate length of time for exclusion (subject to the Right of Appeal) and there is significant potential for permanent exclusion at this level.

Be it the first, second, or third offense, should the Senior Center property, programs, activities, events, and transportation services be deemed "off limits" for an individual for a period of time due to violating this Code of Conduct, that individual will forfeit any prepayment for programs, activities, events, or trips that occur during that "off limits" time period. No refunds will be issued, even if the Right of Appeals process is initiated.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, depending on the nature and severity of the violation, the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services reserves the right to dispense with the First and Second Offense procedures and immediately proceed in accordance with the Third Offense procedure, subject to the Right of Appeal.

Right of Appeal

Any individual who has received notification of exclusion from the Senior Center for a duration of thirty (30) days or more has the right to appeal. The excluded individual has the right to request a special meeting with the Senior Advisory Committee to review the decision. This request must be made in writing within ten (10) business days of the first day of the exclusion period and submitted to the Chairman of the Senior Advisory Committee. A special meeting with the Advisory Committee for Seniors will be scheduled within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of the request and a written notice of the meeting date, time, and location shall be sent to the excluded individual at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Only witnesses to the event(s) leading up to exclusion are permitted to speak at the meeting in support of excluded individual and/or the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services. Either at the conclusion of this special meeting or within five (5) business days thereafter, the Senior Advisory Committee will make the determination as to whether it upholds or rescinds the decision to exclude the individual.

The Director of Recreation and Leisure Services will notify the First Selectman when an individual has been excluded from the Senior Center and of the circumstances and code of conduct violations which resulted in the exclusion. Details will be reported in a written narrative of the events which led to the exclusion, the names of any known witnesses, and copies of any statements made by witnesses. The First Selectman will be informed of the outcome of the special meeting with the Senior Advisory Committee.

If the excluded individual is not satisfied with the decision of the Senior Advisory Committee, the individual has the right to request a special meeting with the Town of Somers Board of Selectmen. The First Selectman/Board of Selectmen will not reverse any decision made by the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services regarding exclusion without the excluded individual first meeting with the Senior Advisory Committee. A request for a meeting with the Board of Selectmen must be made in writing & submitted to the Town of Somers Operations Director within ten (10) business days of the decision issued by the Advisory Committee for Seniors. A special meeting

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with the Board of Selectmen will be scheduled within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of the request and a written notice of the meeting date, time, & location shall be sent to the excluded individual at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. The Town of Somers reserves the right to have the Town Attorney present at this meeting and the excluded individual has the right to have an attorney present as well. In addition to attorneys, only witnesses to the event(s) leading up to exclusion are permitted to speak. The decision of Board of Selectman will be final.

HEALTH & SAFETY

1. All individuals entering the Somers Senior Center must wear proper attire, including safe footwear, while in the building or on the property (unless specific program calls for removal of shoes).
2. The Somers Senior Center operates in full compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with regards to service animals. Per the ADA, “service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.”
3. Participants and their families should be aware that in the event of an emergency, the Senior Center staff will call 911 and notify the participant’s emergency contact person(s) if there is one on file. Individuals who are fully conscious may refuse medical assistance only after the emergency medical responders have arrived and evaluated the person’s medical condition. If further medical treatment is recommended by the emergency medical responders and the person refuses to comply, the person must vacate the premises and cannot be transported to the hospital, a doctor’s office, home, or elsewhere by the Senior Center bus, or by any staff member. Any non-staff individual who voluntarily transports such individual assumes full responsibility and all liability risks. Following a medical incident, the person will not be allowed to remain at the Senior Center for the remainder of the day; the emergency contact person (if one is on file) will be notified. Individuals who have had a medical emergency, either at the Senior Center or elsewhere, and were seen at an Emergency Room should not come to the Somers Senior Center for 24 hours afterwards.
4. Fire drills may be conducted at any time. All occupants of the building are required to participate. In the event of an emergency, all occupants may be required to vacate the building until appropriate authorized personnel deem it is safe to return to the building.
5. Persons entering the Senior Center are encouraged to use the hand sanitizers available throughout the building. If you are ill with a cold, the flu, etc. and are coughing/sneezing or have a fever, seek medical attention and please remain at home.
6. Storage of private property and personal belongings is not permitted after the individual leaves the building. The Senior Center is not responsible for lost items. Items will be held for a period of one month and then be considered abandoned property and may be disposed of accordingly.

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7. Individuals entering the Senior Center shall not attempt to make any adjustments to the thermostat controls or the sound system. Such individuals will be financially liable for any damage caused from tampering with these instruments.
8. Open flames are prohibited. Open flames may include, but are not limited to, candles or hurricane glass lamps.
9. Somers Senior Center operates in accordance with the Town of Somers Building Usage Policy with regards to outside entities utilizing the building and property.
10. Only for their own consumption at that time, individuals are permitted to bring food and beverages into the senior center and on the property. Storage of personal food and beverages at the Somers Senior Center is not permitted after the individual leaves the building.
11. Individuals requiring mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, etc. are responsible for proper use and placement of such equipment within the building/on the property and for ensuring equipment does not create a safety hazard for others.
12. Senior Center staff cannot assist or act in the capacity of an aide to individuals who are unable to ambulate independently. If you find that you are experiencing difficulty ambulating independently and require extra assistance via a friend, family member, or aide, the Somers Senior Center encourages you to bring your companion with you when you attend activities and events so that you may continue to enjoy all that the Senior Center has to offer.
13. Any individual or organization desiring to use any Senior Center equipment (located in the kitchen or elsewhere in the building) must obtain prior approval from the Senior Center Supervisor. When using such equipment, such individuals/organizations assume full responsibility for knowing the proper use of such equipment. If such equipment is not properly used and any damage is done to such equipment or the building and/or any injuries sustained by themselves or anyone else present, this person or organization is fully responsible and liable for such damage and/or injuries. Under these circumstances, the Senior Center is not responsible or liable for damage or injuries sustained.
14. Individuals participating in any exercise programs/classes held at the Senior Center do so at their own risk. Those individuals who participate in any exercise classes (chair aerobics, yoga, etc.) assume full responsibility for their own safety and whether their own personal health and medical conditions permit performing such exercises. It is recommended that participants consult with their physician before beginning any new exercise routine.

TRANSPORTATION

Please refer to the Town of Somers Dial-A-Ride Passenger Handbook.

MEALS ON WHEELS

The Somers Meals on Wheels (MOW) program is intended to provide meals to residents 18 years and older who are homebound and unable to meet basic nutritional needs either temporarily or long term and have no other reliable means of obtaining or preparing meals.

The Somers MOW program fulfills a unique need of the elderly and/or disabled who are homebound due to acute or chronic illness or handicap. It provides nutritious meals for the purpose of assisting individuals in maintaining and/or improving their health status as well as delaying and/or preventing institutionalization. It is not intended to foster isolation or to develop unnecessary dependence upon the service.

Being homebound encompasses the inability to leave home, and leaving home requires a considerable and taxing effort. Homebound eligibility for MOW means:

1. Someone just returning from a hospital stay involving surgery or injury and has weakness and pain. Service would be limited to three weeks and reassessed at the end of that time.
2. An individual with psychiatric illness that prevents him or her from leaving the home or in the event that it would be considered unsafe for the individual to leave the home unattended (even if there are no physical limitations).
3. An individual with chronic illness.

Occasional absences from the home such as medical appointments, religious services, barber/hairdresser or other infrequent or unique events would not negate a person's homebound status.

Exceptions to the above criteria could be made at the discretion of the Director of Human Services.

The Somers MOW program has been operating continuously for many years independent of support from federal, state, or local government funds. The program provides meals 52 weeks a year for our community's frail, elderly, and those with physical and mental limitations, many of whom live alone.

The program was, for many years, completely run by volunteers, but now is coordinated by the Town of Somers Human Services Department. Volunteers deliver the meals.

The cost of meals is set on a sliding scale. If an individual has a financial need, there is a MOW fund to assist, which is totally supported by donations.

The Somers MOW program not only provides proper nutrition, but also safety checks while reducing isolation.

FAX & COPY SERVICES

Senior Center staff will send faxes on behalf of registered Senior Center participants free of charge up to two times each day. Receiving faxes on behalf of Senior Center participants is not permitted. Senior Center staff will make copies on behalf of registered participants. There is no charge for up to three copies per day. More than three copies per day will be at a charge of 15 cents per black and white copy and 50 cents per color copy. There is a limit of 20 copies per day.