

BAR NONE

**PRISON
RIDESHARE
HANDBOOK**



What is Bar None?

Bar None is an abolitionist prisoner solidarity group based out of Treaty 1 territory, on the land of Anishinaabeg (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We view our commitment to prison abolition as related to the dismantling of the ongoing occupation and theft of these lands.

The prison rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison. It was created in the fall of 2015 as a response to the lack of affordable, public transportation for people to visit their loved ones in southern Manitoba's prisons.

Why are rides to prisons important?

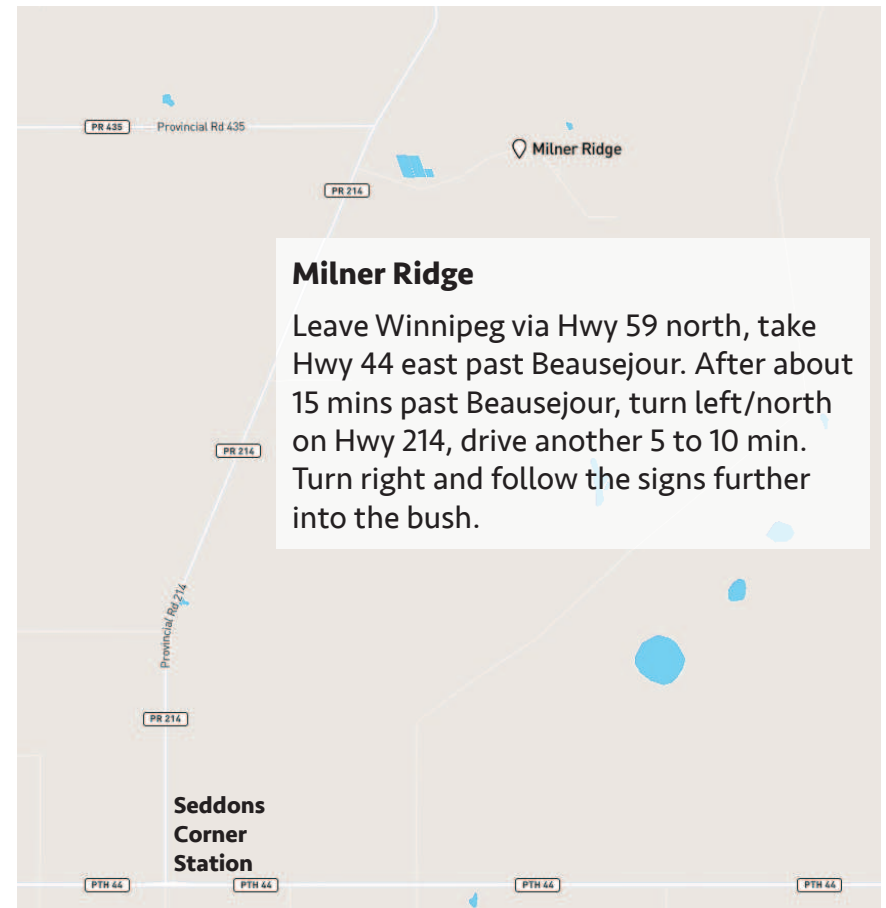
Most of Manitoba's prisons are outside the cities where the majority of imprisoned people are from. There are no busses to take people to prisons, and this often means people on the inside don't get visited, and people on the outside don't get to visit if they don't have regular access to a car.

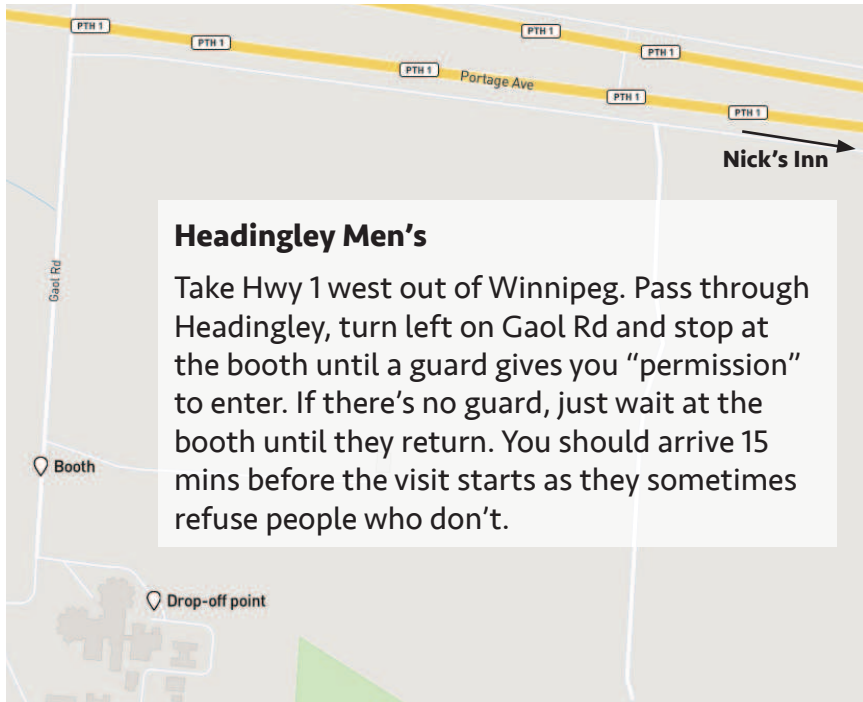
Connecting people with rides is one way to work against the damage incarceration does to the relationships that sustain communities. We see this work as part of our commitment to the principles of prison abolition.

Prison abolition? What's that all about?

Prisons haven't been around forever, and we don't think they will be. The current justice system is failing. Yet most people still think of prison as the one and only way to deal with crime, especially violent crime. This lack of imagination afflicts even the most progressive segments of society.

Prisons don't work, [they don't actually reduce crime](#). [They are racist](#): in western Canada, prisons and policing were [developed to target Indigenous peoples](#). In 2014, [77% of peo-](#)





ple imprisoned in Manitoba were Indigenous (and that number is rising) whereas Indigenous peoples make up 17% of the population. Prisons are classist because they target poor people more than rich people. They are cruel and ineffective because they take people away from families and communities, which isolates prisoners rather than holding people accountable for the harms they may have caused. This causes lasting harm to imprisoned people and their communities.

Reformers try to make prisons more sensitive to the needs of different groups. Unfortunately evidence shows that this often leads to more people imprisoned and more families divided. At the same time, the move to free some prisoners—such as those imprisoned for minor offenses—reinforces the idea that other people truly belong in prison. Prison abolition means we need to stop thinking that way, and start thinking about what might work better. There are more humane and effective forms of justice than prisons and we need to start practicing them.

If you're reading this in print and want to read our sources, please ask us to email you the digital version or find it at barnonewpg.org/rideshare.



Ride logistics

Respect

As an abolitionist group we understand that prisons are the problem, not the people imprisoned in them. To this end we want to work against racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression. We expect respect between everyone involved, in all directions (between drivers, passengers, and coordinators), within this project.

We want people to feel comfortable and safe during rides. This can mean different things to different people. We encourage people to talk to each other if any issues arise during the ride. We recognize this can feel difficult because of a power imbalance between drivers and passengers. We also encourage people to bring up any issues with the coordinator.

Confidentiality

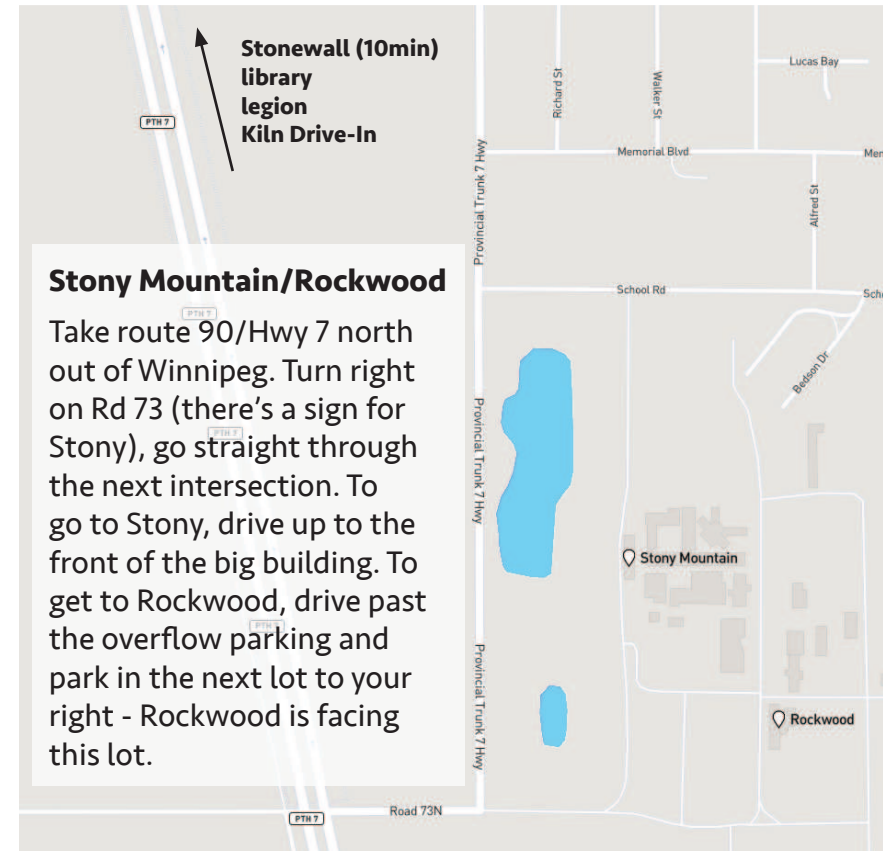
We've developed this statement because some riders have expressed that this is something that is important to them. People taking rides aren't consenting to have information or stories shared, however we recognize that friendships can develop out of these rides and that they will be negotiated on their own terms.

While we don't want to stigmatize imprisonment, as this is something we identify as an oppressive dynamic in society, and something we're actively trying to work against, we also acknowledge that this information can have effects on people's housing and employment situations.

If you have confidentiality concerns you're encouraged to talk about it with each other or the coordinator.

About the institutions

Following are directions to some of the institutions in Manitoba, instructions on their particularities, and ideas of where to go nearby as someone is visiting.



About volunteering

We are a secular organization.

We are unable to accept volunteers who are currently or prospectively prison guards, border guards, police officers or otherwise employed in law enforcement.

We are always looking for drivers, people with vehicles they are willing to lend, and donations for gas money. These rides are free of charge to passengers, and we reimburse drivers for gas money.

Organizer meetings and email list

We are eager to welcome new organizers and we strive to make our meetings as accessible as possible. Food and coffee is served at all meetings, and we are happy to provide bus tickets or cab fare to and from the meeting. On-site child minding is available if requested in advance (ideally with a week's notice). Please email barnone.wpg@gmail.com to make arrangements.

If you're interested in attending meetings, please contact barnone.wpg@gmail.com for information about when and where our next meeting is.

Coordinators

The rideshare coordinator receives and records ride requests, connects drivers to riders, and facilitates reimbursements. They can also attend Bar None's monthly meetings and help organize the project. Anyone is welcome to come to these.

Riders

Get clearance to visit the prison. If you'd like assistance with this process, we can help you through it.

Book a visit with the prison, then call or email the coordinator at [204-599-8869](tel:204-599-8869) or barnone.wpg@gmail.com. The earlier you request the ride, the easier it will be to find you a driver. They will send an email to our driver email list with the time, date, and prison being visited.

The coordinator will let you know if a driver volunteers and will give your contact information to the driver. The driver will be in touch with you before the visit to confirm pickup time and location.

If something comes up and you can't make your visit, let the driver and coordinator know.

Drivers

Respond to the email confirming you can drive.

The ride coordinator will let you know who you're picking up and where you're going. This will include a method of contact (probably phone, maybe email) for the rider.

Check in with the person you're driving at least 24 hours before the ride, but preferable earlier, to confirm when and where you'll be picking them up, number of riders, if you need a carseat (we can provide this if it's needed), or if there are any other details either of you need (sensitivities to scents or pets or what have you).

Driver reimbursements

Check your odometer before you go; you will need to give us the distance for the trip to be reimbursed for gas.

There have been many questions about what kilometres drivers can claim for their trip, or if they can drive back into the city. We have no hard rules about this either way. We want to make it possible for people to volunteer when they can, and recognize that time and gas money are valuable resources that some people have more of than others. It is totally fair to volunteer to drive and need to claim the entirety of your trip and/or use the time during a three-hour visit for something else.

At the same time, we are a volunteer organization whose funding is unstable and want to reimburse drivers based on need. If you are in a position to only count the trip to and from the prison, we ask that you consider doing so to keep the availability of rides open for other visits. Drivers know their own situation best and the call is up to them, we're not checking google maps and no one will question it; so claim it if you need to without feeling guilty.

If you get coffee/food for yourself or the rider, keep your receipts. You'll need to hand them in to be reimbursed - up to \$15 per person per ride.

When you drop your rider off at the institution, confirm when the visit will be over. If you can, exchange cell phone numbers in case they need to be picked up sooner.

Check your odometer again when you're done and fill out the ride report at rideshare.barnonewpg.org. The coordinator may get in touch to check in with you about how it went.

Mileage is paid out at a variable rate based on the city's current average gas price and whether the institution is closer to Winnipeg. If the average gas price is \$1.00/L, a ride to Stony Mountain (considered closer to Winnipeg) would be reimbursed at 25¢/km and a ride to Milner Ridge (farther)

would be reimbursed at 20¢/km. For an average gas price of \$1.30/L, rates would be 30¢/km and 25¢/km. You can check the recent gas prices and their derived rates at rideshare.barnonewpg.org/gas-prices

Reimbursements are paid out at the end of the month unless otherwise requested. If you need gas money in advance of the ride, let the coordinator know. Please fill out your report as soon as possible; if a ride goes three months without being reported on, the gas money will be considered a donation.

If you'd like to "shadow" a ride before doing one by yourself, let the coordinator know and they can arrange one.

If you forget to check your odometer, you can use google maps to determine the distance.

We ask that drivers try to commit to giving a minimum of 1 ride every two months. This is a way of making our capacity more predictable for us and for the people looking for rides.

