

Dial-A-Ride Paratransit Service Rider's Guide



**Columbus Consolidated Government /
METRA Transit System**

**(706) 225-4596
814 Linwood Blvd
Columbus, GA 31901**

Effective: July 1, 2026

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Dear Customer

METRA Transit System is committed to providing our customers with safe, reliable, dependable, and cost-effective transit services with a professional team of employees, dedicated to our customers' needs and committed to excellence.

METRA's ADA paratransit service, "Dial-A-Ride," provides origin-to-destination public transportation to eligible persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route bus for some or all trips. Each year, METRA provides over 35,000 trips on its Dial-A-Ride service. METRA's Dial-A-Ride service is provided in accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

METRA works closely with the community to seek ways to further improve its programs and services. We are most successful when METRA and its customers work together as partners.

Here is how you can help us achieve our mission:

- Whenever possible, please take advantage of the reduced fare offered to Dial-A-Ride customers who use our fixed-route bus service (**only \$0.65**).
- Please be ready to board the bus at your scheduled pickup time.
- Please cancel any trip you no longer need at least one (1) hour before your scheduled pickup time.

At METRA, every customer is important. Please help us provide the best service possible by following these guidelines. We look forward to serving you!

Sincerely,



Everett Fleming, Interim Director
Department of Transportation/METRA

What is Dial-A-Ride?

Dial-A-Ride is an ADA complementary paratransit service of the Columbus Metropolitan Transportation System/ METRA. Dial-A-Ride provides origin-to-destination service for eligible persons with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route bus service, in accordance with the DOT ADA regulations, also known as ADA paratransit service.

Who is eligible for this service?

METRA's Dial-A-Ride services are available to customers who apply for and are determined to be ADA paratransit eligible. Eligibility is determined upon an individual's ability to:

- Board, ride or disembark from a fixed route bus.
- Travel to or from METRA bus stops.
- Must be at least 12 years of age, if not accompanied by an adult. Children below 12 using

Dial-A-Ride must be accompanied by an adult. Eligibility is not based on age, economic condition, or inability to drive an automobile. Having a medical condition or a disability will not automatically qualify applicants for an ADA paratransit eligibility.

What areas are served?

ADA Service Area – 3/4 of a mile around METRA's ten (10) fixed routes.

Consistent with the DOT ADA regulations, Dial-A-Ride service is available to all eligible riders for travel anywhere within 3/4 of a mile of METRA's ten (10) fixed bus routes at the same time as METRA bus service operates.

Note: All ADA trips must begin and end in the ADA service area.

Premium Service Area – Up to 1.5 miles around METRA’s ten (10) fixed routes.

METRA offers premium Dial-A-Ride service to eligible riders to certain places outside the ADA service area. Trips that begin or end in the premium service area are considered premium. Under the ADA, METRA must meet its obligations within the ADA service area. METRA cannot provide premium service if ADA service has constraints on capacity. Accordingly, premium service operates under different policies from ADA service. For more information, see “How do you Reserve Trips?”

METRA may not service locations deemed unsafe for Dial-A-Ride bus operation.

Note: Please see pages 11 and 12 for a map of METRA’s service area, including the ADA and Premium service areas.

What are the Dial-A-Ride service hours?

Dial-A-Ride service operates when fixed-route bus service operates:

- Monday through Saturday: 4:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. with last pick-ups at 7:30 p.m.
- Holidays: same as METRA fixed-route service.

How do you apply for Dial-A-Ride?

Those wishing to apply should call METRA at **(706) 225-4596** between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. Staff will provide applicants with the forms and instructions by mail. Applicants may download these materials by visiting:

www.columbusga.gov/metra/Riding-METRA/Dial-A-Ride.

You can also apply for eligibility online at:

<https://my.sparelabs.com/metra>

Application materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

Applicants must:

Explain the reasons they cannot use METRA fixed-route bus service and must obtain medical verification of any functional disabilities. Upon receipt of the completed application, METRA will review to determine if an in-person interview is needed. Applicants who may qualify will be contacted by METRA for an in-person interview. Riders may be determined unconditionally eligible (no trip conditions), conditionally eligible (able to use fixed-route service for some trips under certain conditions, or not eligible.

METRA grants eligibility for three (3) years at a time unless the disability is temporary (please see “Temporary Disabilities” for more information). Eligible riders must recertify near the end of their eligibility. Riders with permanent disabilities are asked to update their contact information but do not need to attend a recertification interview.

Application response timeline

Applicants will be notified by METRA of their Dial-A-Ride eligibility status within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receipt of a completed application.

Appeals Process

Individuals who are not eligible for paratransit services or are otherwise unsatisfied with the ADA Coordinators assessment and/or decision may submit a written appeal within 60 business days of the denial (excluding weekends and holidays when METRA is not in service, such as Memorial Day). Written appeals are immediately forwarded to METRA’s Transit Director. The Director will make the final eligibility determination or decision and

notify the applicant and/or caretaker within 30 calendar days. For questions regarding eligibility, please call METRA Dial-A-Ride at **(706) 225-4596**.

How do you apply for visitor eligibility?

The ADA regulations permit eligible individuals that reside outside of the Columbus area to obtain visitor eligibility for up to 21 calendar days in a 365-day period. Visitors needing more than 21 calendar days of Dial-A-Ride service must apply for eligibility through METRA.

Individuals certified by another transit agency may present their local credentials. Individuals without certification but whose disability is apparent may request visitor status. METRA asks those without certification whose disability is not apparent to provide documentation of their disability. For additional information, please contact METRA Dial-A-Ride Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Dial-A-Ride ID Cards

METRA provides free identification cards to eligible riders. Replacement ID cards are subject to the fees below. ID cards are made by appointment Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Customers must come to the METRA Administration Building to have their ID cards made.

The Administration Building is located on the northern part of the METRA campus at 814 Linwood Blvd., Columbus, GA (on the corner of Linwood Blvd. and 9th Ave. Across the street from Linwood Cemetery).

- Initial ID card: no charge
- First replacement: \$5
- Additional replacements: \$10 each

The Dial-A-Ride ID is proof of eligibility for using complementary paratransit as a visitor in other communities.



How do you reserve trips on Dial-A-Ride?

To reserve a trip please call **(706) 225-4596** Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, you must leave a voice message. All ADA trip messages received on Saturday and Sunday will be honored on the next business day, Monday (provided that there is no holiday).

ADA Trips – within 3/4 mile of METRA’s ten (10) fixed bus routes.

METRA accepts ADA trip requests up to fourteen (14) days in advance but no less than the day prior to travel. METRA does not provide same-day service.

Premium Service Area Trips – Up to 1.5 miles of METRA’s ten (10) fixed bus routes.

Any trip with at least one address in the premium service zone is a premium trip. Premium service is a next-day service and trip times are subject to available capacity. Reservations must be made as follows:

Traveling Tuesdays through Saturdays: Call between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. one day before your trip.

Travelling on Mondays or following holidays: Call between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. two or three days before your trip if the holiday falls on a Monday.

As a reminder, METRA cannot provide premium service if ADA service has constraints on capacity.

What information will you provide when scheduling a trip?

When reserving Dial-A-Ride trips, you should be prepared to provide the following information:

- Full name and home address.
- Date of travel.
- Time of appointment (if applicable) or requested drop-off time.
- Requested pickup time (if no appointment). Note: you may request a pickup time or a drop-off time but not both.
- Exact addresses of pickup and drop-off locations.
- If returning, time of return pickup.
- Whether you are traveling with a companion or personal care attendant (PCA).
- Whether you are traveling with a service animal.
- Which mobility devices you will use.
- Other information needed to accommodate your trip needs, including assistance required to board the vehicle.

How does METRA negotiate pickup times?

For ADA Service:

Under the ADA, METRA may negotiate trip requests up to one hour before or after your trip request except for instances when you have specific constraints (e.g., cannot leave before the end of your workday).

For Premium Service:

Premium service is offered on a space-available basis. This means that METRA may not be able to offer you the pickup time you request if ADA service is constrained. METRA may offer you a time when space is available or place your name on a waiting list. If your trip is placed on a waiting list, we will call you with available trip options on the day of travel.

Please note reservationists are required to ask for your complete information and will confirm the details to ensure that everything is correct.

Standing Reservations

Riders traveling to and from the same destination at the same time, and on the same day of the week make a standing reservation. This means that it will not be necessary to call back and reserve each trip individually.

You may change your destination or pickup address on a standing reservation for a minimum of two (2) weeks. All changes to standing reservations must be made at least one (1) day prior to the scheduled date. Same day changes cannot be accommodated.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), total standing reservations may not exceed fifty percent (50%) of space available at any time that service capacity is constrained. Please note that a subscription service is not mandated by 49 CFR §37.133.

How do you cancel a reservation?

To cancel your trip, please call **(706) 225-4596** at least one hour before your scheduled pickup time. If calling outside of our office hours, please call **(706) 225-4673**.



Procedures for riding Dial-A-Ride

When using Dial-A-Ride, the following procedures apply:

- Scheduled pick-up times will be based on appointment times. All scheduled trips will be made up to an hour before or after your requested time.
- Please allow fifteen (15) minutes from your scheduled pickup time for the bus to arrive.
- When the bus reaches your pickup address, the horn will be blown to acknowledge arrival. Please meet the driver as soon as possible. Note: the bus operator must wait five (5) minutes for riders to board.
- Riders may not alter the pick-up and drop-off addresses from the addresses provided when reserving the trip.

- Riders must pay the fare upon boarding with correct change or use of a fare card.
- Riders who must be met by a responsible person will not be permitted to exit the vehicle until that individual arrives to meet them. METRA will wait no more than five (5) minutes.

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

Riders who travel with PCAs must inform METRA during reservations calls. The PCA rides for free.

Riders under the age of twelve (12) must be accompanied by an adult.

Companions

Riders must inform METRA they wish to travel with a companion when reserving a trip. Riders may travel with one companion for any trips they reserve. Riders may request to travel with additional companions if METRA determines that space is available. Each companion must pay the regular Dial-A-Ride fare.

Transporting Packages

Each rider is allowed up to six (6) grocery bags when traveling on Dial-A-Ride. Riders are responsible for their bags and packages.

Service Animals

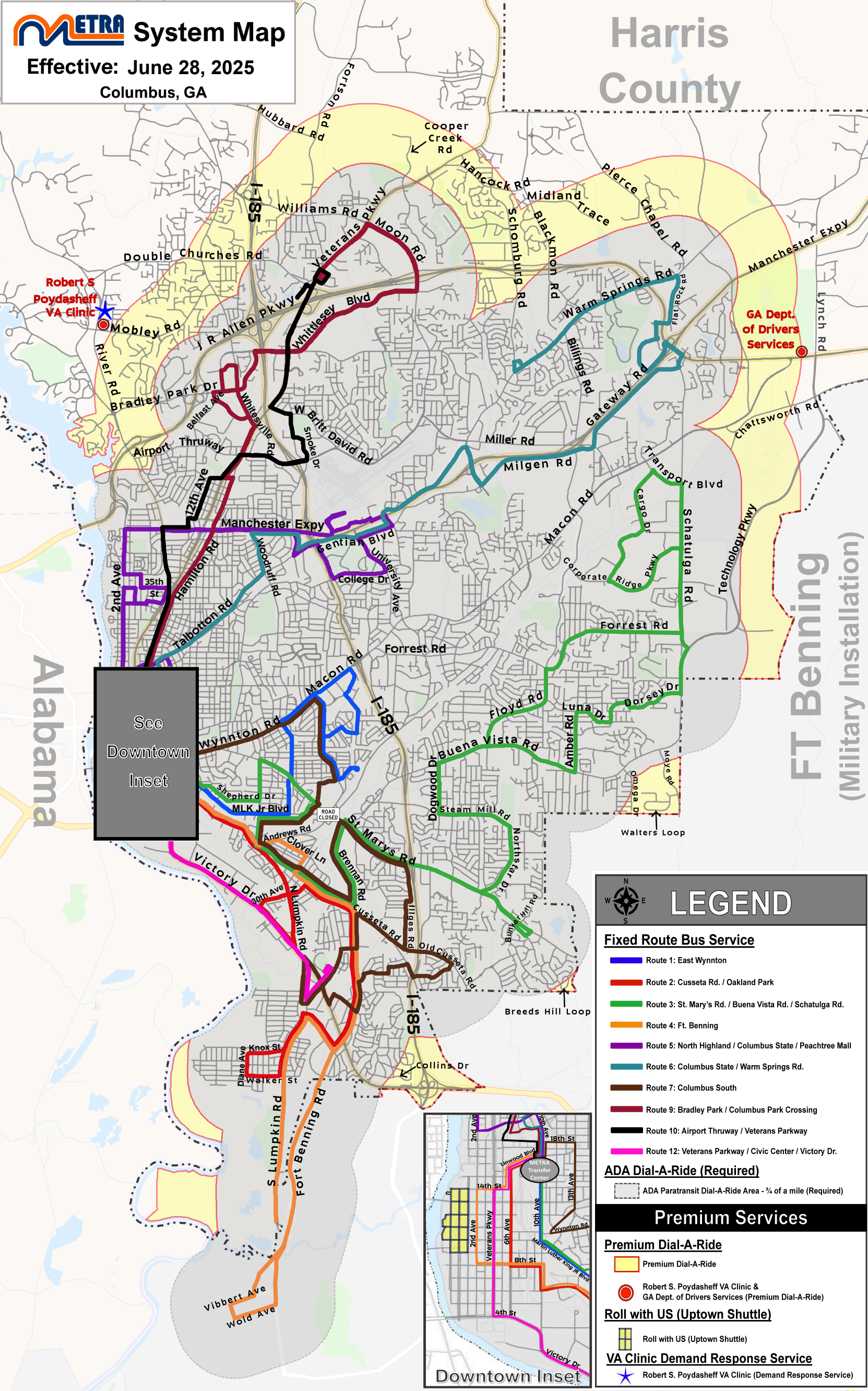
A service animal is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting

METRA System Map

Effective: June 28, 2025

Columbus, GA

Harris County



See
Downtown
Inset

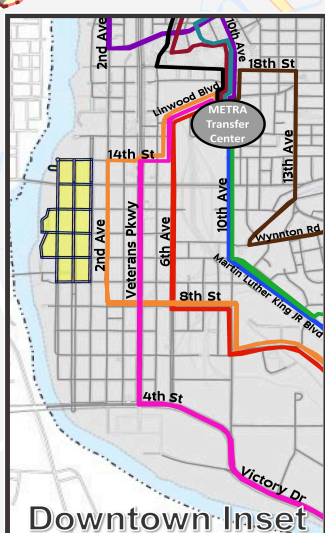
FT Benning
(Military Installation)

LEGEND

- Fixed Route Bus Service**
- █ Route 1: East Wynnton
 - █ Route 2: Cusseta Rd. / Oakland Park
 - █ Route 3: St. Mary's Rd. / Buena Vista Rd. / Schatulga Rd.
 - █ Route 4: Ft. Benning
 - █ Route 5: North Highland / Columbus State / Peachtree Mall
 - █ Route 6: Columbus State / Warm Springs Rd.
 - █ Route 7: Columbus South
 - █ Route 9: Bradley Park / Columbus Park Crossing
 - █ Route 10: Airport Thruway / Veterans Parkway
 - █ Route 12: Veterans Parkway / Civic Center / Victory Dr.
- ADA Dial-A-Ride (Required)**
- ADA Paratransit Dial-A-Ride Area - 3/4 of a mile (Required)

Premium Services

- Premium Dial-A-Ride**
- Premium Dial-A-Ride
 - Robert S. Poydasheff VA Clinic & GA Dept. of Drivers Services (Premium Dial-A-Ride)
- Roll with US (Uptown Shuttle)**
- Roll with US (Uptown Shuttle)
- VA Clinic Demand Response Service**
- ★ Robert S. Poydasheff VA Clinic (Demand Response Service)



individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

Riders traveling with service animals meeting this definition are subject to the following conditions:

- Service animals must remain on a leash or harness except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with the animal's ability to perform.
- Service animals must remain under their owner's control and not pose a direct threat to others.
- Service animals must not block the aisle.

Dial-A-Ride Fares

- The one-way fare for riders and companions is \$2.50.
- PCAs do not pay a fare but riders traveling with PCAs must inform METRA they are traveling with a PCA when reserving a trip.
- Payment is by cash (exact amount) or fare card.
- Fare cards may be purchased with credit or debit cards.
- METRA cannot replace lost, stolen, or unused cards.
- Fares are subject to change.



How to Board with a Mobility Aid Device

A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. Dial-A-Ride vehicles have a weight capacity of 1,000 pounds. The combined weight of the wheelchair and passenger cannot exceed this limit.

For safety and comfort while boarding and traveling with a mobility device, METRA asks customers to follow all procedures when boarding.

While METRA makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate riders, if a mobility device poses a safety hazard, METRA may not be able to transport the rider.

General Policy Statement on No-Shows and Late Cancellations

METRA understands that because Dial-A-Ride requires trips to be scheduled in advance, customers may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. METRA also understands that customers may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains METRA's no-show policy.

Definitions: No-Show, Pickup Window, and Late Cancellation

No-show – a no-show occurs when a customer fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window and the driver waits at least 5 minutes.

Pickup Window – The pickup window is from 15 minutes before the scheduled pickup time to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time (30-minute window). Customers must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pickup window. The driver will wait for a maximum of 5 minutes within the pickup window for the customer to appear.

Late Cancellation – A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made less than 1 hour before the scheduled pickup time or as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window.

Definitions: No-Show, Pickup Window, and Late Cancellation

METRA does not count as no-shows or late cancellations any missed trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error.
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location.
- Bus operators arriving and departing before the pickup window begins.
- Bus operators arriving late (after the end of the pickup window).
- Bus operators arriving within the pickup window but departing without waiting the required 5 minutes.

METRA does not count no-shows or late cancellations when situations are beyond a customer's control and prevent the customer from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

- Medical emergency.
- Family emergency.
- Sudden illness or change in condition.
- Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice.

Notice: Customers should contact Dial-A-Ride (**706-225-4596**) *or* METRA's ADA Coordinator (**706-225-4585**), Mon. – Fri. from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, when experiencing no-shows or late cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control. Customers may also call the METRA Transfer

Center (706-225-4673), Mon. – Fri. from 4:30 AM –8:00 AM and from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM. On Saturdays, Customers can call the METRA Transfer Center from 4:30 AM – 6:30 PM.

Exceptions for Disability-Related Issues

Missed trips or cancellations due to a passenger's disability will not be counted as no-shows or late cancellations. For example, exceptions will be made for passengers who are scheduling trips and have documented cognitive disabilities (including, but not limited to, Alzheimer's or dementia) who miss trips and cancellations due to disorientation, memory issues, or confusion. METRA's ADA Coordinator will consider a passenger's documented disabilities and circumstances before making a no-show or late cancellation determination. Caregivers or guardians scheduling trips for a disabled passenger are responsible for adhering to the No-Show and Late Cancellation policy.

Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-shows

When a customer is a no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the customer specifically cancels the trips. To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, customers are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day.

Suspension Policies for a Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-shows and Late Cancellations

METRA reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a customer's account. Each verified no-show or late cancellation consistent with the above definitions counts as 1 penalty point.

Customers will be subject to suspension only after they have met **all three of the following conditions:**

1.) Accumulate 3 penalty points in one calendar month.

Example: If a Dial-A-Ride customer has two no-shows and one late cancellation, then this would equal 3 penalty points, 1 point for each no-show and cancellation.

(Methodology: The threshold of 3 penalty points per calendar month was established congruent with a "three-strikes" policy where customers are warned at least twice for a no show or late cancelation).

2.) Have booked at least 6 trips that same calendar month.

*Example: A Dial-A-Ride customer must book at least 6 trips within a calendar month to meet this condition. If, for example, a customer books 4 trips within a calendar month and no-shows or late cancels for 3 of those trips, then they would ***not*** be eligible for suspension because they have not met the condition of booking at least 6 trips.*

(Methodology: The threshold of 6 trips per calendar month was established by averaging the number of trips per calendar month for the average Dial-A-Ride customer).

3.) Have "no-showed" or "late cancelled" at least 16 percent of those trips for that same calendar month. A customer will be subject to suspension only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of penalty points are reached during the calendar month.

Example: If a Dial-A-Ride customer has booked a total of 10 trips in one calendar month and 7 of those trips were no-shows, resulting in an accumulation of 7 points, then that would mean that 70 percent of that customer's trips that calendar month were no shows, meeting the percentage threshold for this condition.

(Methodology: The threshold of 16 percent was established by averaging the monthly percentage of "no show" trips per month which was found to be 8 percent. This percentage was then doubled to 16 percent which is consistent with methodology used in section 9.12.2 on page 9-28 of the FTA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Guidance -- Circular 4710.1).

Consistent with the criteria listed in this section of the policy above, METRA will notify customers by telephone if they are at risk of suspension due to this policy. All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows or late cancellations, and how to appeal suspensions will be provided to the customer.

Suspensions begin on Mondays. The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning letter but no suspension. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: 7-calender day suspension.
- Third violation: 14-calendar day suspension.
- Fourth violation: 28-calender day suspension.
- Fifth and subsequent violations: 30-calender day suspension.

Notice: Suspensions are based on calendar days, not service days. While not in service on Sundays and holidays, METRA shall count these days towards a suspension.

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations

Customers wishing to dispute a specific no-show or late cancellation should contact Dial-A-Ride at 706-225-4596 or the ADA Coordinator at 706-225-4585, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to explain their circumstances and request the removal of a no-show or late cancellation.

Disputes may also be received through the following methods:

For written disputes, please send to:
METRA Transit System Dial-A-Ride
P.O. Box 1340
Columbus, GA 31902

For emailed disputes, please send to:
metrainfo@columbusga.org

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

Customers wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in writing by letter or via email. Customers must submit written appeal requests within **60 business days of receiving suspension letters**.

For written appeals, please send to:
METRA Transit System Dial-A-Ride
P.O. Box 1340
Columbus, GA 31902

For emailed appeals, please send to:
metrainfo@columbusga.org

METRA's Process for Notifying Customers

Customers will receive a warning letter from METRA when a no-show or late cancellation occurs. METRA's ADA Coordinator will notify customers by telephone and written letter if they are at risk of suspension due to this policy. All suspension notices will be mailed to the customer and will include a copy of this policy.

Requests for reasonable modification

Requests for reasonable modifications for riders with disabilities may be made by anyone who believes that an existing policy, procedure, or practice needs to be modified to ensure that the transportation services provided by METRA Transit System are accessible to persons with disabilities that are consistent with the US DOT's Reasonable Modifications of Policies and Practices Final Rule and 49 CFR §37.133. See METRA's website for additional information.

Dial-A-Ride Rules of Rider Conduct

- No eating, drinking, smoking, or tobacco use while on the vehicle. Exceptions for eating and drinking are made under reasonable modification for persons with disabilities.
- No drinking of alcoholic beverages or riding under the influence of intoxicating substances while riding on METRA vehicles.
- Do not operate or tamper with equipment on the vehicle. This includes operating the vehicle's ramp and tampering with mobility securement devices.

- Any riders causing disturbances with other riders, using profane language, and/or committing any other violation may be temporarily suspended.
- To ensure the safety of all customers, items that are a safety hazard are prohibited. This includes having excessively large items and having too many items.
- Engaging in violent behavior against and/or physical or verbally threatening a Dial-A-Ride operator or fellow rider is prohibited.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment is prohibited.
- Service animals are not allowed to occupy a seat on the bus.

METRA reserves the right to refuse to provide service to individuals who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct or represents a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

METRA's Nondiscrimination Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Columbus Consolidated Government/ METRA Transit System provides all of its services, including public transit services, without regard to disability.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against by METRA Transit System based on your disability, you may file a complaint with METRA and/or the FTA Office of Civil Rights.

METRA's complaint procedures are described on the METRA webpage.

You may also call METRA at (706) 225-4596 and request that a form be mailed to you.

Future Policy Revisions

The Columbus Consolidated Government/METRA Transit System reserves the right to revise current policies and implement new policies.

Contact Information

Dial-A-Ride: **(706) 225-4596**

Fax: **(706) 225-4429**

Website: www.columbusga.gov/Metra/

Georgia Relay for Hearing Impaired: **711**

Transfer Center: **(706) 225-4673**

ADA Complaint

- The City of Columbus/METRA operates its program and services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and associated laws, ordinances and regulations which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.
- If customers feel that they are discriminated against by METRA based on their disability, then they may file a complaint with METRA. For more information, please call (706) 225-4596 or visit our website at <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/Civil-Rights/ADA>
- Complaints may also be filed at any time with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by visiting their website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-andguidance/civil-rights-ada/fta-civil-rights-complaint-form> and following the instructions provided.

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI

The Columbus Consolidated Government –
Department of Transportation/METRA

- The City of Columbus/METRA operates its program and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the City of Columbus/METRA.
- For more information on the City of Columbus/METRA's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact (706) 225-4581, or mail completed forms to: METRA: Attn: Title VI; PO Box 1340; Columbus, GA 31901. For more information, visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/metra/>
- A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration at any time by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- If information is needed in another language, contact (706) 225-4581
 - Si se necesita informacion en otro idioma, llame (706) 225-4581
 - Si l'information est necessaire dans une autre langue, contactez (706) 225-4581