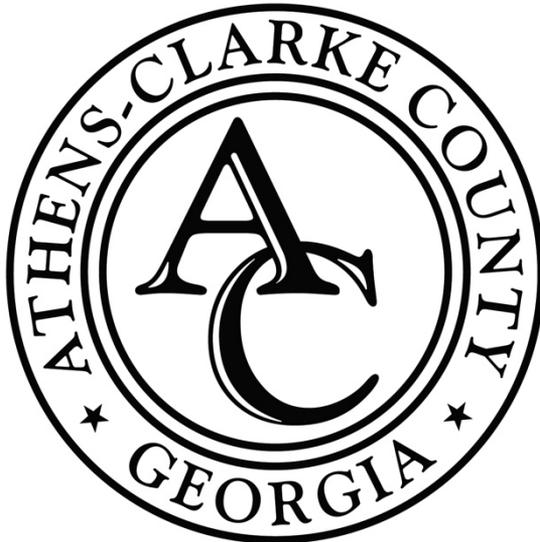


The Lift



TRANSIT

Rider's Guide

Paratransit Services

Accessible formats are available upon request by contacting:
Patricia Hale at Pat.Hale@accgov.com 706-613-3913

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department
325 Pound Street
Athens, Georgia 30601
accgov.com/transit
(706) 613-3435

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Frequently Used Numbers

Police: 911 _____

Fire: 911 _____

Ambulance: 911 _____

Notes:

I. Welcome to The Lift Paratransit Services

The Lift is a complementary ADA paratransit service provided for individuals who, due to their disability, are unable to use the fixed-route bus service. This does not include disabilities that only make the use of fixed-route transit service difficult, or inconvenient. In comparison to the regular fixed-route service The Lift provides; shared rides, curb-to-curb pickup from origin to destination within the established service area.

The LIFT will provide reasonable modifications for passengers that need assistance beyond the curb, during the hours of service in accordance to FTA 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37.

Eligibility

The Lift provides rides for people who are certified as eligible for paratransit service under the rules of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Eligibility for The Lift is open to persons in the following three categories:

1. Persons unable to navigate the fixed-route system.
2. Persons who require a lift-equipped bus when the fixed route service does not provide accessibility.
3. Person's whose disability makes it impossible for them to travel to or from the nearest bus stop.

If you believe you have a physical or mental disability (including mobility or cognitive impairments), that prevents you from independently using lift-equipped accessible fixed-route bus service, write or call for an application:

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department
325 Pound Street
Athens, Georgia 30601
(706) 613-3435

Persons requiring assistance completing the application, may contact the Athens-Clarke County Transit Department for further assistance.

The Eligibility Coordinator will arrange a face-to-face interview for applicants within 21 days of receiving an application. Some individuals may be asked to undergo a functional assessment to verify mobility limitations; It may be determined, based on your abilities, that you are eligible for some trips but not for others; It may be determined that you are capable of using the lift-equipped fixed route bus service. All application information is kept confidential.

If you need transportation to attend the interview, The Lift will pick you up and return you to your point of origin free of charge.

II. Service Areas and Hours

The Lift operates during the same days and hours as the regular fixed route service.

Weekdays: 5:45 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Saturday: 7:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Sunday: 7:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.

The Lift does not operate on the following Holidays:

New Year's Day

Labor Day

Martin Luther King Day

Thanksgiving Day

Memorial Day

Christmas Day

Independence Day

The service area includes corridors that are within 1 mile of the fixed bus route.

III. Scheduling a Ride

You must call to make a reservation. You can arrange a trip up to 5:00 p.m. the day before you travel.

Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis.

When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- Your first and last name
- Date when you want to travel

- Pick-up address: number, street, apartment number, city, zip code
- Your requested pickup or drop off time
- Your requested return time if you want a round trip
- Where you want to go: number, street, suite number, city, zip code
- If you will be bringing a service animal
- If you will be accompanied by a personal care attendant (PCA) and/or companion (including children)
- Any other information the driver should know to assist with your travel needs

Helpful Hints:

Trips may be scheduled up to 14 days in advance. Scheduling trips in advance increases the likelihood of receiving the requested trip time(s).

Please note: ADA guidelines allows for a revised pickup with that may be up to one hour before, or after your requested pickup time.

Trip demand is heaviest between 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. If possible please consider alternative times to schedule trips to ensure your request(s) can be accommodated.

You may leave a message on our voice mail and your call will be returned as soon as possible; or e-mail your

request to transitdispatch@accgov.com no later than 4:45PM.

Companions and Personal Care Assistants (PCAs)

As a certified rider needing assistance, the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) may ride with you at **no charge**.

As a certified rider you may arrange to bring one (1) fare-paying companion per scheduled trip. Additional companions may accompany you on a space-permitting basis, and is subject to approval by the ACCTD Scheduler.

The PCA and companion may both ride with you on the same trip. When making reservations for your ride notify the Scheduler if a companion and/or PCA will be traveling with you.

Cancellations

To cancel trips, call the reservation line and speak to the Scheduler. Cancellations can be left on the voicemail system. Trips must be cancelled no less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

Call (706) 613-3435 to cancel a ride.

No-Show – Definitions and Penalties

No Show Policy

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department is authorized by federal and state regulation to establish an administrative process to suspend, for a reasonable period of time, the paratransit/shared ride service of customers who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips, except where the trips are missed for reasons that are not under their control. This Policy implements the administration of "no shows."

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department will record each customer "no show" or "late cancellation" as a missed trip. Customers whose missed trips are excessive, as defined by this Policy, may be suspended for a reasonable period of time. This policy applies to both advance reservation and subscription trips. A "no show" that occurs due to an Athens-Clarke County Transit Department error does not count against the transit customer.

DEFINITIONS

- A "**no show**" occurs when the vehicle arrives at the pick-up location within the pick-up window, waits the required 5 minutes and the customer does not board the vehicle.
- A **late cancellation** occurs when a customer cancels a trip less than **one hour** before the scheduled pick-up window.

CANCELLING A TRIP

Customers are responsible for cancelling any trips they no longer need. To cancel a trip, customers must call either 706 -613-3435 at least one hour prior or cancel through the IVR system the night prior to their trip.

If a customer "no shows" their first trip of the day, for an ADA passenger, the subsequent trips will not be automatically cancelled.

EXCESSIVE MISSED TRIPS

If a rider repeatedly misses scheduled Lift Service Rides, he or she will be recommended for suspension. Missed rides or "No-shows" are compiled quarterly during these time periods: January–March, April–June, July–September and October–December.

After each quarter records are cleared. If a customer has four more or no-shows within a quarter, Riders will be issued a letter from ACCTD listing the days and the time in which the no shows occurred. ACCTD will review the percentage of missed rides occurring each quarter relative to total rides scheduled. For example, if between January and March a

rider has scheduled 16 trips and missed 8 s/he has a 50% cancellation rate. If the percentage of no-shows is 50% or greater, a one-week suspension will be scheduled. A 30 day minimum notice will be given prior to scheduled suspensions. All suspensions will be limited to one week.

No-shows for reasons that are beyond the customer's control will not be counted. Examples of excused no-shows include but are not limited to:

- Illness and/or hospitalization;
- Family or other emergencies;
- ACCTD staff error;
- Inclement weather such as ice and snow.

Subscription Service

If you travel to and from the same destination at the same time and day at least two times a week, you may request to use The Lift's subscription service. This service allows riders to make regular trips without telephoning in for reservations or to confirm rides. Subscription riders will need to call and cancel their ride. A change in time, origination, or destination may change your eligibility for the subscription ride service.

Under certain conditions, you may discontinue subscription service for a prearranged, specific period of time and may return to subscription service without penalty following the absence. Subscription service may be temporarily discontinued for reasons such as illness, vacation, or school break.

Subscription service is limited in accordance with the

Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that not more than 50% of the rides at any hour of any day may be subscription rides.

There may be a waiting list for subscription rides.

IV. Riding The Lift

Fares

All riders must pay a fare if fares are currently being charged for ACC Transit. Only a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) traveling with an ADA certified rider is carried free of charge. Fares for the Lift are twice the fare for the same trip on the fixed route bus. When a ride is scheduled, the dispatcher can tell you the exact amount of the one-way fare.

Your driver will not provide change for over-payment of fare; the exact cash fare is required. You also may purchase a 10-trip booklet at the Athens-Clarke County Transit Department - 325 Pound Street, Athens, GA 30601.

Pickup and Drop Off

You can expect to be picked up within a 30-minute “window” of your scheduled pick-up time. You should be ready to board the vehicle at the beginning of your

“Pickup Window”.



A paratransit vehicle arriving any time within the pickup window will wait up to 5 minutes for the passenger. It is important to remember that buses arriving within 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time are considered on time and within the time window. Should a vehicle arrive early (before the 30 minute pickup window), you are not required to board until 15 minutes before the scheduled time (at the beginning of the pickup window).

A pick-up is considered on-time if the operator arrives anytime within the thirty (30) minute window. Drivers are required to wait for five (5) minutes once they arrive at a location for a passenger. Drivers will depart after five (5) minutes if the customer is not present. Customers will not be marked a no-show if the vehicle arrives outside the thirty (30) minute window.

NOTE: You will not be considered a “no-show” if you refuse a ride that arrives later than the 30-minute window.

Boarding with a Mobility Device

All vehicles are equipped with passenger lifts that meet ADA specifications. Lifts will only accommodate three or more wheeled devices. Mobility devices that exceed these standards or described by FTA 49CFR Part 38 as legitimate safety concerns are mobility devices that block the aisle or interfere with safe evacuation of passengers during an emergency; or fail to fit into securement area.

- If you need a passenger lift to board a vehicle, the driver will assist you. All drivers are trained to operate the lift.
- If needed, you may also board the vehicle while standing on the lift.
- For your safety, please make sure your wheelchair or other mobility device is maintained in accordance to manufacturer's specifications.
- For Lift service, the wheeled device cannot exceed the following dimensions: 30 inches in width, 48 inches in length and the weight of the device, when occupied, does not exceed 800 pounds.
- ACC Transit Fixed-route buses can accommodate the same sized devices up to 1000 pounds when occupied.

Transporting Packages

The vehicle will be shared, riders should limit their parcels to one armload, or the equivalent of 2 grocery bags. Packages must be transported on your lap or under the seat. Drivers must adhere to a schedule and cannot assist with packages. For the safety of all riders, you may not transport explosives, acids, flammable liquids, or other hazardous materials.

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life-support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials and will fit in the paratransit vehicle.

Transporting Children

ADA-eligible children must pay the full fare. Children traveling as companions must pay the full fare. ADA certified children ages six (6) and over may travel without an accompanying adult only if it can be demonstrated they would be able, if not prevented by their disability, to use public transportation independently. Children ages four (4) and under or children under forty (40) pounds must be secured in a child safety seat provided by an accompanying adult. Passengers must provide the child safety seat.

Transporting Animals

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog/canine companion. You should tell the dispatcher when you reserve trips that you will be traveling with a service animal. Pets and other non-service animals may be transported only in a properly secured cage or container.

Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges

ACCTD can provide 21 days of service for ADA-certified persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside the Athens, Georgia area. Call ACCTD for further information.

V. Responsibilities

Athens-Clarke County Transit has a short list of common-sense guidelines designed to ensure safety and comfort for all riders as well as the driver.

Rider Responsibilities

- Read and understand all sections of the Guide to Ride carefully.
- Make reservations at least one or more days in advance.
- Be ready at pickup location and be on time.

- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute “window”.
- Call to cancel unneeded rides as soon as possible; avoid “no-shows”.
- Pay the correct fare in cash or discount tickets (drivers do not make change).
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchair or other mobility device in a safe condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.
- Expect “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Maintain acceptable standards of hygiene.
- No eating, drinking or smoking on board.
- No riding while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering in the vehicle.
- No radio, cassette tape players, compact disc players, or other sound-generating equipment are to be played aloud aboard the vehicle (headphones are permissible).

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers are to adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene, as those required of the riders.

- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Be uniformed with visible name tag.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle
Maintain the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- If requested, assist riders when entering and leaving the vehicle.

Drivers are Not Permitted to:

- Enter a rider’s residence or other buildings.
- Perform any personal care assistance for riders, including but not limited to, assisting riders to dress.
- Load or Unload Packages or Groceries.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Carry riders or wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Accept tips or gratuities.

VI. Suspension of Service

Misusing the system can result in suspension of your paratransit service. The following are misuses of the paratransit services that could lead to suspension.

1. Obtaining or using paratransit services under false pretenses.

The Americans with Disabilities Act reserves

paratransit services for individuals certified eligible. Your service may be suspended if:

- You have made false or misleading statements on your eligibility application.
- You allow other non-eligible individuals such as friends or family members to ride using your name.

2. Suspension for “No-Shows”

No-shows delay vehicles and use up space and resources other riders could use.

If a customer has four more or no-shows within a quarter, Riders will be issued a letter from ACCTD listing the days and the time in which the no shows occurred. ACCTD will review the percentage of missed rides occurring each quarter relative to total rides scheduled. If the percentage of no-shows is 50% or greater, a one-week suspension will be scheduled. A 30 day minimum notice will be given prior to scheduled suspensions. All suspensions will be limited to one week. After each quarter records are cleared.

No-shows for reasons that are beyond the customer’s control will not be counted. Examples of excused no-shows include but are not limited to:

- Illness and/or hospitalization;
- Family or other emergencies;
- ACCTD staff error;
- Inclement weather such as ice and snow.

All passengers are encouraged to contact the Transit Dispatch Team at 706-613-3435 to cancel trips as soon as possible if you are unable to keep the scheduled trip.

3. Suspension for abusive or disruptive behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior can annoy or endanger passengers, drivers, and the Lift staff.

Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Intimidation or threats of physical harm to drivers or other riders.
- Verbal abuse of drivers, staff, and/or other passengers.
- Unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior having sexual, violent, or racial connotations.
- Unauthorized use of vehicle equipment.
- Voluntary and repeated violation of riding rules, including:
 - Smoking, eating, and drinking on vehicles.
 - Refusing to remain seated with seat belt on.
 - Defacing equipment.
 - Refusing to comply with other requirements specified in this guide.

Circumstances that are beyond your control

Examples of situations not within the passenger's control may include but are not limited to:

- A sudden personal emergency.

- Sudden or worsening illness.
- Late arrival of the paratransit vehicle.
- A driver does not provide appropriate assistance.
- Disruptive behavior caused by a disability.

If an investigation reveals your disruptive behavior is due to a disability and is beyond your control, your service may not be suspended. However, Athens Transit may require you to travel with a Personal Care Assistant (PCA). If your PCA cannot help you to control your behavior, and/or a safety problem continues to exist, your service may be disallowed.

VII. The Appeals Process

If you are not in agreement with a decision made by ACC Transit regarding eligibility or a suspension, you should contact the Director of Athens Clarke County Transit at 706-613-3432 for an administrative hearing. If you are still unsatisfied after an informal hearing, you can file a written appeal with the Athens-Clarke County ADA Coordinator, Lawa Howard, and Disabilities Act Coordinator

ACC-Risk Management

375 Satula Ave

Athens, Ga. 30606

(706) 613-3101

(706) 613-3090.

An appointed panel of transportation officials, medical/disability professionals, and rider representatives (2- ADA Committee members) will review the circumstances of your suspension. The appeals process will be carried out in accordance with the ADA regulations.

1. An explanation of the appeals process is listed below.
2. Appeals must be filed within 60 days of a denial of eligibility or a decision to suspend service.
3. Appeals must be filed in writing or on audiocassette; accommodations will be made for persons unable to do so.
4. You may ride the service until your eligibility / suspension appeal is heard.
5. A decision will be made within 30 days and rendered in writing.

NOTE: If you are appealing a suspension based on an illegal, seriously disruptive, or violent behavior, you may not ride until the Appeals Panel reviews and overturns your suspension.

Guidelines for Requesting / Holding an Appeal Hearing

Requirements:

- A. An individual must request an appeal within 60 calendar days of the denial of their initial application or suspension.
- B. An individual must have an opportunity to be heard in person to present information and arguments.
- C. There must be a "separation of function" between those involved in the initial determination and those deciding appeals.
- D. Written notification of the appeal decision, stating the reasons for the finding, must be provided.
- E. Presumptive eligibility must be granted to the individual if a decision is not made within 30 days of the completion of the appeals process

Process:

1. Written appeal is submitted to ADA coordinator, who schedules the appeal hearing.

2. At appeals hearing, introductions of panel members, passenger and presiding member.
3. An explanation of conflict of interest should an individual have a professional or personal relationship with a decision-maker.
4. An explanation of the appeal policy and the applicant's rights to ensure that there is a clear understanding of process.
5. The basis on which decisions will be reached (e.g., majority vote, etc.).
6. A brief overview of eligibility/suspension policy to ensure that the applicant/passenger has a clear understanding of key issues such as the functional nature and trip-by-trip nature of ADA paratransit eligibility.
7. A summary of initial determination / suspension findings and the informal review findings.
8. An opportunity for the applicant and /or her representative to provide additional information or dispute the initial determination / suspension findings.
9. An opportunity for the hearing officer or panel members to ask the applicant or her representative questions and other persons involved.
10. Appeals panel deliberates and makes a decision on course of action, with written decision concerning the appeal so that the applicant clearly understands what will happen following the hearing.
11. Restatement of services or eligibility or denials / suspensions upheld.

VIII. Using Regular Public Transit Services

Listed are some benefits of the Athens-Clarke County Transit Department fixed-route system:

- Fares are at least half of those charged for The Lift services.
- Senior citizens and people with disabilities are eligible for reduced fares on the fixed-route service.
- Wheelchair accessible buses operate on timed schedules and require no advance reservations.
- You have more choice and independence since you may go anywhere the bus goes at any time according to its schedule.

For information about riding Athens-Clarke County Transit, please call **613-3430**.

IX. Customer Service

If you experienced a problem with a specific ride or you need to make an appointment for eligibility certification, please call our office at **613-3435**. The Lift is committed to using customer input as a tool to improve service quality.

If you are experiencing a problem with eligibility, or a suspension, and you would like to talk with someone other than the ADA coordinator Lawa Howard 706-613-3090, you may call or write to:

Patricia Hale, Interim Transit Director
Athens Clarke County Transit Department
775 E. Broad St.
Athens, Georgia 30601
(706)-613-3432

X. Quick Reference Numbers

(706 area code) _____

General Information **706-613-3430**

Reservations/Cancellations**706-613-3435**

Eligibility

ADA Paratransit Application

Travel Training Programs

Comments or Complaints

If you are experiencing a problem or have a complaint and you would like to speak with someone other than the ADA coordinator, Lawa Howard 706-613-3090 you may call or write to:

Patricia Hale, Interim Transit Director
Athens Clarke County Transit Department
775 E. Broad St.
Athens, Georgia 30601
(706)-613-3432

Materials in Alternative Formats

Administrative Fax..... **706-613-3714**

Georgia Relay Service:

For hearing Impaired/TTY Customers:

1-800 –255-0056

For hearing customers:

1-800 –255-0135



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Athens-Clarke County Transit Department
accgov.com/transit
(706) 613-3435