

# **Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride Service Guide**



**METRO BUS**  
dial-a-ride services





Serving St. Cloud  
Sartell, Sauk Rapids  
and Waite Park,  
Minnesota

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# METRO BUS Dial-a-Ride Guide

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# DIAL-A-RIDE OVERVIEW

Dial-a-Ride is a driver-assisted, door-through-door, shared ride bus service for people with disabilities.

Dial-a-Ride serves the cities of St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids and Sartell to get to and from activity centers, medical facilities, work, school, grocery shopping and other community functions.

These program guidelines describe the process of applying for Dial-a-Ride along with information on policies, procedures, and the responsibilities of both the passenger and Metro Bus.

## **Mission Statement**

We provide safe, reliable and friendly public transportation.

Following the policies and procedures outlined in this Service Guide will ensure that Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride operates successfully for everyone.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides the framework that Metro Bus must follow when providing Dial-a-Ride, which is referred to as “complementary paratransit” service in the transit industry.

The ADA establishes minimum requirements for complementary paratransit services on such matters as fares, operating hours, service area and other elements of the program.

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride is funded primarily through an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature, with passenger fares and local and federal funding accounting for the balance of operating revenue.

## **ADA Complaints**

If you have an ADA-related complaint, contact the Dial-a-Ride Operations Manager

Email [nlahr@stcloudmtc.com](mailto:nlahr@stcloudmtc.com)

Or call **320.529.4494**

**Monday - Friday**

8:00 am to 5:00 pm

## Dial-a-Ride Availability and Hours

Dial-a-Ride operates comparable hours to Fixed Route. Specific times vary by geographic area.

There is no service on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Service ends early on Christmas Eve.

## Dial-a-Ride Personnel

All Metro Bus drivers wear uniforms that clearly identify them as Metro Bus personnel. Drivers receive training in defensive driving, First Aid and customer relations.

They also receive passenger sensitivity training to help them understand and respond to the special needs of Dial-a-Ride passengers.





# CERTIFICATION & ELIGIBILITY

## Eligibility

### To be eligible for Dial-a-Ride an individual:

- Must be unable to board, ride, or disembark a Fixed Route Metro Bus, or access the Fixed Route system due to a combination of a disability and physical barrier (i.e. distance to bus stop, terrain, etc.)
- Uses a personal oxygen supply or ventilator.

### Ineligible for Dial-a-Ride:

- A person requiring external life support equipment or immediate/emergency medical transportation.

## Applying for Dial-a-Ride

**1) Application:** The Dial-a-Ride application is available online at [ridemetrobust.com](http://ridemetrobust.com) or by calling 320.252.1010.

**2) Interview:** After Metro Bus receives the application, an interview will be scheduled.

At the interview:

- the application will be reviewed;
- questions will be asked about applicant's ability to use the Fixed Route bus system;
- a cognitive or physical functional assessment may be performed.

If transportation is needed to the interview, Metro Bus will provide a ride free of charge. Applicants should come dressed in appropriate attire for a possible outdoor functional assessment.

Eligibility determination will be made within 21 business days of receipt of application.

**3) Determination:** Following the interview process, applicants will receive written notification regarding their eligibility. This letter will be presented to the applicant if an eligibility decision has been made at the time of the interview. If further information is needed to make an eligibility decision, then the eligibility letter will be mailed to the applicant.

Eligibility for Dial-a-Ride is a transportation decision, not a medical one.

Determinations are based not on the presence of a disability, but on the effect the disability has on an individual's capacity to use Fixed Route bus service. Perceived inconvenience, real inconveniences or simply a desire not to use accessible Fixed Route bus service, are not criteria for eligibility.

## Approval

If approved for service, the applicant will receive an identification card. The card includes information about how to schedule a ride.

Once approved for service, the applicant must communicate changes in disability status or home address to Metro Bus. If an individual's use of a mobility aid changes, such as switching from using a walker to using a wheelchair, this should also be communicated to Metro Bus.

Approval is given in the form of certification. There are five types of certifications:

### Types of Certification

- 1. Unconditional:** Allows use year-round and under any condition.
- 2. Conditional:** Allows use when a condition/barrier doesn't allow individual to utilize the Fixed Route bus system. Examples of conditional certification include the presence of snow and ice, complexity of trip (i.e. multiple transfers to complete a trip), distance to a bus stop, change in physical ability due to a medical procedure.
- 3. Temporary:** Allows use when disability is temporary for a limited, specific amount of time due to post-operative recovery, broken bones, etc.
- 4. Non-Resident:** If the applicant lives outside the Metro Bus transit service area and meets the eligibility criteria, he or she may use Dial-a-Ride for trips within the service area.
- 5. Visitor:** Allows use when visiting and staying in Metro Bus service area. Must prove eligibility by presenting an identification card from their local public transportation program, or prove mobility impairments, such as use of a wheelchair or other mobility aid. Using the service longer than 21 days in a 365-day period of time requires completion of application.

## **Appeals Process**

If an individual is determined ineligible and denied service, or given a conditional or temporary certification for Dial-a-Ride, the written notification shall state the reason for the decision. The applicant may appeal the decision by following the information in the Notice of Right to Appeal.

All appeals may be presented in person, by phone, or in writing within 60 days of receipt of the letter stating the eligibility determination. Upon receipt, the appeal will be date stamped and referred to the Community Outreach & Travel Training Manager for initial review and consideration. The Community Outreach & Travel Training Manager will decide to either reverse a determination of eligibility or schedule the matter for a hearing at the next Appeal Committee meeting. The Appeal Committee regularly meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 11:30 a.m. Appointments may be made to appear before the Appeal Committee by calling 320.252.1010.

After the Appeal Committee has received, reviewed and considered the material presented as part of the Appeal process, they shall render a final decision and shall direct the Community Outreach & Travel Training Manager to prepare a letter to the applicant regarding its determinations. The Appeal Committee will specify, and the letter shall explain in detail, the reasons for their decision.

**Reapplying for Service:** If an applicant is denied eligibility, the applicant may reapply if there are substantial new or different conditions which cause a significant change in physical or mental capabilities.

## **Recertification**

All Dial-a-Ride passengers, whether they have been approved for an unconditional or conditional certification, must be recertified for service every three years. A reminder notice will be sent by mail at least 60 days prior to their expiration date. Those who still need Dial-a-Ride transportation may reapply for the service. Recertification may be identical to the certification process; however, Metro Bus reserves the right to waive this process or any portion of it.

**Accessible formats for this service guide, application,  
or other materials are available by request by calling 320.251.1499  
or email [info@stcloudmtc.com](mailto:info@stcloudmtc.com).**

# SCHEDULING RIDES & POLICIES

## Scheduling a Trip

To schedule a ride, call the Dial-a-Ride dispatch office at 320.252.1010.

**Drivers cannot take appointments or make changes to any previously scheduled rides.**

Please provide the following information:

- a passenger name
- origin address
- destination address
- desired destination arrival time
- whether a companion or Personal Care Attendant will be accompanying for each trip scheduled

The caller will be provided with scheduled pick-up and return times. All passengers should be ready and waiting at the first door (first door definition is "giving inside access to the building") of the building from which they are being picked up. If the driver arrives and the passenger is not ready at the first door, the driver is allowed to leave one minute after the scheduled pick-up time, which will result in a no-show for the passenger.

Due to unforeseen circumstances drivers may occasionally be late and passengers are asked to wait up to 15 minutes beyond the scheduled pick-up time to avoid receiving a no-show.

**Medical Return:** Return trips for medical appointments can be scheduled when the initial ride is

## Scheduling Rides for Dial-a-Ride

**Call 320.252.1010**

**Monday - Friday**  
6:30 am to 5:00 pm

**Saturday & Sunday**  
8:00 am to 5:00 pm

requested or can be called in when the medical appointment is completed.

### **Advance Notice Requirement:**

Rides may be scheduled between one and seven days in advance. Every effort will be made to schedule trip requests at the specific time desired; however, because this is a shared ride service (see below) earlier or later pick-up times may be negotiated. Dial-a-Ride does not provide emergency medical transportation.

Passengers are responsible for remembering their scheduled pick-up and return times. Drivers cannot provide this information. If verification of scheduled rides is needed, please call the Dial-a-Ride dispatch office at 320.252.1010.

**Shared-Ride System:** The Dial-a-Ride program operates on a shared-ride basis. This means that other passengers may be on board during any part of a trip, and that scheduled pick-up times or routes of travel may

be altered to accommodate another passenger. It is likely that your ride won't always be a direct route to your destination without any stops. All trips will be coordinated to carry as many passengers as possible to help lower the cost of service.

## Subscription Trips

Subscription Service may be available for those who travel to the same place, at the same times, several days a week. To be considered for Dial-a-Ride Subscription service, all of the following criteria must be met:

- Certified to use Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride, except those with Temporary or Visitor certifications
- Request is for travel to the same destination at the same time — at least three times a week

To be considered for Subscription Service, please complete the Subscription Request Form, available at [ridemetrobus.com](http://ridemetrobus.com) or by calling 320.252.1010.

**Subscription Service requests are reviewed the first Monday of each month and the five working days following.** Approval is based on meeting the set criteria, as well as the availability of service.

Subscription trips may be put on hold for up to 30 days. If a rider does not resume subscription trip within 30 days, it will be removed and rescheduled through the subscription trip request process. Subscriptions have no expiration. If there are any changes made to the subscription (day, time or destination) it may be canceled and will be reinstated, if there is availability. If a rider cancels 50% or more

of their trips in the month, subscription service may be removed.

## Canceling a Scheduled Trip

If a trip has been scheduled that will not be used, please cancel it as far in advance as possible. To avoid a no-show, a scheduled pick-up time must be cancelled at least two hours in advance.

## No-Show Policy

A no-show occurs when an individual schedules a ride and fails to use the service by missing their scheduled ride or does not give sufficient cancellation notice (less than 2 hours).

If an individual receives more than five (5) no-shows in a 30-day period AND the no-shows equal more than 10% of their total trips scheduled for that 30-day period of time, they will be suspended. The 30-day period of time is determined by the date of the first no-show.

When an individual receives a no-show, a letter will be sent to them containing information about when the no-show occurred and will give instructions for how to appeal the no-show. Individuals have 10 business days from receipt of the letter to notify Metro Bus that they wish to appeal the no-show. The appeal may be in writing, by phone, or in person to Metro Bus. Metro Bus will reply in writing or by phone to the individual within 10 business days of receipt of the appeal notice with a determination of the validity of the no-show.

An individual who receives a sixth (6) no-show (and their no-shows equal more than 10% of their total trips for a 30-day period of time) will be notified by letter that they will be suspended. The

suspension will go into effect fifteen (15) days from the date of the letter. Metro Bus administrative staff will issue the suspension.

Individuals wishing to appeal the suspension may do so by notifying Metro Bus and attend the next Dial-a-Ride Appeal Committee meeting to discuss the reasons for the no-shows. During the time period of the appeal, the suspension will be put on hold. The Appeal Committee may either dismiss one or all of the no-shows or make a final determination to uphold the suspension.

If an individual goes one year without any suspensions (counting from the previous suspension's start date), their next suspension will revert back to a 1st Suspension of seven (7) days.

The Dial-a-Ride Appeal Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN 56301.

**1st suspension – loss of Dial-a-Ride privileges for seven (7) days.**

**2nd suspension – loss of Dial-a-Ride privileges for fourteen (14) days.**

**3rd suspension – loss of Dial-a-Ride privileges for twenty-one (21) days.**

**4th suspension – loss of Dial-a-Ride privileges for thirty (30) days.**

**Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride is a shared-ride service, so it is important that scheduled trips do not go unused.**

Consideration will be given for no-shows that are beyond the passenger's control, which could include any of the following:

- 1) the vehicle arrived at the pick-up location more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled pick-up time;
- 2) a sudden personal or family emergency arose that caused the passenger to change plans and did not allow time to notify dispatch; or
- 3) a sudden turn for the worse for a passenger with a variable condition.

# RIDING DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE

## Door-Through-Door Service Policy

Door-through-door service means that drivers will assist all passengers through the first door of the building (first door definition is “giving inside access to the building”) at both their point of origin and their destination.

Driver assistance ends when the driver has assisted the passenger through the first door of the building. **Drivers are not allowed to assist beyond this point.** Passengers who require further assistance once inside the first door of a building are responsible to have a Personal Care Attendant, companion, or other individual present to assist them. The Dial-a-Ride driver reserves the right to refuse loading at a location where the lift or ramp cannot be physically deployed due to the location being deemed as unsafe to the driver and/or passenger.

## Paying for your Trip (Fares)

**Fares:** A fare is required for each one-way trip. Individual fares cannot be paid round-trip, in advance or billed at a later date. Passengers are asked to have their passes ready to swipe through the farebox upon boarding the bus. When paying a fare with cash, any amount over the cost of the ride will be given in the form of a debit change card, which can be used for future rides.

Up to two children, five and under, ride free with a paid fare on any Metro Bus. However, if a child, regardless of age, is certified with Dial-a-Ride, a fare must be paid. Up to two fare-paying companions or a non-farepaying Personal Care Attendant may accompany the certified child.

**Agency Fare:** When Metro Bus transports an individual or group of individuals for an “Agency Trip”, each trip will be billed directly to the participating agency or organization through a contractual agreement. Agency trips are when an agency (such as social service agency, residential care facility, or other organization) schedules a guaranteed trip for a resident, client, or group for attending a function of the agency or organization.



## Types of Fares

- **Cash Fare**
- **31-Day All Service Pass**  
Unlimited ridership on all Metro Bus routes and Dial-a-Ride during the 31 days following the first time the pass is activated.
- **10-Ride Pass** Good for 10 rides, no expiration.

**Call 252.1010 for current fare prices.** Passes may be purchased online at [ridemetrobust.com](http://ridemetrobust.com), at the Metro Bus Transit Center, major grocery stores (service counter).

**Receipts:** Metro Bus does not provide receipts for rides taken. Individuals who need this information for income verification are responsible for keeping their own records.

## Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

One Personal Care Attendant (PCA) can accompany a certified Dial-a-Ride passenger at no charge. A PCA is defined as a person who provides care for the certified individual and who is a necessary part of the individual's mobility. The certified individual's application will need to indicate that he or she, at times, requires the assistance of a PCA. The need for a PCA will be noted in the certified individual's client file. A PCA's ride must be scheduled with the dispatcher in advance to allow for seating in the vehicle. The PCA must board and exit the vehicle at the same locations as the certified individual.

**Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride does not provide PCA's for riders.**

## Traveling Companions

One companion may ride with a certified Dial-a-Ride individual. Additional companions may ride if there is sufficient vehicle capacity as determined by the Dial-a-Ride dispatcher. Companions are required to start and end their trip with the certified user and pay the one-way trip fare each time they ride.

## Out of Town Visitors

Because eligibility Criteria established by the ADA are standard throughout the country, ADA-certified visitors can use Dial-a-Ride anywhere within the St. Cloud transit area (which includes St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park and Sartell).

Service will be provided to visitors who present documentation of eligibility from their home jurisdiction or by persons who seek service in person whose disability is apparent, and provide proof of residency.

Visitors do not need to apply for certification in the city they are visiting and are permitted to use the service on any combination of 21 days throughout a 365-day period beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during such 365-day period.

It is important to call ahead at 320.252.1010 when planning to use Dial-a-Ride, because policies and procedures vary from city to city.

## Wheelchairs

A wheelchair is defined by the ADA as a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or four-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility limitations, whether operated manually or powered.

All Dial-a-Ride buses can accommodate the ADA's maximum mobility device size of 30 inches wide by 48 inches long, when measured two inches above the ground.

Eligibility is determined based on the functional ability to use Fixed Route service. If the combined weight of the individual and their wheelchair exceeds 800 pounds, the individual must board independent of their wheelchair. The wheelchair must have a PCA control device to allow the driver to maneuver the wheelchair into the vehicle. If no PCA control device exists, the individual must have a PCA accompany them to maneuver the wheelchair onto the vehicle.

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride does not transport mobility devices without the rider.

### **Wheelchair securement and restraints:**

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride vehicles are equipped with securement devices to keep wheelchairs from moving while on the vehicle. Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride drivers are trained in, and responsible for, properly securing wheelchairs. Riders are required to wear the vehicle-equipped seat belt and restraints.

**Broken wheelchairs:** Mobility devices must be in good working order when traveling on the Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride service. Flat tires, brakes that do not hold, power chairs without power, loose

## Scooter-type Wheelchairs

Be advised that some mobility devices have been shown to be unstable during transport. Often, it is the recommendation of the mobility device manufacturer that occupants refrain from being seated on their device, while their device is being transported. For their safety, riders should transfer from the device to a vehicle seat, while in route.

Metro Bus policy states that mobility devices or aides will be secured with an approved tie down system. However, if the operator determines that a mobility device or aide cannot be secured properly because the design or size of the cart would make it unsafe, the passenger will be asked to transfer to a vehicle seat.

handgrips, and bent or loose wheels are safety hazards. **Drivers may refuse to provide a ride if a wheelchair is unsafe.**

## Steps, Ramps, Sidewalks & Driveways

Drivers will assist ambulatory passengers in entering and exiting all buildings provided there are no more than five steps to maneuver or ascend/descend. For the safety of both the driver and the passenger, drivers are not permitted to assist passengers who use a wheelchair up and down any steps. Curbs are not included as steps.

Steps, ramps, sidewalks and driveways must be free of ice, snow and debris. For both riders' and drivers' safety, service may be refused if drivers determine that assisting a particular rider is unsafe.

If service is refused, the driver will notify the Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride supervisor. A liaison may be asked to inspect and evaluate the situation and explain what corrections must be made in order for service to resume.

## **Animals**

Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities — such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. A service animal must be under the constant control of its owner or handler. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

Riders should inform dispatch when service animals will be accompanying them. **There is no additional fare charged for a service animal.**

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride can transport non-service animals on a space-available basis, provided that the animals are properly caged. Drivers are not permitted to carry cages.

## **Children**

Up to two children, five and under, ride free with a paid fare on any Metro Bus. Additional children or children over the age of five must pay a fare. If the child is certified to use Dial-a-Ride, a fare is required to be paid.

**Strollers:** Baby strollers must be folded and stored in a manner as to not interfere with other passengers or the operation of the bus. Under no circumstances shall a bus operator allow a child to remain seated in a stroller while the bus is in motion.

## **Seat Belts**

All non-wheelchair passengers must use a seat belt if one is available. For those riding in a wheelchair, the driver will secure the wheelchair tie-down devices and engage separate seat belts.

## **Grocery and Shopping Bags**

Passengers are allowed to bring on the bus as many packages as they are capable of carrying in one trip. Drivers are only allowed to assist with two grocery bags or one cardboard grocery box. If help is needed for additional packages, a companion must be available to assist the passenger.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE (Comments and Complaints)**

Customer service is a very important part of the Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride service.

Our goal is to provide passengers with a safe and enjoyable ride.

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride employees are highly trained professional drivers and dispatchers.

When using the Dial-a-Ride service, customers can expect to be treated in a courteous manner by a staff that has a goal of providing the best service possible.

Customer Service is responsible for obtaining and documenting information, forwarding it to the appropriate department and following up to ensure issues are resolved in a timely manner.

**To assist the Customer Service representative in researching an issue, the following information is needed:**

- Date and time of incident
- Name of passenger
- Phone number
- Employee name, if known
- Bus number
- Details of incident

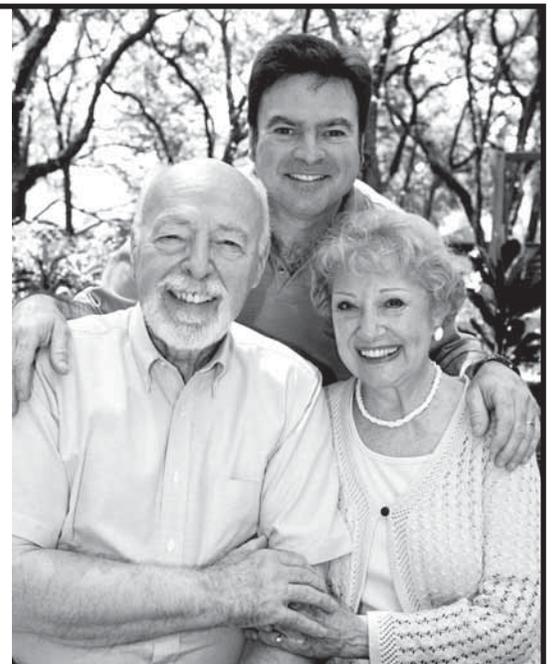
Please let the Customer Service representative know if you would like to receive a follow-up call once the issue has been researched. It is important to report any comments or complaints as soon as possible, while the details are clear.

### **Increase your independence**

Riding the Fixed Route may work better for some of your trips. The Fixed Route allows you more flexibility and spontaneity. You don't have to call ahead to plan your trip, and you can extend your stay at your destination without worrying about missing your scheduled pick-up time. All buses are wheelchair accessible.

**Learning how to ride Fixed Route will not affect your eligibility status for Dial-a-Ride, and we'll provide free training.** We work with you at your pace until you feel comfortable to ride on your own.

**Learn more about Travel Training:  
320.529.4497.**



# **METRO BUS OPERATING POLICIES**

## **Disruptive Passenger Policy**

Metro Bus prohibits passengers from disturbing the peace and quiet of another person or the transit bus operator. Disturbing the peace includes but is not limited to: offensive odors, verbal outbursts and visual disturbances. Metro Bus reserves the right to refuse entry aboard the bus or removal from the bus. Disruptive behavior while being transported by Dial-a-Ride may result in a temporary suspension of riding privileges.

## **Beverage Policy**

Persons entering the bus with hot beverages must have them in a sealed, travel mug with a lid.

This does not include paper or Styrofoam containers with lids.

Cold beverages must be in a plastic bottle with a replaceable top, or a travel mug.

## **Roller blades/In-Line Skates**

Passengers wearing Roller blades and wishing to board the bus shall first remove their Roller blades prior to boarding the bus, and shall not put them back on until they have exited the bus.

It will be acceptable for such passengers to board and ride the bus in their stocking feet.

# EXPECTATIONS

## **What passengers should expect from the Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride program, its drivers and staff:**

- Courteous and professional telephone staff
- Drivers who have successfully completed all necessary training needed to be a Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride driver
- Door-through-door assistance from driver
- A safe ride
- Drivers who are appropriately dressed and groomed
- Drivers and staff who can communicate with riders in spoken and written English
- A properly maintained vehicle, free of smoke and litter
- Prompt response to customer-service issues when requested

## **What the Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride program, its drivers and its staff expect from Passengers:**

- Respect toward drivers, other riders and staff
- No eating, drinking or smoking on the vehicle
- Personal assistive devices that are in good working order
- Steps, ramps, sidewalks and driveways that are clear of snow and ice
- Rides that are free of disruptive behavior
- Adherence to scheduling policies (i.e. ready and waiting at the first door of the building at your scheduled pick up time)



**FOR RESERVATIONS, CANCELLATIONS OR CUSTOMER  
SERVICE CALL .....320.252.1010**

Call up to 7 days ahead for a reservation

Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride and Metro Bus  
Fixed Route Services are operated by the  
St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission.  
665 Franklin Ave NE, St. Cloud MN 56304