



# Transit Plus Policies and Procedures





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This document is available in large print or other formats upon request.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Transit is a team of transportation professionals committed to providing high-quality public transportation, paratransit, and commuter services in a safe, dependable, and courteous manner to the citizens of Frederick County. Transit promotes mass transportation alternatives in the region and assists Frederick County citizens to select the most cost-effective and convenient transportation alternative.

## **WHAT IS Transit-plus?**

**Transit-plus** is our countywide, shared-ride, curb-to-curb paratransit service for older adults and persons with disabilities. Passenger trips will be coordinated to serve as many people as possible and to use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.

## **POLICIES**

### **General Policies**

Riding Transit can be a safe and comfortable experience when passengers demonstrate thoughtful consideration for one another. Since taking public transit involves sharing space, it is important to treat others with courtesy and respect. We ask that you follow these guidelines. The following policies apply to all of Transit's services, including Transit-plus:

1. Smoking, eating, drinking, chewing tobacco, and using illegal substances onboard Transit vehicles are prohibited. A driver may refuse to transport someone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances, or whose behavior or language appears abusive, offensive, disorderly, or dangerous to themselves or others.
2. Use headphones when listening to devices and keep the volume low so others are not disturbed.
3. Limit your conversation with the driver to questions regarding Transit services only, so the driver can focus their attention on safe driving.
4. Reserve priority seating for those who need it. Remember that not all disabilities are visible.
5. Children ages 12 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
6. Keep the aisles clear so passengers can enter and exit safely. Articles carried onto the bus are to be held by the passenger or secured under the seat.
7. Secure strollers, baby carriages, and portable shopping carts to ensure they are kept out of aisles.
8. The number of groceries or bags carried on the bus will be limited to what the passenger can carry in one trip. The driver cannot assist with these items.

9. Service animals are defined as animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities and are permitted onboard Transit vehicles. Non-service animals, including pets, are permitted but must be secured in an appropriate animal carrier. Transit operators reserve the right to deny entry if not properly secured or under the rider's control.
10. Certain items, such as combustible items (including gasoline) or guns of any kind (including pellet guns, paintball, or airsoft guns) are not permitted onboard.

**The remaining policies are specific to Transit-plus.**

### **Eligibility**

Older adults (60 or older) and people with disabilities are eligible to register for Transit-plus.

Passengers must be registered with Transit-plus before transportation service can be scheduled.

### **Geographic Areas Served**

Transit-plus is available throughout Frederick County.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Transit-plus hours of services are Monday to Friday 8:00AM to 4:00PM. Therefore, no trip will be scheduled to start before 8:00AM and all passengers travel must be completed by 4:00PM. When scheduling appointments with Transit-plus please take into consideration the length of the appointment and the travel time to get you home.

Service is **not** provided on the following County holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. For specific dates of these holidays during the current year, please call the Transit office at 301-600-2065.

### **Advanced Reservation Policy**

Trips can be scheduled up to fourteen (14) calendar days in advance. For example, to schedule a trip on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>, the schedule will open, and you can call beginning the 1st.

**You should NOT reserve a trip as a backup plan. Cancelling a trip at the last minute, or even the day prior, consumes resources and prevents others from using the service. Please only schedule a trip when you are sure you will use it. This will ensure that denials are kept to a minimum. Excessive late cancellations and no-shows will result in suspension of eligibility. For more information, see the No-show and Cancellation Policy below.**

### **Late Policy**

In order to provide service to as many people as possible, it is essential that all passengers be ready at their scheduled time. Passengers who are not ready for their scheduled pickup time cause the driver to fall behind schedule and inconvenience other passengers. Therefore, there is a five-minute limit to the amount of time Transit-plus drivers will wait for a late passenger.

It is the passenger's responsibility to be ready and waiting by their scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger is not ready and boarding the bus within five minutes of the scheduled pickup time and has not called the dispatcher to reschedule or cancel the trip, the driver will notify the dispatcher and depart for next pickup, and the late passenger will be considered "no-show."

### **"No-Show" & Cancellation Policy**

From time to time, it may be necessary for a scheduled passenger to cancel a trip for unexpected circumstances beyond their control. Last minute cancellations, or "no-shows," are detrimental to the efficient and effective operations of a demand-response transportation system. No-shows waste resources that could be used to provide transportation to other passengers. Therefore, Transit-plus has instituted a "no-show" policy to prevent and remedy abuse.

#### **What Constitutes a "No-Show"?**

If a passenger is unable to make his or her scheduled trip and does not call the dispatcher to cancel the trip at least by noon the day prior to the scheduled pick-up time, the trip will be a late cancel and considered a "no-show." Passengers who are not ready by their scheduled pick-up time may also be considered a "no-show" if they are more than five minutes late; the driver will leave after waiting five minutes and contacting the dispatcher. The only exception to this is a return trip from a medical appointment; if you are not seen timely for your appointment and this changes your return trip, please notify Transit as soon as possible. We will reschedule your return trip for later the same day.

#### **Excessive Cancellations**

Transit-plus is not always able to provide trips for all requests. Once all available spaces are booked, we must deny a passenger's request for a trip. Passengers who regularly cancel their trips prevent others from utilizing the service. Therefore, this practice cannot be permitted. Excessive cancellations are more than two (2) round trips in a thirty (30) day period. **Trips with Transit-plus should not be made as a backup plan. There are limited resources, so please be considerate of others, and only schedule a trip when you are certain you plan to use it.**

## **No-Show and Excessive Cancellation Consequences**

First offense	2 no-shows or 4 late cancels in 30 days	Written reminder
Second offense	Any additional offenses in 30 days (3 no-shows or 5 late cancels)	Verbal warning and warning letter
Third offense	Any additional offenses in 45 days (4 no-shows or 6 late cancels)	Suspension of service for one month
Fourth offense	Any additional offenses in 45 days (5 no-shows or 7 late cancels)	Suspension of service until reinstated at the discretion of the Operations Manager, a minimum of 3 months
An offense will be dropped if a subsequent offense does not occur within 45 days of the preceding offense.		

## **Appeals Process**

The passenger may appeal any consequence if he or she feels a no-show or cancellation occurred because of unexpected circumstances beyond his or her control (e.g. medical or family emergency). Written appeals should be sent within ten (10) calendar days of notification of the offense to Transit Services, Assistant Director of Operations, 1040 Rocky Springs Road, Frederick, MD, 21702, or email [transit@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:transit@frederickcountymd.gov).

## **Passenger Assistance Policy**

All Transit-plus drivers are trained in passenger assistance techniques and will provide passenger assistance in boarding and disembarking from the vehicle. Passenger assistance may include guiding the passenger to the vehicle, lending a steady arm for balance in boarding the vehicle, finding a seat or securing a wheelchair.

Transit-plus drivers will not provide assistance that involves bearing weight, including lifting and carrying passengers. Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling must arrange for a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to accompany and assist them. Transit-plus does not provide PCAs. The driver may refuse service if the passenger cannot safely travel to and from the vehicle without the driver lifting or carrying the passenger.

For passengers using wheelchairs, Transit-plus provides curb-to-curb service. The driver will board passengers in wheelchairs on the lift and secure the chair and person on board the bus. When the bus arrives at the destination, the driver will secure the passenger in the wheelchair on the lift and assist getting the passenger off of the lift. If any further assistance is needed from the vehicle to the destination, the passenger must be accompanied by a PCA who is capable of assisting them.

Transit-plus drivers will not enter passengers' homes. For the safety and protection of both drivers and passengers, it is against our policy to provide this type of assistance.

Transit-plus is not a delivery service. Passengers are responsible for carrying their own belongings. Packages that cannot be stowed on your lap or the seat beside you are not permitted. Packages carried on the bus will be limited to what the passenger can carry in one boarding. The driver cannot assist with these items.

### **Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Policy**

A PCA is someone designated or employed specifically to help an individual with a disability meet his or her personal needs in daily living activities.

Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling (beyond that which the Transit- plus driver can provide), including lifting, carrying, support during the ride, and behavior control, must arrange for a PCA to accompany and assist them. TransIT-plus does not provide PCAs.

Passengers needing the assistance of a PCA must register the PCA with Transit. A registered PCA may accompany the passenger free of charge.

It is strongly recommended that a person who requires the use of a PCA in order to travel should always travel with their PCA since drivers cannot provide assistance beyond that which is described in the previous section.

### **Policy on Portable Breathing Aids**

Portable oxygen supplies and respirators are permitted on board Transit-plus with proper notification. Oxygen tanks must be secured so they do not move during transport. Information about the use of this equipment must be provided to the dispatcher when scheduling service.

### **Passenger Securement Policy**

#### **Wheelchairs**

All standard wheelchairs (those measuring no more than 30" wide, from outer sides of wheels, and 48" long, from the back wheels to the footrests, and weighing no more than 600 pounds total combined weight of chair and person) will be accommodated. If the total combined weight of the individual and their wheelchair exceeds 600 pounds, Transit's ability to accommodate the wheelchair will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All wheelchairs must be secured to the vehicle in the designated area. The driver will provide assistance in securing the wheelchair. Wheelchairs that cannot be properly secured (i.e. three-wheeled scooters) will be accommodated so long as they meet the size and weight restrictions above and fit within the securement area.

An individual using a wheelchair may transfer to a fixed seat on the vehicle as long as they are able to accomplish the transfer independently or with the assistance of a PCA. Drivers will not lift passengers.

### **Seatbelts**

Transit strongly recommends that all passengers wear seatbelts in vehicles equipped with them; persons traveling in sedans or vans are required to wear them. Persons using wheelchairs should be secured to their chairs in addition to having their wheelchairs secured to the vehicle. The driver will provide assistance in fastening seatbelts upon request.

### **Child Safety Seats**

All children under the age of 8 or weighing less than 80 pounds must be secured in a child safety seat provided by the guardian if the vehicle is equipped with seatbelts. Transit is unable to provide the safety seat.

### **Lift Use Policy**

Transit strongly recommends that persons who wish to use the lift to board do so only when seated in a wheelchair. Persons who do not use wheelchairs but wish to use the lift to board or de-board the vehicle must inform the dispatcher when scheduling service. This is necessary for vehicle scheduling considerations.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **How to Register for Transit-plus**

To register for Transit-plus, a registration application must be submitted for approval to the Operations Manager. Applications can be mailed on request by calling 301-600-2065. The application form is also available on our website: [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/transit](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/transit).

The application requires one of the following:

- **Proof of Age 60 or older** (one of the following):
  - Birth Certificate
  - Baptismal Certificate
  - Driver's License
  - MVA Identification Card
  - Marriage Certificate
- or · **Documentation of Disability:** Information about the nature, extent, functional effect, and duration of your disability is requested in one part of the application. This part must be completed by your physician, caseworker, or other professional familiar with your disability.

Once the Operations Manager has approved your application and you have received your confirmation letter and rider instructions, you may schedule service.

### **How to Schedule a Trip**

Call the Transit Plus department at **301-600-1725** and follow the prompts between 8AM – 4PM, Monday-Friday, up to ten (14) calendar days in advance. You will hear the following options:

- “*To schedule a paratransit trip, please press 1.*”  
Use this option to schedule future trips.
- “*If you need to check on an existing trip for today, cancel a ride, or speak to a Transit Dispatcher, please press 2.*”  
Use this option to cancel or check on your trip for today.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing customers can use the Maryland TDD Relay System, 1 800-735-2258 to contact Transit to schedule a trip.

### **What Information the Dispatcher Will Need**

When you call to schedule your trip, please be prepared to give the dispatcher the following information:

- Your name
- Your daytime telephone number
- The date you would like to schedule your trip
- Your appointment time
- Where (complete address and phone number)
- Special assistance needed or other considerations (for example, if you use a wheelchair or travel with a Personal Care Attendant or service animal).

Trips will not be scheduled until complete trip information is received.

You will be advised what time to be ready for pick up. It is our goal to pick up a passenger within thirty (30) minutes of his or her “ready time.” Example: If your ready time is 9:00 AM, you will be ready to be picked up between 9:00 AM and 9:30 AM.

If your trip can be made using our shuttle-route bus service, the Dispatcher may recommend that you schedule your trip on the appropriate bus route.

### **How to Request the Return Trip**

Your return trip will be scheduled when you make the initial trip request. Your return trip is scheduled one hour from your appointment, unless more time is needed/required. This reduces the possibility that you will have to wait when you are ready to return.

If you are not ready when the driver arrives for your return trip, you may call to request your return trip when you are ready. Return trips are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be patient, as we cannot anticipate when all of our passengers will be ready to return. Most trips will be scheduled within thirty (30) minutes after notification.

### **How to Cancel a Trip**

If you change your mind or are unable to make your scheduled trip, please let the Dispatcher know as soon as possible, but by noon the day prior to your scheduled pickup. If you do not cancel your trip by noon the day prior, it will be considered a "no show" (see "No Show" Policy) and could result in suspension of service. To cancel a trip, call 301-600-1725 and press 2.

## **PASSENGER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The passenger has a right to:**

1. Safe, comfortable, and courteous service.
2. On-time service as scheduled by the dispatcher.
3. Information presented in an appropriate format.
4. Appeal any actions that result in a denial of service.

### **The passenger has the responsibility to:**

1. Be ready for the driver by the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Inform the dispatcher of any special assistance needs.
3. Inform the dispatcher of cancelations by noon the day prior to your trip.
4. Inform the Operations Manager of any service problems (or exemplary service).
5. Appeal any actions that result in a denial of service.

## **OTHER SERVICES WHICH MAY MEET YOUR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**

### **Public Transit**

Transit operates fixed-route bus service in Frederick from 6:00 AM to 9:40 PM. Monday through Friday, and 7:30 AM to 9:45 PM on Saturday. During these times, our wheelchair-accessible buses circulate through most of the City of Frederick and Frederick County and serve medical, shopping, employment, and education centers. Six routes operate as deviated-fixed routes. These routes operate on a regular schedule for use by all customers and can deviate within a 3/4-mile corridor for passengers who are functionally unable to board the bus at a scheduled time point because of a disability. Call 301-600-2065 for more information or to schedule a route deviation.

Transit operates shuttle service between Frederick and Brunswick/Jefferson, Emmitsburg/Thurmont, Walkersville, East Frederick, North Frederick, Point of Rocks, and the Route 85/Crestwood Boulevard business corridor.

For more information, please call 301-600-2065 or check our website: [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/transit](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/transit). Schedules are also available by mail, on board Transit vehicles, or at the following additional locations: Frederick County Treasurer Office, Frederick County Senior Center, City Hall, C. Burr Artz Library, FCC, Frederick County Visitors Center, Boscov's, YMCA, and many other community service organizations.

### **Travel Training**

For assistance in learning to use the fixed-route system, view the travel training video, "Road to Travel Independence," on Transit's website. Additional training, including the video and travel planning assistance, is available. For more information, contact the Receptionist at 301-600-2065 or email Transit at [Transit@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:Transit@frederickcountymd.gov).

### **ADA Paratransit**

If you have a disability that prevents you from using accessible fixed-route transit, you may be eligible for our ADA Paratransit service, a component of our Transit-plus service. The ADA Paratransit service area and hours are comparable to that of our fixed-route bus service operating in the City of Frederick. ADA Paratransit is available to registered Transit-plus paratransit customers whose trip origin and destination are within a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius of all Transit's fixed and deviated-fixed Connector and Shuttle bus routes. Trip purposes are unrestricted, next-day reservations are accepted. For more information, please call Transit-plus at 301-600-1725, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

### **Taxi Access Program (TAP)**

The mission of the Taxi Access Program (TAP) is to provide registered Transit-plus customers with additional transportation resources. The TAP program allows Transit-plus customers access to taxi services as an alternative to Transit-plus. Transit-plus users are eligible to use TAP once they have been active with Transit-plus for one (1) month and have taken three (3) trips or have been denied three (3) trips due to Transit-plus overcapacity. For more information on TAP, please visit <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/6483/Taxi- Access-Program>.

### **Frederick County Alerts**

Stay up to date on all service changes and cancelations by signing up to receive Transit Alerts through ALERT Frederick County. Register to receive alerts at [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/alerts](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/alerts) and sign up to receive the type of alerts you would like.