

LIFT SERVICE USER'S GUIDE

**Paratransit Service
of
Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority**

Effective 1/1/03 (*revised 3/1/10*)

LIFT SERVICE

**The Paratransit Service
of
Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority**

820 SE Quincy St.

Topeka, Kansas 66612-1114

(785) 783-7000 Voice/TDD

www.TopekaTransit.com

This guide is available in an accessible format upon request.

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Accessible Service

The Board of Directors of the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (*also known as Topeka Transit*) has resolved that the mission of the Authority is:

To provide safe, reliable, courteous and efficient public transportation service to all residents and guests of the Topeka community.

To achieve this mission, Topeka Transit shall operate and maintain a transit system in the Topeka metropolitan area. This system shall operate in an ethical manner within the framework of all regulatory and budgetary constraints while respecting the rights and contributions of its employees.

With this mission in mind, Topeka Transit's Lift system was established in 1976 as one of the first paratransit services in the USA. The Lift is a door-to-door accessible bus service for those persons with disabilities in Topeka who are functionally unable to use the wheelchair accessible fixed-route bus system.

Topeka Transit is committed to providing the best service for the community that can be achieved and realizes that all persons should be afforded equal public transit opportunities.

The following information will help Lift passengers and Topeka Transit staff work together to provide the best possible service to the largest number of persons requesting transportation. As Topeka Transit strives to meet the needs of all riders, the cooperation and understanding of passengers is appreciated.

Eligibility for Service

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) establishes accessibility regulations for public transit services. To use Lift services, a person must be certified as eligible according to ADA criteria, which is based on a person's *functional inability* to use the wheelchair accessible fixed-route bus system.

Persons wanting to become certified to use the Lift must complete an application form and return it to Topeka Transit. Applications are available by calling (785) 783-7000, by visiting the Quincy Street Station at 820 SE Quincy Street or by writing the Lift Service at 820 SE Quincy Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1114.

The application form must be completed in a standard written or typed format, however, the application instructions are available in an accessible format upon request. Assistance in completing the application will be provided, if needed.

The application is reviewed for determination of eligibility once it is received. Applicants are to provide as much information as possible to describe their disability and how it affects their ability to ride a fixed-route bus. All information received remains confidential. Eligibility is based on a person's *functional inability* to use the wheelchair accessible fixed-route system. Applicant information may be verified, with the applicant's authorization, when required. In some instances, an applicant may be asked to have a functional assessment made by an independent agency to determine his or her functional ability to ride a fixed-route bus.

Once eligibility is determined, the applicant is issued an identification number and provided a copy of the Lift User's Guide, which contains the policies and procedures for the service.

Passengers are responsible for reading and adhering to all policies and procedures. Re-certification for services will be required, and is the responsibility of each passenger, prior to expiration of their current eligibility period. Persons with Topeka Transit Lift eligibility will be able to use paratransit services in other U.S. cities, in accordance with the availability of accessible transportation of that transit system.

In some instances, applicants are granted conditional eligibility and will have their use of the Lift service determined on a trip-by-trip basis. Conditional eligibility may be deemed necessary if a person's functional ability is affected by situations such as certain weather conditions, unfamiliar or inaccessible travel paths, or a disability with varying degrees of incapacity.

Persons deemed not eligible will receive notification and instructions on how to request an appeal. An appeal must be filed within 60 days of notice and a determination will be made within 30 days of receiving the appeal.

Requesting a ride

Passengers may arrange a ride any time prior to 5:00 p.m. the day before the ride is needed by calling the scheduling office at **783-7000**. Rides requested for the same day will be scheduled only if time and space are available. Reservations may be made up to one (1) week in advance.

Ride requests for Monday through Saturday Lift service may be made from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Passenger calls may be received by a voice mail service on weekdays when the scheduling personnel are assisting other clients or on weekends when the office is closed. Messages are checked as soon as possible and return calls are attempted. If you reach the voice mail, it is important to leave a message with the following specific information:

1. Name and telephone number
2. Exact pick-up location (including address, door, apartment number, building, etc)
3. Exact destination location and zip code
4. Date and desired pick-up time. Also state desired arrival time if possible.
5. Return pick-up time, if return trip is desired
6. If a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or Guest (Escort) will be accompanying you
7. Any mobility aids you will be using or other special instructions

Please try to schedule flexible trips, such as shopping or entertainment, during the least busy service hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., when possible. A fare is to be paid for each stop made to a destination point, even if the stop takes only a few minutes.

Vehicle operators **do not** make trip reservations, unauthorized stops, or destination changes.

The phone personnel are extremely busy, therefore, please have addresses and know exactly what you need to schedule prior to calling the scheduling office; schedulers will not look up addresses in the phone book on behalf of clients. **In addition, it is requested that personal conversation and repeat calls be kept to a minimum.**

Subscription Service (also known as Standing Orders)

Subscription service is limited to passengers traveling to the same place at the same time each week for a minimum period of 90 days. **Due to the amount of time and effort it takes the schedulers to arrange subscription rides, please know exactly what you need before placing your request.**

Topeka Transit has the right to terminate any subscription service if there is a consistent pattern of cancellations or changes of any part of the subscription.

Getting ready for your trip

It is also the passenger's responsibility to be ready to leave at the scheduled time and place when the vehicle arrives. If you are not able to let yourself in/out of your home and/or cannot be left alone, be sure that another person is present to help you.

Operators are not responsible for providing personal care assistance and are not qualified to render medical aid. Those who need such assistance or need help in obtaining an attendant should call a local disability agency or an independent living resource center.

It is the passengers' responsibility to confirm their ride information the day of their ride. **The vehicle may arrive up to 15 minutes before or after the scheduled pick-up time**, so you should be ready and waiting at the designated location.

If conditions delay the vehicle fifteen (15) minutes beyond the pick-up time, please contact the scheduling office.

Please make certain you have the exact fare before your ride arrives. You may pay exact cash fare or with a Lift ticket. Ticket strips contain 10 one-way ride tickets and may be purchased through the mail, at Quincy Street Station (820 SE Quincy St), or at participating outlet locations. **If you do not have the fare, you will not be transported.**

Waiting times

Due to time constraints and to alleviate distress caused to other passengers, it is necessary to have a limited waiting period for the time an operator will wait on a passenger at the pick-up point. **The waiting time will be three (3) minutes from the scheduled pick-up time.**

If the vehicle has been delayed past the scheduled pick-up time, the operator will wait three (3) minutes from the actual arrival time. Passengers who are not ready to board by this time or who are not at the designated location will be charged with a no-show and the vehicle will continue on with its route. Policies on no-shows and cancellations will be explained later in this guide.

If appropriate, the operator will sound the horn when the vehicle arrives. Passengers should be at a location where they can see or hear the vehicle when it arrives. If requested, a specific means of indicating the vehicle has arrived will be pre-arranged for persons with both hearing and visual impairments.

It is the passenger's responsibility to verify the exact time by calling Time & Temperature at 233-6471. This time will correspond with Topeka Transit atomic clocks.

Return rides

Requests for return rides should be placed when the original ride request is made. As stated earlier, all rides must be requested by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the date needed **or** up to one week in advance.

When the desired return time is uncertain, it might be helpful for you to contact the office or the individual with whom you have the appointment to ask for an estimated completion time. Allow plenty of time to finish your appointment in order to meet the vehicle at your scheduled pick-up time.

Passengers who must cancel a return ride because an appointment ran late should state that as the reason for canceling the trip.

Upon the riders' request and **time permitting**, a second vehicle **may** be able to return at a later time.

Negotiation time and drive time

When assigning your ride to a vehicle, the ADA provides for a one-hour negotiation time on either side of the requested pick-up time. This negotiation time will be used when a passenger's schedule is flexible. In instances when the arrival time is not flexible, such as work, medical, or school trips, a negotiation time of one hour **prior** to the appointment time may be used. On return rides, a negotiation time of one hour **following** the requested pick-up time may be used. An average of 30 minutes drive time from the pick-up to arrival time may also be included in scheduling.

Contractors

At times, passengers may be transported by a privately contracted vehicle rather than a Lift vehicle. This option is available due to arrangements between Topeka Transit and local private providers and is only available when scheduled by Topeka Transit personnel. The cost of the ride will be the same whether it is a Lift vehicle or a private contractor and contractors accept Lift tickets for payment. **All ride changes or cancellations must be made through the Lift service office and all policies/guidelines apply for rides arranged with private contractors. Persons who call a private contractor directly to request or change a ride must pay the normal fare charged by that company.**

Passengers cannot request to ride with a contractor rather than a Topeka Transit vehicle.

Cancellation and No-Show Policy

Cancellations

To cancel a ride, you must call **at least one hour prior** to the scheduled pick-up time. Canceling in advance allows us the opportunity to redirect vehicles to other riders needing service.

To cancel a ride:

Call **783-7000**:

- ◆ Speak to the person answering or leave a message on the voice mail.
- ◆ Give your name and telephone number.
- ◆ Give the date and time of the ride(s) to be canceled.
- ◆ Give the address of the pick-up and destination locations.

Late Cancellations

If a passenger calls to cancel within one (1) hour of the scheduled pick-up time, it is known as a late cancellation. When cancelling late, please state the reason for the cancellation.

A pattern of late cancellations may result in suspension of service for a period of four weeks.

No-shows

A ride is considered a *no-show* when:

1. A passenger does not show up at the designated location on time, *or*
2. A passenger is not ready within the standard three (3) minute waiting time.

Return rides, if applicable, will **NOT** be canceled and may result in additional no-shows. ***Please contact the office immediately if you want subsequent rides canceled.***

A pattern of no-shows may result in suspension of service for a period of four weeks.

Suspension of service

Records will be reviewed when a person has a pattern of late cancellations or no-shows. According to Federal ADA regulations, a transit system may suspend service to individuals who establish a pattern or practice of no-shows (*Federal Register, Vol. 56, No. 173, Sept. 6, 1991, 49 CFR, Sec. 37.125{h}*).

Late Cancellations:

A letter of warning may be issued after three **late cancellations** within a 30-day period. A fourth late cancellation within that same 30 days may result in a suspension of service. The reason for the late cancellations, if given, will be taken into consideration when assessing a suspension of service.

No-shows:

A letter of warning may also be sent after two **no-shows** within a 30-day period. A third no-show within that same 30 days may result in a suspension of service.

The suspension period will last a period of four weeks.

Appeal procedure

An appeal process will be available to all persons who have received notice of suspension of service. Before suspension of service takes place, the passenger will be notified by certified mail of the intention to suspend service.

Passengers who have been notified of the intention to suspend service may call or write the Director of Operations within five (5) business days of receipt of the notice to appeal the decision to suspend service. The appeal committee will consist of three Topeka Transit managers. Persons who do not appeal will have service suspended beginning on the sixth day after receipt of the notice.

If the decision to suspend service is upheld, the passenger may further request a final appeal with Topeka Transit and a representative of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Services (ACATS). The hearing decision will be final.

Passenger Accommodations

Assistance from Operators

1. Door-to-door service only.
 - a. Operators will not lift passengers and/or wheelchairs.
 - b. Operators will not enter homes or nursing facilities. Passengers must be able to exit on their own or receive appropriate assistance from their personal care attendant.
 - c. Operators will not handle keys to lock or unlock doors, activate or de-activate house alarms, or use security codes.
 - d. Operators will not enter a business facility beyond the first floor lobby to look for passengers. Passengers must be ready at the door of the scheduled location when the vehicle arrives.
 - e. Ramps must meet A.D.A. specifications and be free of snow, ice, and debris.
 - f. The pathway to and from the bus must be safe and free of debris. If the operator or supervisor determines the pathway too dangerous or steep, the passenger must travel to the vehicle on their own without operator assistance.

2. Package assistance is limited.
 - a. Operators are not to carry or handle groceries, parcels, or packages.
 - b. Large items or items that pose a safety/health threat will not be transported. It is the passengers' responsibility to make separate delivery arrangements (examples: televisions, firearms, furniture, computers, plants, gasoline, boxes, etc.)
 - c. If a passenger has a need to transport an additional mobility aid along with them, prior approval must be given by the Director of Operations. If space is available and approval given, there will be a **\$10.00** surcharge for the service payable at the time the service is provided.
 - d. Passengers are to find other assistance or make separate arrangements for delivery if there are more items than they can handle in one trip to the vehicle; **multiple trips to and from the vehicle are prohibited**. In addition, bags or packages must not be stowed in the walkways or seats. This policy also applies when using our contractors.

3. Assistance with fare collection is also limited.
 - a. Fare must be readily available to put in the fare box or give to the operators.
 - b. Operators do not sell tickets.
 - c. Tickets are available through the mail, at various outlets, and at the Quincy Street Station (820 SE Quincy).
 - d. Operators do not make or carry change for individual fares.
 - e. Operators will not remove fares from wallets, purses or passenger's clothing. Passengers may put their fare in an envelope or carrying case specially designed for the fare (please notify the office if doing so).
 - f. Passengers must have the correct fare upon boarding in order to ride.
No credit or billing available.

Other assistance information

Please be sure the address of your house, apartment, or building is posted and visible from the street to assist the operators in locating you. It is the passenger's responsibility to provide clear, concise location information.

If a passenger cannot be left unattended at their destination, a staff or family member must be waiting to receive the passenger at least 5 minutes past the pick-up time. If no one is there to receive them, the operators may choose to keep the passenger on board and deliver at a later time. **The passenger will be charged one extra fare for each additional drop-off attempt.**

According to ADA regulations, persons have certain rights for assistance from medical facilities, businesses, grocery stores, etc. and should request such assistance from them when needed.

Personal care attendants (PCAs)

One (1) Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may accompany a registered Lift rider at no additional charge. Your file **must** indicate that you are eligible to have a PCA travel with you. You must reserve space for your PCA when scheduling your trip and they must have the same origin and destination as you do.

Guests/Escorts

Guests are welcome to ride with you and must pay the regular paratransit fare. Due to limited space, each Lift rider is allowed one (1) guest per trip. You must reserve space for your guest (including children) when scheduling your trip and they must have the same origin and destination as you do.

Seating for additional guests is on a "space available" basis and must not result in denial of service to another certified eligible Lift passenger.

Children

Up to three children under age five may ride free with a fare-paying certified adult. If a passenger is traveling with an infant, toddler, or small child, it is the passengers' responsibility to provide a child safety seat or booster seat according to the law. Topeka Transit and its contractors **do not** supply child safety or booster seats.

Visitors

Out-of-town visitors to Topeka who claim they cannot use the wheelchair accessible fixed-route buses will be presumed eligible for a period of 21 days per year. After 21 days, visitors will be required to complete a Topeka Transit application for A.D.A. paratransit eligibility.

Animals

Guide and service animals are allowed on all Topeka Transit and contract vehicles. Companion animals and pets are allowed only if transported in a **latched pet carrier**. Passengers are responsible for loading and unloading the carrier and must maintain control of the animal at all times. When scheduling your trips, please inform the scheduling office if an animal will be accompanying you.

Use of securements and seat belts

Topeka Transit requires all wheelchairs and motorized scooters be secured when in any bus or contracted vehicle to prevent movement during normal trips, while making emergency stops or in order to avoid incidents. Lap and shoulder belts are available at wheelchair securement locations and Topeka Transit urges its riders to use them for additional safety.

Passengers are to remain seated and keep their mobility aid secured until the vehicle comes to a complete stop at their destination. It is the responsibility of the operator to attach and remove the securements. In addition, the operator is the only person who should be operating the lift device or any other device on the vehicle.

The lift will accommodate common wheelchairs. These common wheelchairs are defined as **not to exceed 30 inches in width or 48 inches in length** when measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds in total weight when occupied. Mobility devices larger than these standards may be denied service aboard Topeka Transit and contract vehicles. For our riders' safety, Topeka Transit cannot transport riders with broken mobility devices. Please make certain they are clean, safe, and in good working condition before traveling. In addition, the mobility device needs to be free from clutter (clothing, bags, sacks, etc.) to allow for proper securement.

Topeka Transit offers free securement loops, which can be attached to a passenger's wheelchair or scooter. The loops provide a readily visible securement location for the operators to use. To obtain a set of the loops, go to the Quincy Street Station at 820 SE Quincy Street or call 783-7000. Loops are available while supplies last. There is a fee for replacement loops.

Boarding the bus

Any person who is not able to climb steps into a bus may request to use the lift platform when boarding. For stability, handrails are provided on both the lift device and the steps. Please have your exact fare readily available to give the operator upon boarding.

Rules for All Passengers

Riders are asked to follow these rules of conduct both on board any bus and while at Quincy Street Station to ensure the safety and comfort of all riders and the operator.

- No smoking inside vehicles and facility
- No open food/drink containers on board (must be in sealed container)
- No eating or drinking
- No service if passenger is not wearing a shirt, pants, or shoes
- No service if passenger has poor personal hygiene or body odor
- No playing of radios, computers, games, or MP3's/Ipods without headphones
- No cell phones on speaker or loud conversations which may distract operator
- No foul, abusive or threatening language
- No obscene or violent actions
- No spitting
- No littering
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- No fare evasion
- No firearms or weapons of any kind
- No operating or tampering with vehicle equipment
- No unruly behavior by young children or students
- No leaving items or children unattended
- No physical or verbal abuse of another rider or transit employee
- No unlawful posting of materials on any transit property
- No excessive carry-on items
- No packages in seats or aisles
- No animals, with the exception of guide/service animals
- No bikes allowed inside the bus; must use bike rack

In addition, customer service and scheduling personnel will not tolerate abusive, threatening, or foul language during phone calls. Riders who violate any of the above rules are subject to penalties, including being banned from Topeka Transit services and facilities. Riders who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or operator will be immediately banned and may face possible criminal prosecution.

Passenger safety is a primary concern. Under no circumstance will gasoline, kerosene, explosives of any kind, firearms, car batteries, panes of glass, large items or any other dangerous articles be allowed on the bus. The transport of common types of portable life support equipment, such as respirators or portable oxygen, is allowed. Equipment, which would violate the rules of transporting hazardous materials (Hazardous Materials Regulations), is prohibited. Also, keep your head and hands inside the vehicle at all times.

Fixed-route Service Information

Topeka Transit operates fixed-routes throughout Topeka Monday through Saturday using wheelchair accessible buses. Primary service operates from 5:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. weekdays and from 7:15 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturdays. For route information, call the Quincy Street Station at **783-7000**. Route schedules and maps are available upon request in an accessible format. Persons with a hearing impairment may call **783-7000** (TDD) for information.

Persons with disabilities, Medicare recipients, and person's age 65 and older may ride fixed-route buses at a reduced fare if they show a Topeka Transit Reduced Fare ID Card each time they board the fixed-route bus. To obtain an application form for a Reduced Fare ID Card, call **783-7000** or visit our website at www.topekatransit.com. Youth age 5 to 18 may also ride the fixed-route buses at the reduced fare by showing a valid high school ID or an ID showing their birth date.

The side facing seats closest to the front on the fixed route buses are reserved for persons with disabilities and the elderly. All ambulatory passengers may use the lift platform or kneeling feature upon request. Guide or service animals are allowed on all Topeka Transit vehicles. The passenger must maintain control of the animal at all times. Small pets or companion animals are allowed as long as they are in a pet carrier. All wheelchairs and scooters must be secured.

Passengers with folding grocery carts or baby strollers are asked to sit toward the back of the bus. Please fold the stroller when possible.

Bike racks are available on all Topeka Transit fixed route buses and can hold up to two bikes at one time. No bikes are allowed inside the bus. It is the passengers' responsibility to secure the bike on the rack and to remove it immediately after departing the bus. Please return the rack to the folded position. There is no extra charge for transporting the bike.

Comments, compliments or complaints regarding our service can be made by calling the Quincy Street Station at (785) 783-7000, sending an e-mail to info@topekatransit.com, or by writing to or visiting Quincy Street Station at 820 SE Quincy, Topeka, KS 66612-1114.