



Transportation & Parking Services

Auxiliary Services

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE

PARATRANSIT SERVICES

UGA Transportation and Parking Services
146 East Cloverhurst Avenue
West Parking Deck – Fifth Level
Athens, GA 30605
706-369-5991
van@uga.edu

Table of Contents

I.	Welcome to UGA Paratransit Services	
a.	Eligibility.....	3
II.	Service Areas and Hours	4
III.	Scheduling a Ride	5
a.	Personal Care Assistant (PCAs).....	6
b.	Cancellations.....	6
c.	“No Show” policies.....	6
d.	Subscription Services.....	7
IV.	Riding UGA Paratransit Services	
a.	Pickup and drop off	7
b.	Boarding with mobility devices.....	8
c.	Transporting packages.....	8
d.	Transporting life support equipment....	8
e.	Transporting children.....	8
f.	Transporting animals.....	9
g.	Out-of-area visitors	9
V.	Responsibilities	
a.	Rider responsibilities.....	9
b.	Driver responsibilities.....	10
VI.	Service Suspension	
a.	Reasons for suspensions.....	10
b.	Circumstances beyond your control.....	12
c.	Appeals Process.....	12
VII.	Using Regular Public Transit Service.....	14
VIII.	Customer Service.....	15
IX.	Quick Reference Numbers.....	15

I. Welcome to UGA Paratransit Services

UGA Paratransit Services is a complimentary ADA paratransit service provided for individuals who, because of their disability, are unable to use UGA TPS' fixed route bus service. This does not include disabilities that only make the use of accessible transit service difficult or inconvenient. UGA Paratransit Services provides comparable service to the regular fixed route bus in terms of shared rides, Curb -to- Curb pickup, service area, and hours and days of service.

Eligibility

UGA Paratransit Services provides rides for people who are certified as eligible for paratransit service under the rules of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as determined by the UGA Disability Resource Center. Eligibility for UGA Paratransit Services 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. Persons 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:

UGA Transportation and Parking Services
146 East Cloverhurst Avenue
West Parking Deck – Fifth Level
Athens, GA 30605
706-369-5991
vans@uga.edu

Contact us if you need an application in an alternative format or require in-person telephone assistance to complete your application.

Within 21 days of receiving your application, the Disability Resource Center will arrange a face-to-face interview for you. 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 rides but not for others, or it may be determined that you are capable of using UGA Transportation and Parking Services equipped fixed route bus service. All application information will be kept confidential.

If you need transportation to the interview, UGA Paratransit Services will pick you up and return you to your point of origin free of charge.

II. Service Areas and Hours

UGA Paratransit Services operates during the same days and hours as the regular fixed route service, Athens Transit.

Fall and Spring semesters when class is in session:

- Monday–Wednesday: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. regular service / 7:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. on-call service
- Thursday–Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. regular service / 7:00 p.m.–3:00 a.m. on-call service
- Saturday: 10:00 a.m.–3:00 a.m. on-call service
- Sunday: 12:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. on-call service

Intersession ([see calendar here](#)):

- Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. on-call service

Summer:

- Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–1:00 a.m. on-call service

Holidays: Services not available

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

The service area includes corridors that are within 0.75 mile of the fixed bus route.

III. Scheduling a Ride

You must call (706-369-5991) or email (vans@uga.edu) 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 or emailing 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:

Because of the demand, the more advanced notice you can give (7-14 days in advance), the more likely you are to get the ride you need. You may be asked to change your requested pickup time to accommodate your request for a reservation. The ADA allows us to negotiate a revised pickup with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pickup time.

The reservation telephone line is busiest in the morning hours; if possible, call after 11:00 a.m. Trip demand is heaviest between 7:30 – 10:00a.m. and 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. Try to schedule your trips outside these times, if possible, to increase the likelihood your ride request can be better accommodated.

Companions and Personal Care Assistants

As a certified rider you may arrange to bring one A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) is someone whose assistance you must have in order to ride para-transit. As a certified rider needing assistance, the PCA may ride with you at no charge. Your PCA and companion may both ride with you on the same trip. When making reservations for your ride, please tell the dispatcher if a companion or Personal Care Assistant will be riding with you.

Cancellations

To cancel trips, call the reservation line and speak to the dispatcher or send an email (vans@uga.edu). Cancellations can be left on an automated recorder that is turned on 24 hours a day. Please remember to cancel trips you cannot use as soon as possible or at least one hour before your pickup times. This will help free up space for others to ride and keep program costs down.

Call (706-369-5991) or email (vans@uga.edu) to cancel a ride.

No-Show – Definitions and Penalties

You will be considered a “no-show” if you:

- Reserve a ride but do not meet the vehicle within 3 minutes of its arrival.
- Call to cancel a trip less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

If you are a “no-show” for a trip and we are unable to contact you, any subsequent trips scheduled for the same day will be canceled unless we hear from you.

If you “no-show” three (3) times in six (6) months you may be suspended:

- 1st time – 1 week suspension and lose your subscription ride privileges.
- 2nd time – 2 week suspension.
- 3rd time – 30 day suspension.

NOTE: If a passenger cannot use a scheduled trip, the trip will be

counted as a “**Canceled**” and will not be counted as a “**No Show**”.

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 UGA Paratransit Services’ subscription service. This service allows riders to make regular trips without telephoning in for reservations or to confirm rides. Subscription riders need only to call to cancel their ride. A change in time, origination, or destination may change your eligibility for a subscription ride.

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 UGA Paratransit Services

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 3 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).

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 mobility devices such as wheelchairs and three wheel scooters up to 48” by 30” with a total weight up to 600 pounds, including the passenger. Mobility devices that exceed these standards may not be transportable.

- If you need a ramp to board a vehicle, the driver will assist you. All drivers are trained to operate the ramp.
- 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.

Transporting Packages

Because 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 can not 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 certified children ages six 13 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 or 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

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

V. Responsibilities

UGA Paratransit 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”.
- 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 / 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 you “no-show” 3 times in six months you may be suspended. The following process will occur when a passenger receives a No-Show:

1st No-Show: A *Written Notice* is sent. 2nd No-Show: A *Final Warning* is sent.

3rd No-Show: A *Suspension Notice* is sent.

No-Show – Penalties

- 1st suspension in 6 months: 1 week suspension and you will lose your subscription privilege.
- 2nd suspension in 6 months: 2 weeks suspension and you will lose your subscription privilege.
- 3rd suspension in 6 months: 30 days suspension and you will lose your subscription privilege.

3. Suspension for abusive or disruptive behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior can annoy or endanger passengers, drivers, and UGA Paratransit Services 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, UGA Paratransit 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 UGA Transportation and Parking Services' Paratransit Service regarding eligibility or a suspension, you should contact Director of Transportation and Parking Services, Todd Berven at 706-369-6228 for an administrative hearing. If you are still unsatisfied after an informal hearing, you can file a written appeal with the Disability Resource Center ADA Coordinator – Erin Benson (phone: 706-542-8719 / email: eew@uga.edu). 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 ADA regulations.

- An explanation of the appeals process is listed below.
- Appeals must be filed within 60 days of a denial of eligibility or a decision to suspend service.

- Appeals must be filed in writing or on audiocassette; accommodations will be made for persons unable to do so.
- You may ride the service until your eligibility / suspension appeal is heard.
- 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. At appeals hearing, introductions of panel members, passenger and presiding member.
2. An explanation of conflict of interest should an individual have a professional or personal relationship with a decision-maker.
3. An explanation of the appeal policy and the applicant’s rights to ensure that there is a clear understanding of process.
4. The basis on which decisions will be reached (e.g., majority vote, etc.).
5. 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.
6. A summary of initial determination / suspension findings and the informal review findings.

7. An opportunity for the applicant and /or her representative to provide additional information or dispute the initial determination / suspension findings.
8. the applicant or her representative questions and other persons involved.
9. Appeals panel deliberates and decides on course of action, with written decision concerning the appeal so that the applicant clearly understands what will happen following the hearing.
- 10.
11. Restatement of services or eligibility or denials / suspensions upheld.

VIII. Using Regular Public Transit Services

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

- Fares are at least half of those charged for UGA Paratransit Services.
- Senior citizens and people with disabilities are eligible for reduced fares on Athens Transit.
- 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 any time according to its schedule.

For information about riding UGA Transportation and Parking Services fixed route service, please call **706-369-6220**.

IX. Customer Service

If you experienced a problem with a specific ride or you need to make an appointment for eligibility certification, please call or email our office at 706-369-5991 / email: vans@uga.edu. UGA Paratransit Services 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, you may call or write to:

Director
UGA Transportation and Parking Services
2505 Riverbend Road
Athens, Georgia 30602
706-369-6228

X. Quick Reference Numbers (706 area code)

General information706-369-5991
Reservations/Cancellations.....706-369-5991/email
Service Eligibility Disability Resource Center
- ADA Coordinator – Erin Benson
 ▪ Phone: 706-542-8719
 ▪ email: eev@uga.edu
ADA Paratransit Application
- email vans@uga.edu or call 706-369-5991
Comments or Complaints 706-369-5991
Materials in Alternative Formats 706-542-8719
Administrative FAX.....706-369-6229
Georgia Relay Service: 866-694-5824
Hearing Impaired Customers 1-800-255-0056
For hearing customers..... 1-800-255-0135



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Transportation & Parking Services

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<https://tps.uga.edu/disability/paratransit>