



Transportation & Parking Services

Auxiliary Services

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE

PARATRANSIT SERVICES

UGA Transportation and Parking Services
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West Parking Deck – Fifth Level
Athens, GA 30605
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van@uga.edu

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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 access 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 have been temporarily injured and are unable to navigate to a fixed bus route. Applications for temporary services are located on the paratransit website.

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. People unable to navigate the fixed route system.
2. People who require a lift-equipped bus when the fixed route service does not provide accessibility.
3. People 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 Disabilities Resource Center
Clark Howell Hall
825 South Lumpkin Street
Athens, Ga. 30602
706-542-8719
drc@uga.edu

Accessible formats of our policies are available upon request. If you need text to voice relay, please call 711. 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.

II. Service Areas and Hours

UGA Paratransit Services office hours are M-F 6:00 am to 7:00 pm

Fall and Spring semesters when class is in session:

- Monday–Friday: 6:30 am.–7:00 p.m. regular service / 7:00 p.m.–11:59 pm on-call service

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

- Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.-no night services

Summer:

- Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. till 11:59 p.m.-on-call services

Holidays: School is Closed and there is No Service

- September 4, 2023
- November 23, 2023 – November 24, 2023
- December 25, 2023 – December 29, 2023
- January 1, 2024
- January 15, 2024
- May 27, 2024
- June 19, 2024
- July 4, 2024

III. Scheduling a Ride

Per ADA guidelines reservations require a minimum of 1 hour notice by emailing (van@uga.edu) You can arrange a trip up to 6:00 p.m. the day before you travel. Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. When emailing to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- Your first and last name
- Date of travel
- Pick up Time and location/drop off location (locations have to be owned by UGA) Please see map on website for the closet paratransit stop, or email if you can't find your stop
- If you will be bringing a service animal
- If you will be accompanied by a personal care attendant (PCA)
- 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.

Personal Care Assistants

As a certified rider you may arrange to bring (1) a Personal Care Assistant. A (PCA) is someone whose assistance you must have in order to ride paratransit and/or navigate around campus. When making reservations for your ride, please note in the email if a Personal Care Assistant will be riding with you.

Cancellations

To cancel trips, a minimum of 1 hour is required according to ADA guidelines. Please send an email (vans@uga.edu). Please remember to cancel trips as this will help free up space for others to ride and keep program costs down.

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.
- Cancel a trip less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

If you are a “no-show” for a trip and you do not contact us, any subsequent trips scheduled for the same day may be canceled.

If you “no-show” three (3) times within a semester you may be suspended:

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

NOTE: If a passenger cancels a trip following the guidelines listed above, it 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 emailing in for reservations or to confirm rides. Subscription riders need only to email to cancel their ride. A change in time, origination, or destination may change your eligibility for a subscription ride.

IV. Riding UGA Paratransit Services

Pickup and Drop Off

You can expect to be picked up within a 5-minute “window” of your scheduled pick-up time. You should be ready to board the vehicle at the beginning of your “Pickup Window”.

Pick up locations have been determined by paratransit along with the DRC, to give everyone access to the buildings. Please visit the paratransit website or the DRC website to see where the pickup locations are for the campus of UGA and surrounding locations owned by UGA, example Health Science Center campus. Paratransit provides services to buildings owned by UGA. If you need services to other locations outside of this area, please contact The Lift.

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 vans arriving within 5 minutes before or 5 minutes after the scheduled pickup time are considered on time and within the time 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 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 using the lift to walk up.
- For your safety, please make sure your wheelchair or other mobility device is maintained in accordance with manufacturer’s specifications.
- All passengers are required by Ga State Code 240-8-786.1 to use a safety belt while riding a passenger vehicle on any road. This includes passengers who use a wheelchair for transport. Passengers in wheelchairs are required to have their WC positioning belt or harness on correctly before boarding and during the ride. After the driver has secured the WC, they will add the safety belt to comply with state law. If a passenger possesses a written statement from a physician that such person is unable, for medical or physical reasons, to wear a safety belt according to Section (b) of Ga State Code 40-8-786.1, that passenger will not be required to wear a safety belt.
- All passengers including WC passengers are to be transported in the forward-facing position.

Transporting Packages

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

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

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

Transporting Service Animals

Service Animals are welcome on any van at any time. Please include in your email 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

The Lift from Athens Transit Clarke County can provide 21 days of service for ADA-certified persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside the Athens, Georgia area. Please 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 the pickup location and be on time.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute “window”.
- Email 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 in uniform with visible name tag.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle and 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 the 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 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 services 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. A 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 people involved.
9. The appeals panel deliberates and decides on a course of action, with a written decision concerning the appeal so that the applicant clearly understands what will happen following the hearing.
10. 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 reservations.
- You have more choice and independence since you can go anywhere the bus goes any time according to its schedule.
- For information about riding Athens Transit fixed route bus service, please call **706-613-3430**.

For information about riding UGA Transportation and Parking Services fixed route bus 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 Paratransit Manager or ADA director, 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 information 706-369-5991

Reservations/Cancellations..... email vans@uga.edu

Service Eligibility Disability Resource Center

- ADA Coordinator – Erin Benson
 - Phone: 706-542-8719
 - email: eeew@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: 711



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Transportation & Parking Services

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Paratransit Services

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