



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

The Bus Plus program is origin-to-destination transportation for people who have a disability that prevents them from using the fixed route bus system. The service is operated by the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority's Paratransit Department for people living within the metropolitan Des Moines area. The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), requires that Bus Plus service be comparable to the fixed route bus service as far as hours and areas served.

Eligibility

The Bus Plus program must meet all federal ADA rules and regulations. To be eligible for Bus Plus, a person's **disability must prevent him or her from getting to a bus stop, getting onto the bus or other difficulties with using the bus.** To start the eligibility process, a person must fill out a "Transportation Service Eligibility Form." This form must be submitted to DART's Paratransit Department, which will review the application and provide the results by mail within twenty-one (21) days.

The application review will indicate **one of three results:**

- ▶ Conditional approval for travel within a certain area or during certain weather conditions.
- ▶ Full approval for all Bus Plus services.
- ▶ Denial based on the person's ability to use the fixed route bus service.
- ▶ These results may also be temporary if the condition or disability is temporary in nature.
- ▶ Those who disagree with the results may appeal to the Bus Plus Appeal Committee.

Once a person has been approved as a Bus Plus customer, that person will remain eligible as long as the disability remains and he or she use the service at least once a year. If either situation does not occur, the customer may be notified by mail that his or her eligibility has been canceled. The customer may reapply at any time.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

Service Hours and Days

Bus Plus service operates the same days and hours as the fixed route buses.

Reservations

To make a reservation, Bus Plus customers must call Monday - Friday [515-283-8136](tel:515-283-8136) no later than 5 p.m. the day before the trip is to be taken. Reservations, however, will be accepted up to seven (7) days prior to the trip. Paratransit drivers cannot schedule a trip for a customer. [Actual pick-up times may vary up to one hour before or after the requested time.](#)

The following information must be ready when calling Paratransit to make a reservation:

- ▶ The addresses where the trip will start and where it will end.
- ▶ The appointment time or needed arrival time.
- ▶ Any special instructions such as assistance needed, or if a personal care attendant (PCA) will be traveling on the trip.

Reservations for Sunday and Monday travel may be made Monday through Friday during normal business hours on the regular reservations line [515-283-8136](tel:515-283-8136) OR the day before between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. by calling [515-283-8147](tel:515-283-8147). Customers will be directed to leave their name and telephone number where they can be reached between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. that day. A DART staff member will return the call to take the reservation.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

Office Hours

The Bus Plus office is open Monday - Friday 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. The office is closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays. DART services do not operate in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Driver Assistance

Driver assistance is available. The following rules apply to this assistance:

- ▶ Assistance will be provided from the door of the house or building to the bus and back.
- ▶ The Bus Plus driver will not be able to help passengers with non-transportation requests such as helping put on a coat or locking a door.
- ▶ Driver assistance with a mobility device on steps is not guaranteed and will be limited to a maximum of two steps. This service is based on the size of the passenger, the height of the step and the driver's ability.
- ▶ Assistance is to the first door only.
- ▶ Please limit packages or bags to what you can carry on board in one boarding trip and you can keep in control while the bus is in motion. Bags or packages should not block the aisle. You may request the driver's assistance loading and unloading packages or bags. Packages or bags should weigh no more than 15 pounds.
- ▶ When a family member or other individual is available, he or she will be expected to provide assistance rather than the driver.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

Traveling Companion and Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A [companion](#) may ride the Bus Plus service with a customer if there is [space available](#) on the vehicle. Companions must pay the same fare as the eligible Bus Plus customer.

If a customer cannot travel alone due to a disability, a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may ride with the customer. The customer [must be approved for service](#) prior to taking the trip. The attendant will not be charged a fare.

Companions and attendants are always welcome.

Fares and Payment

The fare for Bus Plus service is \$3.50 for any trip within the service area.

Requests for trips outside the Bus Plus service area may be taken on a space-available basis. The fare for trips that are up to three-quarters of a mile beyond the service area is \$8.00. For trips that are up to 1½ miles beyond the service area the fare is \$10.00 and for any trips beyond the 1½ miles outside the service area the fare is \$12.00.

The following [fare payment rules](#) apply:

- ▶ Customers must have exact fare as drivers do not carry change.
- ▶ The Bus Plus driver will collect only the fare for the trip the customer is taking at that time. A customer's return trip fare must be paid at the time the return trip is taken.
- ▶ Customers may pay with cash, personal checks or purple Paratransit tokens. There will be a \$25 service charge for returned checks.
- ▶ Only tokens acceptable for Bus Plus payment are the purple Paratransit tokens.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

Fares and Payment Cont.

- ▶ If a customer wishes to purchase tokens, he or she must call the office no later than the day before the tokens are needed for the trip, and the driver will deliver the tokens at the time the customer is picked up.

Bus Plus Policies

Bus Plus drivers have to keep a schedule just like other drivers. Therefore, Bus Plus drivers will **wait a maximum of five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.**

Customers must be ready and watching at their scheduled pick-up time, or they may miss the bus. A second vehicle will not be sent.

When customers cancel, or do not show up when they have scheduled a trip, service to others is impacted. A trip is considered a "canceled trip" when a customer calls Bus Plus prior to 4 p.m. the day before the trip, or at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. A trip is considered a "No Show" when a customer fails to take a trip or calls less than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Repeated "No Shows" or "Late Cancels" may result in a penalty. A copy of the complete Bus Plus No Show Policy is available online at www.ridedart.com or call 515-283-8136.

During the **winter, Bus Plus service will operate any time the fixed route bus service operates.** However, because the Bus Plus service operates on side streets that may not be cleared, Bus Plus staff may need to notify customers if a bus is unable to get to them. Drivers will assist customers when the walks are cleared of snow and ice. It is a customer's responsibility to have walks cleared.

Some customers may be able to use the fixed route bus service if they were provided transportation to a bus stop. In these cases, the Bus Plus service will pick the customers up at their curb and take them to a bus stop, where they will need to transfer to the fixed route bus service to complete their trip. For more information about this policy, call 515-283-8136.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

Additional Services

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority provides a [training program](#) for customers with disabilities who, with personal training, may be able to use the local route bus service. Call 515-283-8136 to inquire about this service. This training is known as “travel training.”

Transportation Tips

Be Ready Early

Please be ready at least 15 minutes BEFORE your pick-up time. Buses run on flexible schedules and may arrive “early” to pick you up. The bus will wait only 5 minutes after it arrives.

Paratransit Vehicles

Paratransit has several different types of vehicles in use. As needed, Paratransit staff could send any bus in DART's fleet.



Bus Plus Rider's Guide

