



# **Paratransit Passenger Handbook**

EFFECTIVE: January 2023  
Update: September 2024

## **WHAT IS DIAL-A-RIDE?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) recognizes that some individuals are unable to use a fixed-route bus service even if the service is fully accessible. The ADA requires that transit agencies providing fixed-route bus services must also provide complementary ADA Paratransit services. This paratransit service is for those persons whose disabilities prevent them from using a fixed-route bus service for some or all their transportation needs. This does not include disabilities that make use of the accessible fixed-route transit service difficult or inconvenient. According to the law, ADA Paratransit is to “complement” the fixed-route bus service by providing service that is comparable in terms of service area, days/hours of operations, convenience, and several other factors. The specific criteria for determining who is eligible for ADA Paratransit are defined by ADA law. As a complementary or “sister” service, Dial-A-Ride (DAR) follows many of the same restrictions and is comparable in convenience in areas including wait times, length of trips, etc. to RapidRide, the fixed-route service. Dial-A-Ride is not a taxi, medical, or emergency transportation. It is a public shared-ride service.

## **TYPES OF RIDERS**

Riders may be approved permanently or temporarily, conditionally, or unconditionally, or as a visitor. Upon approval of services, riders are informed of their status and provided with any additional guidance necessary. Riders who are unsure as to their status are encouraged to contact the Rapid Transit System (RTS) Operations Coordinator.

## **WHERE DOES DIAL-A-RIDE GO?**

Dial-A-Ride can only provide transportation within the corporate city limits of Rapid City. Rides cannot be scheduled without a physical street address. Dial-A-Ride will make reasonable attempts to get as close to the preferred entrance to any location, however, buses will only access locations that have been deemed safe according to internal safety policies.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

### **Monday – Friday**

- Bus Hours | 6:10am – 5:50pm
- Office Hours | 7:00am – 5:30pm
- Depot Lobby Hours | 7:30am – 5:00pm

### **Saturday**

- Bus Hours | 8:30am – 5:30pm

### **Sunday**

- Not in operation

**RTS is closed for the following holidays:** New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>), Fourth of July, Labor Day, Native American Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, and Christmas Day. Holiday closures are posted in buses and on Facebook 2 weeks in advance, and a list is also noted on our website.

## **COST: FARES, TICKETS AND PASSES**

Dial-A-Ride operates with a “No Fare, No Ride” policy. Riders are not permitted to ride free of charge regardless of the trip's purpose. Riders must provide their fare, ticket, or pass upon boarding. Riders cannot obtain these upon arrival at their destination. Fares are one-way and each trip must be paid individually to the driver. A rider may not pay all their daily fares to their first driver.

<b>Cash Fare</b>	Zone 1 - \$3.00 one way	<b>10-Ride Tickets</b>	Zone 1 - \$27.00
	Zone 2 - \$3.50 one way		Zone 2 - \$31.50

**Monthly Calendar Pass\*** Unlimited rides Zone 1 and Zone 2- \$90.00

## **PAYING FARES AND MAKING PURCHASES**

Individual fares, tickets, and passes may be purchased directly from the bus driver with cash, check, or voucher. Drivers do not carry change and ID is required for check purchases. Riders may purchase tickets or passes at the Milo Barber Bus depot during lobby hours with cash, check, debit/credit card, or voucher. ID is required for check and debit/credit card purchases. RTS cannot process payments over the phone, via the Internet, or by postal mail. RTS cannot hold, mail, or deliver tickets or passes. Each sale is a direct exchange.

10-Ride Tickets will be hole punched by the driver and should be disposed of when “full”. Monthly Calendar Passes are business card-sized and must be shown to the driver upon boarding. These are only valid in the calendar month and are not discounted if purchased within the month. Passes are available to purchase on the 20th of the month prior. Monthly passes are non-transferable and cannot be shared between riders. There are no refunds, exchanges, or replacements.

Zone 1 rides are those in which the pick-up and drop-off location is less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the fixed-route. Zone 2 rides are those in which the pick-up and/or drop-off location is more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the fixed-route. Riders do not need to calculate their zones and will be informed of their zone by the dispatch staff. In the event a rider has a Zone 1 ticket, but a Zone 2 ride, they may use the ticket and pay an additional \$0.50 per ride.

## **HOW TO SCHEDULE A RIDE**

Ride requests are accepted by the dispatch office via phone. Riders are encouraged to schedule as far in advance as possible as all rides are scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis regardless of ride purpose. Dial-A-Ride does not schedule, re-schedule, or adjust schedules on the same day. The following information is required when scheduling:

- Rider's first and last name
- Scheduler's first and last name if not the rider
- Phone number
- Day and date the ride is needed
- Address and the name of the pick-up location
- Address and the name of the destination
- Appointment or requested arrival time
- Requested pick-up time
- Verify if any return or additional rides are needed and provide the address(es) and location name(s)
- Verify if a guest, a personal care attendant, or an animal will also travel

## **TIME FRAMES OR “WINDOWS”**

**RIDE REQUEST WINDOW:** Rides may be requested, canceled, or changed as early as 14 days in advance. Rides may be requested or changed as late as the day prior by 3:30pm. Ride requests and changes are only accepted from 7:00am-3:30pm. Cancellations may be requested at any time.

**PICK-UP WINDOW:** Dial-A-Ride operates with a back-end pick-up window of 20 minutes. For example, if a pick-up time is 7:30am, the bus could arrive anytime between 7:30am and 7:50am. The bus is not considered late if they arrive within this time frame. All schedules are made with this window in mind to ensure riders will still arrive at their destination on time.

**SCHEDULING WINDOW:** Due to the ride-share nature of the service, arrival/departure times are based on a 1-hour scheduling window. This window length is consistent with the scheduling a RapidRide rider may experience. Riders may be dropped off and/or picked up within 1 hour of their requested time. For example: if a rider requests to arrive at a destination at 9:00am, they may be delivered anytime between 8:00am and 10:00am. Riders will be made aware of the specific pick-up time upon scheduling. Appointment-based trips, such as medical visits or employment, will not be subject to 1-hour late arrivals.

### **ON-BOARD WINDOW:**

Regardless of the time of day, location or travel distance rides can last as long as 1 hour and 10 minutes. This is consistent with ride times a RapidRide rider may experience.

### **NO-SHOW/WAIT TIME WINDOW:**

Upon arrival to pick-up a rider, the driver will wait for 5 minutes. If the rider does not board the bus within that time the ride will be canceled and will be considered a "no-show". Please see the no-show policy listed in this handbook.

### **LOCATIONS**

It is the rider's responsibility to provide location addresses and names. Physical street addresses are required for scheduling. Dispatch staff will not look up these details on a rider's behalf. Ride requests will not be scheduled if this information is excluded or if an address provided does not exist. Riders who provide an incorrect address will not be re-routed. They will be dropped off and picked-up at the address they provided even if it is not the location they desired. In some instances, locations have multiple doors or entrances. Riders must inform dispatch at the time of scheduling which entrance they prefer. If it is incorrect, they will still be dropped off and picked up at the entrance they requested.

DAR highly recommends that riders verify times when businesses are open so that they may request their rides with the understanding that they may arrive or depart 1 hour outside their requested time.

Due to safety protocols, not all locations are accessible to a bus. DAR makes every attempt to get as close to a location as possible and will inform the rider of the safest, accessible location. In addition, it is the rider's responsibility to ensure the location is accessible to them should they need ramps, cleared pathways, etc.

### **CHANGING RIDE DETAILS**

Requests for changes to demand or subscription rides follow the same scheduling policies as new rides. These may be requested up to 14 days in advance, but no later than 3:30pm the day prior. This policy includes adjustments to requested arrival/departure times and location changes.

Ride changes may only be requested with the dispatch office. Drivers do not make changes to assigned trips which includes adjusting scheduled times, locations, or the order in which riders are picked up or dropped off.

### **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

The back-end or pick-up from a medical appointment is the only ride exempt from the same-day ride scheduling policies. If a medical appointment is done early riders may contact the dispatch office to request an earlier pick-up time. If a rider is aware they will not be done on time, and have the ability, they may call the dispatch office to inform them of their appointment running late. Whether they can call in advance or not, riders may contact the dispatch office to request a pick-up once they are done with their appointment. Adjusted pick-up times will depend on the current time in relation to the originally scheduled pick-up time and driver availability. DAR is not able to accommodate riders who finish their appointments at the end of RTS operating hours.

If a rider has pre-scheduled rides after medical appointments to locations other than their home, adjustments to subsequent ride times or locations will not be accommodated.

### **OFF HOURS SCHEDULING**

Ride requests or changes to scheduled rides may be submitted on days when Dial-A-Ride is closed, including Sundays and Holidays. All the necessary ride request information (listed above) must be left with the dispatch office via voicemail between the hours of 7:00am-3:30pm. Rides will be scheduled on the following business day after 7:00am.

### **SCHEDULING ABUSE POLICY**

Frequently scheduling and canceling rides not only monopolizes the dispatcher's time, it also causes disturbances in service for other riders. Riders are strongly encouraged to ensure their ride request meets their needs and they have full intentions of

utilizing. DAR should not be used as a “backup.” Every time a ride detail is changed (location, time, etc.) it is canceled and rescheduled. To reduce scheduling abuse, ridership privileges may be suspended for 30 days if a rider schedules nine or more rides and/or cancels more than 30% of those rides during a calendar month.

### **SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES**

Reoccurring rides with the same details may qualify for subscription services. This service allows a rider to schedule these rides in one call and all subsequent rides will be automatically scheduled. They will continue to be auto-scheduled until canceled. Those receiving a subscription service must notify the dispatch office immediately if an individual ride, or the entire subscription service, is no longer needed.

### **SUBSCRIPTION ABUSE POLICY**

Subscriptions are offered as a convenience to riders who have the same regular trip needs for the foreseeable future. Constant changes to subscriptions create excessive work for staff and causes disturbances in service for other riders. Requests to alter any part of a subscription more than once every quarter (3 months) may be denied and riders may risk losing their ability to utilize subscription scheduling for a period of 1 quarter (3 months).

### **SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE WAIT LIST**

Subscription service requests are scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis and the percentage of subscription riders in any given time frame is limited. This ensures that demand rides can be accommodated consistently.

At the time of a subscription request, it will be determined if the new subscription can be added to the current schedule. If the request cannot be accommodated at that time it will be placed on a waitlist. Riders may also request to be added to the waitlist if the times offered are not ideal for them. As subscriptions are canceled, the waitlist will be reviewed and riders will be contacted with a new or updated subscription.

### **HOW TO CANCEL A RIDE?**

If a ride is no longer needed, riders are encouraged to contact Dial-A-Ride as soon as possible. This allows another rider to utilize that time and space. Cancellations may be requested as early as 14 days in advance. While Dial-A-Ride expects a minimum of a 1-hour notice of cancellation, rides can still be canceled up to 15 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Cancellation requests are accepted by the dispatch office via phone. When calling or leaving a voice message to cancel a ride the following information is required:

- Rider's first and last name
- Scheduler's first and last name if not the rider
- Phone number
- Day and date of the ride
- Which ride(s) should be canceled

The rider must specify which rides are to be cancelled, whether it is a single ride, or multiple rides at one time. If a rider cancels their first ride of the day subsequent rides will not automatically be cancelled.

### **LATE CANCELLATION POLICY**

Riders are expected to provide Dial-A-Ride with ample time to cancel a ride so that other riders may utilize that time and space on the bus. Rides can be canceled up to 14 days in advance but should be canceled no later than 60 minutes (1 hour) before the scheduled pick-up time. To reduce late canceling abuse, ridership privileges may be suspended for 30 days if a rider schedules nine or more rides and/or cancels more than 20% of those rides late during a calendar month.

### **NO SHOWS**

Any rider who has made a reservation, but neither keeps it nor cancels it 15 minutes in advance is considered a no-show. Cancellations upon arrival will likewise be treated as a no-show. No show's not only waste valuable resources and time it also causes disturbances in service for other riders. To reduce no-show abuse, ridership privileges may be suspended for 30 days if a rider schedules nine or more rides and/or no-show's more than 10% of those rides during a calendar month.

## **WHO CAN RIDE WITH ME?**

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are individuals who provide some type of assistance to a rider which enables them to be successful with their transportation. PCAs may be necessary for some or all rides. PCAs are not provided by DAR. If a rider requires any level of assistance beyond what DAR can provide it is their responsibility to obtain the services of a PCA. PCAs may ride at no additional cost and rides are limited to one PCA per trip.

Riders may also invite a guest to accompany them. This includes children riders. Guests' fares will be equal to that of the rider they are accompanying. Guests are not permitted to utilize a ticket or pass and must pay their fare with cash or check unless they are an approved DAR rider. The number of guests allowed will vary based on seating availability.

Riders must notify DAR of the presence of a PCA or guest when scheduling rides. If a guest will be joining the rider on the bus, the rider must inform dispatch of the guests' mobility status when scheduling the rides. PCAs and guests are not provided with rider accommodations or services, but a seat space will be reserved for them. PCAs and guests must board and de-board from the same location and at the same time as the rider. Riders are responsible for the behavior of their PCAs and guests. PCAs and guests who fail to abide by the Dial-A-Ride behavior expectations risk suspension from accompanying a rider for a period of 7 days to 90 days.

## **BOARDING THE BUS**

Riders are expected to be ready to board as soon as the bus arrives. This is more easily accomplished if the rider is waiting in a safe place at or near the main entrances. Riders are encouraged to double-check that they have their fare, ticket, or pass ready before the bus arrives. Drivers will not honk, exit the bus, or call/text/email the rider upon arrival. Additionally, riders will not be sent scheduling reminders or notifications of an upcoming pick-up. Riders are welcome to contact the dispatch office to verify their pick-up times if needed.

Some riders have been identified as requiring a Special Services Accommodation. For riders receiving this accommodation, the driver will park, exit their bus, and come to the front entrance of the location. Drivers will knock or ring the doorbell but are not permitted to enter. The Special Services Accommodation does not exempt a rider from the no-show policy. After the initial attempt to meet the rider at the door, the driver may return to their bus for the remaining 5 minutes. If a rider has any questions or would like to request this accommodation they may contact the Operations Coordinator.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AND SERVICES**

Dial-A-Ride can accommodate a variety of mobility devices including manual wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, crutches, portable oxygen, etc. Drivers are thoroughly trained on wheelchair securement best practices and all efforts are made to safely secure riders with mobility devices. Any concerns regarding securement will be discussed with the rider to find the best solution.

Dial-A-Ride will evaluate if services can be provided to any rider using the lift if their weight alone, or their weight in combination with their wheelchair's weight, exceeds the 800-1000 lb. capacity of the lift equipment.

The Rapid Transit System encourages all mobility devices to be in a safe operating condition including handgrips, locking brakes, inflated tires, and footrests. However, riders will not be denied service if devices do not include these safety features.

All riders must remain in an upright, seated position, facing forward while being transported. They may choose to transfer to a seat or remain in their mobility device once on the bus.

Drivers may assist with pushing a manual wheelchair as long as doing so does not pose a risk to the rider, driver, or equipment. If a rider utilizing a wheelchair requires assistance to and/or from the bus, they have two options available to them. If there are no safety hazards and ramps comply with the standards identified in the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities regulations (i.e., Appendix A to Part 37 of the ADA) then the driver may assist. If the ramp does not meet the standards or a safety hazard has been identified, the rider will need to obtain assistance from a PCA or make other

arrangements. Drivers are not permitted to enter a home/location, therefore riders who request assistance must first be able to exit their home/location.

Drivers will not assist passengers in driving or operating electric wheelchairs or scooters. Riders utilizing these devices must be able to maneuver the device independently and safely. If a rider requires assistance with maneuvering an electric wheelchair or scooter, they will need to obtain assistance from a PCA or make other arrangements.

Drivers are not trained as medical providers or personal care attendants. Therefore, they will not attempt to provide a service or assistance that may pose a risk to the rider, driver, or equipment. Drivers are not permitted to provide physical assistance to riders. This includes, but is not limited to assistance up or down steps, standing from a seated position, or helping rider maintain their balance while walking to/from the bus.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Riders must be able to board the bus, independently, with all their items in one trip. Riders cannot get on and off the bus multiple times to load/unload their belongings. The number of personal items is limited to what can fit on the rider's lap, under a seat, or attached to a mobility device. Drivers are not responsible for personal belongings and will not carry, load, unload, or hold personal items. No rider may bring any item on the bus that has been deemed unsafe. This policy includes but is not limited to personal items such as shopping bags or devices such as walker. Riders who are unable to use the steps while carrying their items may utilize the lift or a PCA.

DAR is not responsible for items left on the bus. In the event an item(s) has been forgotten on a bus, riders may contact the dispatch office to inquire. Riders may either arrange for pick-up from the Milo Barber Bus Depot during regular lobby hours or the items can be provided to their next driver if possible. DAR will not deliver items. DAR does not hold onto lost and found items indefinitely.

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Dial-A-Ride is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation. Customers have the right to be treated fairly and considerately. In return, riders are expected to act courteously and respectfully towards each other, the drivers, and other RTS staff.

Any rider who conducts themselves in a manner that is discourteous, disrespectful, inappropriate, or otherwise unacceptable toward dispatchers, drivers, management staff, and/or other riders risks a suspension from RapidRide and Dial-A-Ride services from 1 day to 90 days. This includes riders who choose to not abide by Dial-A-Ride policies or create unnecessary delays in service after adequate warning, explanation, and support. Dial-A-Ride also strives to create good working relationships with caretakers, family members, and staff who support riders. However, the same behavioral expectations apply to these individuals. Failure to meet these expectations can result in the loss of a person's ability to work with RTS on a rider's behalf.

### **SEAT BELTS**

Seat belts are available for the safety of riders. Riders are encouraged to use seat belts, but not required. Shoulder harnesses are available for passengers in wheelchairs. Drivers are permitted to assist riders in securing seatbelts upon request.

### **PET POLICY**

Pets, comfort animals, and emotional support animals are permitted in the Milo Barber Bus Depot, on RapidRide and Dial-A-Ride Buses, and at bus stops with restrictions. Pets must be accompanied by and under the complete control of a mature rider. Pets must be appropriately restrained which includes short leashes, or locked carriers that prevent escape. Pet-owning riders must abide by the personal belongings policy when boarding, riding, and exiting the bus with their pet. Pets may only ride on a rider's lap or the floor without obstructing aisles or rider seating. Pets may not affect the comfort or convenience of others and may not create any health or safety hazards. Pet-owning riders are fully responsible for the behavior of their pet. Pet owners are required to utilize the pet waste area if the occasion arises and are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. Failure to abide by any of these policies may result in suspension of service for the owner and/or pet. It is recommended that any pet utilizing a Rapid Transit Service or facility be fully vaccinated and in good health.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals are exempt from some aspects of the pet policy.

## **TOBACCO, SMOKING AND VAPING**

Tobacco use, smoking and vaping is strictly prohibited on City of Rapid City property or within 30 feet of any entrance. This policy includes while onboard buses, at the depot, and at bus stops.

## **WINTER WEATHER**

Riders are responsible for ensuring their home is accessible and verifying the accessibility of their destination during winter weather events. If a pick-up location is not accessible the ride will be cancelled. A ride may be canceled if road conditions prevent the bus's safe access or deployment of the lift is unsafe for the rider to board/exit. Rides may also be canceled if a rider is unable to travel to/from the bus due to an accumulation of snow or ice. Riders are encouraged to contact the dispatch office if they feel their road, home or destination is impassable so that their ride(s) can be canceled. This determination is welcomed from the rider and does not require RTS approval.

## **DISCONTINUING SERVICE**

Rapid Transit will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. When extreme weather conditions cause unsafe travel, RTS reserves the right to discontinue Dial-A-Ride services until conditions are favorable. RTS may close for full days, observe a late start, implement an early closure, temporarily halt services midday, or bypass unsafe roadways. If RTS discontinues service during normal business hours, efforts will be made to return riders to their homes. This may require pick-up times to be adjusted to earlier in the day than originally scheduled.

Information on weather-related service changes may be obtained by calling the dispatch office, checking RTS and City of Rapid City websites, or Facebook pages. Information on service changes will also be distributed via KOTA TV and KOTA Radio -1380 AM/100.7 FM.

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any special accommodation questions or requests can be made directly to the Operations Coordinator.

Alternate formats of Dial-A-Ride materials and documents are available upon request.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Milo Barber Bus Depot 333 6<sup>th</sup> Street Rapid City, SD 57701

Dispatch Office and General Information: 605-394-6631 ext. 0

Division Manager: 605-394-6631 ext. 1

Operations Coordinator: 605-394-6631 ext. 6

[www.rapidtransitsystem.org](http://www.rapidtransitsystem.org)

[www.rcgov.org](http://www.rcgov.org)