



How to Ride Guide

This document is available in other accessible formats upon request.

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How to Ride Guide

Welcome to the How to Ride Guide, a document designed to help customers become acquainted with StarMetro’s Dial-A-Ride program and other accessible services, and to understand the guidelines to effectively use these services.

The How to Ride Guide is not intended to create a contract. Any violation or deviation of any practice contained in this guide does not create any presumption that a legal duty has been breached. In addition, StarMetro may change the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the How to Ride Guide at any time without liability to anyone.

Contact Information

Phone Numbers

StarMetro and Dial-A-Ride’s customer service call center is available to assist you:

Monday to Saturday, 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Reservations, information, general assistance, eligibility, “where’s my ride” inquires, or to register compliments or concerns (850) 891-5199

Fixed route public transit assistance (850) 891-5200

Call TDD for speech- and hearing-impaired persons 7-1-1

Mailing Address

StarMetro Administrative Office
555 South Appleyard Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Web address

www.TalGov.com/StarMetro

Types of Eligibility

Dial-A-Ride Eligibility and Renewal

Please review the eligibility criteria before submitting an application. StarMetro provides transportation services in specially equipped vehicles to persons who cannot use the regular bus system. To be eligible for this service, individuals must have a disability that prevents them from using the regular fixed route bus system. Neither age, income, access, nor distances to the nearest bus stop are eligible criteria by themselves. Customers under 13 years of age must travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Determination of eligibility can take up to 21 calendar days. You will be notified by mail regarding your eligibility status. Applications and information can be found at: www.TalGov.com/DAR.

Recertification requires a new application every three years. Prior eligibility does not mean automatic recertification. Customers will receive a renewal notice within 60 days of eligibility expiration. Eligibility is generally valid from three months up to three years, depending on the program for which the customer is eligible. Customers must reapply prior to the expiration of their certification. If you do not receive renewal notification, please call Dial-A-Ride's customer service at (850) 891-5199.

Transportation Disadvantaged Eligibility

To be considered for the transportation disadvantaged program, applicants must be a person who, because of mental or physical disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities, or children who are high-risk or disabled or at-risk as defined in Florida Statute 411.202.

TD HELPLINE: 1-800-983-2435

Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*The TD Help Line is sponsored by:
The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged*

The mission of the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged is to ensure the availability of efficient, cost effective, and quality transportation services for Florida's transportation disadvantaged persons.

Americans with Disabilities Act Eligibility

To be ADA eligible, the applicant must have a disability that prevents access to or the use of StarMetro's fixed route transportation services.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities Eligibility

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities notifies Dial-A-Ride which of their beneficiaries are eligible for their transportation program.

Medicaid and Medicare Eligibility

Dial-A-Ride is not a Medicaid or Medicare transportation provider. Some Florida Medicaid and Medicare programs provide transportation services to their enrollees at no cost or little cost to the beneficiary. Depending on the program, some trips may also be provided to non-medical destinations, such as grocery shopping, socializing, and recreation.

If you're not sure if your Florida Medicaid or Medicare program provides transportation, please contact Florida Medicaid or Medicare directly.

Service Information

Dial-A-Ride Service

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD), and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), Dial-A-Ride service is provided by StarMetro for the purpose of delivering transportation services to individuals who cannot access or use StarMetro's fixed route public transit system.

- Dial-A-Ride is a shared ride service with a mandatory fare.
- Dial-A-Ride does not provide emergency or stretcher transportation.
- Dial-A-Ride does not provide Personal Care Attendants (PCAs).
- Dial-A-Ride does not provide child safety seats, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids.

Service Hours

Dial-A-Ride operates during the same days and hours as StarMetro's fixed-route bus service, which is generally from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Please contact customer service for specific hours and holiday schedules.

Travel Times

The Americans with Disabilities Act states that your Dial-A-Ride trip time must be comparable to the same trip on StarMetro's fixed route buses. This means that the time it takes to reach your destination must be reasonably similar to the time it would take to use StarMetro's fixed route bus service, including the time it would take to travel to and from bus stops and any transfers.

Please plan ahead when booking your trip as many things may impact your ride time, including traffic, inclement weather, other customers, school buses, sporting events, etc.

To book a trip for a scheduled appointment, please tell customer service the exact time you need to be there in order to schedule your pick-up window to arrive before your appointment time.

Dial-A-Ride Fares

A fare is required prior to entering the Dial-A-Ride vehicle. Failure to pay the fare at the time of service may result in loss of transportation privileges.

- The one-way fare is \$2.50 per trip.
- Fares are to be paid to the driver prior to boarding the vehicle.
- Fares may be paid in cash, by pre-paid fare token, or through the Token Transit smart phone application. Fares may not be paid using credit cards or checks.
- If paying with cash, please have the exact fare as drivers do not make change.

Service Area

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), curb-to-curb Dial-A-Ride service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of a StarMetro fixed route. Dial-A-Ride provides Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) and Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) transportation to qualifying individuals throughout Leon County. Dial-A-Ride does not provide transportation services outside of Leon County.

Emergency Situations

Dial-A-Ride **does not** provide emergency or urgent same-day transportation. If you are having a medical emergency, dial 9-1-1.

Reservations and Scheduling

Making a Reservation

To make a reservation, call Dial-A-Ride's customer service at (850) 891-5199.

Reservations can be made up to 14 days prior to the date of travel but must be made **no later** than 5 p.m. on the day prior.

Same day service is not available, and changes to pick up/drop off time or location CAN NOT be made on the same day as the service.

When scheduling your return trip, estimate a pickup time late enough to allow you to complete the reason for your trip. If you're not ready when the Dial-A-Ride vehicle arrives, you may have to wait up to two hours before another vehicle becomes available.

A minimum 60-minute wait is required between your appointment time and your return trip time.

Dial-A-Ride's peak service times are 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. If you have flexibility in your travel times, consider traveling between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. – when the service is less busy.

Please have the following information available before calling to schedule your trip:

- First and Last Name
- Telephone Number
- Requested pick-up or drop off time
- The complete pick-up address including an apartment/suite number, gate/security code, building identification, and zip code
- The complete destination address including an apartment/suite number, gate/security code, building identification, zip code, and telephone number
- Indicate if the eligible customer will be accompanied by a PCA and/or a companion. (See Companion and Personal Care Attendant section for details.)

The representative will enter your trip request into the scheduling system. Once all trip information has been taken, the representative will read the trip information back to you to confirm accuracy and provide you with your pick-up window.

Online reservations can be made at www.TalGov.com/DAR. You will need your Dial-A-Ride customer identification number and password. If you do not have this information, contact Dial-A-Ride customer service for assistance.

Subscription Trips

Subscription Trips (also known as “standing orders”) are used for repeated weekly trips that are made to and from the same locations, at the same time and on the same day(s) of the week. Subscription trips must be made for a minimum three-month period.

Examples may be trips to work, school, dialysis, or physical therapy. Once booked, a subscription trip is automatically generated each week.

Subscription trip rules:

- It is the customer's responsibility to cancel trips created from a subscription in advance of the trip.
- Subscription trips may not be modified more than once every 30-days.
- Subscription trips will be monitored for frequent cancellations, no shows, and trip changes.

- Subscription service may be discontinued for frequent changes, no shows, or other issues.
- Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on federal holidays, such as Memorial Day and Labor Day. To schedule service on a federal holiday call Dial-A-Ride's customer service or book online.

The Pick-Up Window

All trips will be scheduled with a 30-minute pick up window.

The pick-up window is a thirty (30) minute time frame in which your ride will arrive for you.

For example, if you are given a pick-up window of 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. this means the earliest time your ride will arrive will be 9 a.m. and the latest time it may arrive is 9:30 a.m. Since your vehicle may arrive at any time between 9 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., you need to be ready to go at the beginning of the pick-up window.

You will receive a reminder of the pick-up window for each of your trips the night before travel, between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., through our automated call-back system.

The system will call you at the number that StarMetro has on file. If you don't answer, it will leave a message on your voice mail or answering machine.

If there is a problem with the pick-up window provided or if you wish to cancel the trip, you must call Dial-A-Ride's customer service.

Using the Service: Day of Travel

The Pick-Up Process

On the day of travel, your ride will arrive within the 30-minute pick-up window.

When the vehicle is an estimated 20 minutes away from your location you will receive an automated arrival reminder notification call.

Dial-A-Ride drivers operate on a schedule that allows them a **maximum five-minute wait** for a customer after arriving at the pick-up location. Customers are not required to board a vehicle earlier than the start of the pick-up window.

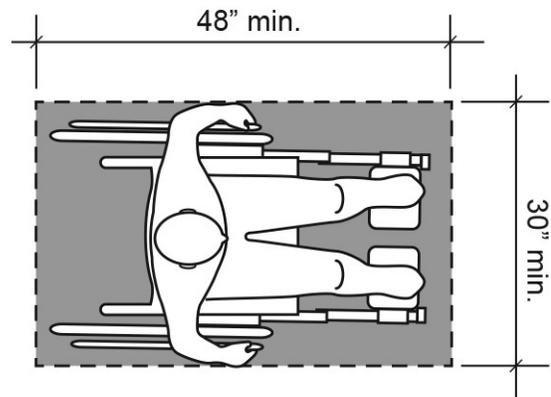
If you are not ready to board within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival, you will be considered a No-Show and the vehicle will depart without you. Another vehicle cannot be sent for you.

If the vehicle does not arrive during the scheduled pick-up window, call Dial-A-Ride's customer service at (850) 891-5199 for assistance.

Boarding with a Mobility Device

It is recommended that all wheelchair and scooter devices are WC-19 compliant so they can be properly secured.

All vehicles used in Dial-A-Ride service are equipped with lifts that will accommodate wheelchairs or scooters that are up to 48-inches long and 30-inches wide. Vehicle lifts can accommodate a combined weight of the customer and the mobility device up to 600 lbs. *Customers using mobility devices exceeding these standards may not be able to be accommodated.*



If it is safe to do so, Dial-A-Ride drivers can assist individuals in manual wheelchairs over one curb or step but cannot carry an individual or their mobility device. All drivers are trained to operate vehicle lifts. All wheelchairs and scooters will be secured with four (4) point tie downs.

Customers without mobility devices may board the vehicle using the wheelchair lift upon request. Only Dial-A-Ride drivers can operate the lift.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is a person traveling as an aide to assist with life-functions and to facilitate safe travel. Your eligibility application must state what functional limitations make it necessary for a PCA to travel with you. If a PCA is not listed on your application, then they may travel as a companion.

Registered PCAs will travel without an additional fare.

Both the PCA and the eligible customer must be picked up and dropped off at the same address, at the same time. A PCA must be registered at the time travel is booked. PCA's will not be allowed to board the vehicle if not on the trip reservation.

Companions and Children

Companions and children may accompany eligible customers on a space available basis. Both the eligible Dial-A-Ride customer and their companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same address, at the same time. All customers and companions, including children, must pay the same \$2.50 one-way fare and be registered on the trip reservation. Companions will not be allowed to board the vehicle if not on the trip reservation.

If needed, it is the responsibility of the adult traveling with a child to supply and properly secure a child safety seat in the Dial-A-Ride vehicle. Dial-A-Ride does not provide child safety seats.

Florida law requires children age five (5) and under to be secured properly in a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.

Children ages zero (0) to three (3) must be in a separate carrier child seat.

Children ages four (4) and five (5) must be in a separate carrier or booster seat.

Service Animals

All service animals must be properly controlled. Service animals must ride on the floor of the vehicle or in the lap of the customer, not on vehicle seats. Customers are responsible for the behavior and hygiene needs of their service animals. Service can be refused or discontinued if a service animal is disruptive or unsanitary. There is no additional charge for service animals.

Transporting Packages

Personal belongings (e.g., groceries, luggage, etc.) are the sole responsibility of the customer. Only items the customer can personally carry in one boarding of the vehicle will be transported. Drivers are not responsible for, nor expected to load and unload, personal belongings of customers. Customers may bring up to two bags or packages on the vehicle.

Dial-A-Ride vehicles are used for multiple customers and space is not available for bulky or numerous items. Bags or packages must be able to be held on the customer's lap during transport. Collapsible carts may be brought on vehicles but must be collapsed during transport and stowed between the customer's knees and the seat in front of them.

StarMetro is not responsible for items left on the bus or broken in transit.

Customers cannot transport explosives, illegal substances, flammable liquids, guns, or hazardous materials, except for certified portable oxygen containers.

Other Considerations

For the comfort and safety of all customers the following policies apply:

- Seat belts must always be worn while riding in any Dial-A-Ride vehicle.
- No eating, drinking, or smoking at any time in any Dial-A-Ride vehicle.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering on the vehicles.
- No disruptive behavior, physical or verbal abuse of the driver or others.

- Specific providers and drivers cannot be requested.
- Requests for specific vehicles cannot be accommodated, other than a request for a vehicle that is wheelchair accessible.
- Customers with cognitive or memory disabilities will require a responsible person be home to receive the customers.
- No sound-generating equipment is to be played aloud on vehicles. Customers must use earphones or headphones.
- Customers should be aware of their personal hygiene, including the use of products that contain scents.
- Customers may not allow their Dial-A-Ride privileges to be used by someone else.
- Drivers will offer assistance to all customers when entering and leaving the vehicle. This includes offering a steadying arm when walking or assistance in bringing a customer's wheelchair or other mobility device to and from the main door.
- Drivers must follow their assigned service schedule and route and will only take guidance from dispatch staff.

Failure to adhere to Dial-A-Ride's policies can result in progressive disciplinary measures up to and including suspension of service.

Driver Requirements

Drivers are not allowed to:

- Lift or carry customers.
- Enter residences.
- Accept tips, gifts, or other gratuities.
- Maneuver wheelchairs up or down more than one step.
- Perform any personal care assistance for customers, including assisting customers to dress, giving medications, or operating medical equipment such as oxygen and I.V. units.
- Help load or unload packages into or out of the vehicle.
- Smoke in the vehicles at any time.
- Text, receive or make personal calls while driving a Dial-A-Ride vehicle.

Cancellations and No-Shows

Cancel a Reservation

To cancel a reservation, call (850) 891-5199. Indicate if a one-way or complete round-trip service is being cancelled. Reservations cancelled less than one (1) hour before the beginning of the pick-up window are counted as a No-Show.

Reservations can also be cancelled online on our website at www.TalGov.com/DAR. You will need your Dial-A-Ride customer identification number and password. If you do not know this information, you can contact Dial-A-Ride customer service for assistance.

Cancellation and No-Show Policies

An excessive number of No-Shows may result in suspension of service, or other corrective actions as appropriate. A trip is a No-Show if:

- There has been no call by the customer (or their representative) to cancel the trip 1 hour or more in advance.
- The customer cancels a trip less than one hour before the beginning of the pick-up window.
- The customer places a request for service but does not meet the vehicle upon its arrival and the driver cannot reasonably see them approaching within the 5-minute window.
- The customer is not ready to board within five (5) minutes after the arrival of the vehicle within the pick-up window and the vehicle departs without them after notifying dispatch and confirming their location.

Penalties for Multiple No-Shows

Customers with five (5) or more no-shows in a calendar month – that equates to 25% or more of their total uncanceled trips – may be subject to suspension of service equaling one week or the number of dates with no-shows, whichever is less. Customers will receive written notification prior to suspension of service.

Suspensions and Appeals

Suspension of Service

In addition to suspension of service for No-Shows, a customer who engages in violent, disruptive, or illegal conduct or violates any of the policies in this document may be denied transportation services. This may include a person who assaults a driver or another customer, who smokes or eats on the vehicle, or who engages in conduct that is so distracting that the delivery of service is disrupted.

Customers will be notified of suspension of service in writing, which will include procedures on appealing the suspension.

Visitors to Leon County

Visitor Riding Privileges

ADA eligibility provides service for persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside of Dial-A-Ride's service area, and who have been certified ADA eligible from another transit agency. Proof of ADA eligibility must be provided to obtain Visitor Status within the Dial-A-Ride program. Twenty-one days of visitor service may be used during a 365-day period. After using 21 days during the 365-day period, the visitor must complete Dial-A-Ride's eligibility process to continue using the service or wait until the start of the next 365-day period to receive additional transportation services.

The above is true for Dial-A-Ride certified ADA customers traveling to other communities with an ADA transportation program.

Compliments or Concerns

Filing a Compliment or Concern

Compliments, concerns, and your suggestions are always welcome. To let us know your thoughts, contact Dial-A-Ride customer service at (850) 891-5199 or StarMetro.CustomerService@TalGov.com.

Please give as much specific and relevant details regarding the trip as possible, including date and time of the trip. Please share concerns about specific rides or incidents as soon after the occurrence as possible. StarMetro will respond within two business days.

Every concern will be investigated. When a concern is filed, StarMetro will:

- Record the description of the problem
- Research the concern
- Resolve all concerns within a reasonable time frame
- Immediately resolve safety related concerns (when possible)
- Upon request, customers will be notified by telephone or letter of the concern's resolution

Fixed Route Services

Public Transit

Dial-A-Ride is not the only option for those needing accessible transportation services. Fixed-route transit allows you the freedom to travel when you want to go, where you want to go, without identification numbers or advance reservations.

StarMetro's fixed-route bus service operates on regular schedules and does not require advanced reservations. At \$1.25 the fare for regular fixed-route bus service is lower than that for Dial-A-Ride service. Additionally, seniors 60 years or older, people with disabilities, and people with a Medicare card may qualify for a reduced fare of \$0.60. Several bus pass programs are also available to qualifying individuals. For information on reduced fares or passes, please contact StarMetro's customer service or visit www.talgov.com/starmetro.

StarMetro's fixed-route buses offer access for individuals with disabilities on 23 routes operating throughout the City of Tallahassee. All fixed-route buses are wheelchair accessible and have ramps for general use. Buses can accommodate up to two wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Wheelchair securement areas have easy to reach "stop request" buttons. Priority seating for elderly and individuals with disabilities is offered. Service animals are welcome on all buses.

Buses automatically announce certain stops, transfer points, major intersections, and various other intervals. You can request the bus driver manually announce when you are approaching a requested stop. Each bus stop is equipped with a contrasting color, raised letter and braille route identification tag. Schedules and service information are available in other accessible formats upon request.

To ride a StarMetro bus, children under 48" must be accompanied by an adult.

Travel Training

Nervous about using the fixed-route system? StarMetro has developed a free program to help you. An instructor will provide travel training to individuals and groups at no charge to teach customers how to use StarMetro's fixed-route buses. Learn to travel the fixed-route bus service by calling (850) 891-5199 for more information.

Flex Services

StarMetro's Flex Services will pick up anywhere within the route's service area and drop off at any destination within that same service area or at a designated fixed-route bus stop. The fare is the same as the fixed-route bus, including free transfers.

The Lake Jackson Flex service operates Monday to Friday, from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Southside Flex service operates Monday to Friday, from 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Call (850) 891-5199 at least two hours in advance to request a Flex trip.

Other Information

Help Someone Get A Ride

Remember to check the box to donate \$1, or more, to the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund the next time you (or a friend or family member) purchase your auto/truck/boat tags. Donated funds will be used to provide transportation services in the local service area where they are collected.

Please Note

Florida Statute Title XLVI (46) Chapter 784.07 defines a “Public transit employees or agents” as bus operators, train operators, revenue collectors, security personnel, equipment maintenance personnel, or field supervisors, who are employees or agents of a transit agency as described in s. 812.015(1)(l). Any person knowingly committing an assault or battery upon a public transit employee while engaged in the performance of his/her duties, the offense for the person charged shall be reclassified as a more severe offense and hold a minimum imprisonment sentences of three (3) to eight (8) years depending on the type of offense.

Emergency Evacuations and Shelters

In the event of a mandatory evacuation order being issued by the Leon County Division of Emergency Management due to severe weather, a tropical storm or hurricane, flooding, fire, or other emergency, StarMetro follows the direction of Emergency Management.

If you require medical supervision or are electricity dependent, if qualified, you can be evacuated to a Special Needs Shelter. To register as a person with special needs, please contact the Leon County Division of Emergency Management at (850) 606-3700.