



# Bus Plus Rider's Guide

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

## Eligibility

The Bus Plus program must meet all federal ADA rules and regulations. In order to be eligible for Bus Plus, these rules require a person's **disability to either prevent them from getting to a bus stop, getting onto the bus or understanding how to use the bus system**. 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 mail the results to you 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 regular city bus service services.

Those who disagree with the results may appeal to the Bus Plus Appeal Committee.

Once a person has been approved as a Bus Plus passenger, **that person will remain eligible** as long as the disability remains and they use the service at least once a year. If either situation does not occur, the passenger will be notified by mail that their eligibility has been canceled. They may reapply at any time.

## Service Hours and Days

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

As a general rule, these are the hours of service:

Monday - Friday - 5:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Saturday - 5:45 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday - 7:45 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.



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## Reservations

To make a reservation, Bus Plus passengers must call [283-8136](tel:283-8136) no later than 5:00 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 passenger. [Requested pick-up times may vary up to one hour due to scheduling constraints.](#)

To make a reservation, the following information must be ready when you call Paratransit:

The address where the trip will start and where it will end.

The appointment time or time you need to be at a location.

Any special instructions such as assistance needed, or if an attendant will be traveling on the trip with the passenger.

Reservations for Monday travel can be made on Sunday between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by calling [283-8147](tel:283-8147). Passengers will be directed to leave their name and telephone number where they can be reached between 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Sunday evening. DART's Paratransit staff will return the passenger's call to take their reservation.

## Office Hours

The Bus Plus office is open [Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 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.



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### ***Driver Assistance cont.***

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 wheelchair 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.

The Bus Plus driver will help passengers with a small number of grocery bags from the bus to the first outside door of the house or building. It is the passenger's responsibility past this point.

*When a family member or other individual is available, they will be expected to provide assistance rather than the driver.*

### **Traveling Companion and Personal Care Attendant (PCA)**

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

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



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### Fares and Payment

The fare for Bus Plus service is based on a zone system which varies depending on either where a passenger is traveling to-and-from, or the time of the day. (See the enclosed map for illustration of these areas.) The highest charge will apply to a trip. If a trip stays within zone A, the cost to the passenger is \$3.00.

The following information lists the fare system:

- Zone A - \$3.00** (Any time Bus Plus is operating)
- Zone B - \$3.00** (Certain days and times only)
- Zone C - \$7.00** (Any time Bus Plus is operating)
- Zone D - \$9.00** (Any time Bus Plus is operating)
- Zone E - \$11.00** (Any time Bus Plus is operating)

*Travel in Zones C, D, and E are based on vehicle availability and are not guaranteed.*

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

Passengers must have exact fare as drivers do not carry change.

The Bus Plus driver will collect only the fare for the trip the passenger is taking at that time. A passenger's return trip fare must be paid at the time the return trip is taken.

Passengers may pay with cash, personal checks or tokens.  
*(There will be a \$25 service charge for returned checks.)*

If a passenger wishes to purchase tokens, they must call the office no later than the day before they need tokens for the trip, and the driver will deliver the tokens at the time the passenger 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](#). Passengers must be ready and watching at their scheduled pick-up time, or they may miss the bus. A second vehicle will not be sent.



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### ***Bus Plus Policies Cont.***

When passengers cancel, or do not show up when they have scheduled a trip, Bus Plus service cannot serve as many passengers. Therefore a charge may be assessed to passengers having an excessive number of either. A trip is considered a “canceled trip” when a passenger calls Bus Plus between 4:00 p.m. the day before the trip, and one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. A trip is considered a “No Show” when a passenger fails to take a trip or calls less than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time. A charge may be assessed in the following situations:

Each time a passenger “Cancels” more than eight (8) times per month.

Each time a passenger “No Shows” more than four (4) times per month.

Passengers exceeding the listed number of “Cancels” or “No Shows” can be charged the actual cost of the trip, which ranges from \$18.00 - \$23.00. These passengers will receive a billing at the first of each month. Payment must be received prior to the end of that same month in order to continue to be eligible for the Bus Plus service. During the winter, Bus Plus service will operate any time the city 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 passengers if a bus is unable to get to a passenger. Drivers will assist passengers when the walks are cleared of snow and ice. It is a passenger’s responsibility to have walks cleared.

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

### **Additional Services**

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority provides a [training program](#) for passengers with disabilities who, with personal training, may be able to use the city bus service. Call 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. Our buses run on flexible schedules and may arrive “early” to pick you up. The bus can only wait 5 minutes after it arrives.

