



Customer Handbook

**Rock Region METRO
901 Maple Street
North Little Rock, AR 72114**

Effective August 2020

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INTRODUCTION

METRO Links is an origin to destination, shared-ride service that complements Rock Region METRO's fixed-route bus service. This service is designed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The METRO Links Customer Handbook is designed to inform ADA paratransit eligible consumers about METRO Links.

The ADA is a civil rights law, not a transportation law, or a social program law. The ADA clearly requires non-discriminatory access to fixed-route service, with complementary paratransit service acting as a "safety net" for people who cannot use the fixed route bus system. Under the ADA, complementary paratransit service is not intended to be a comprehensive transportation system for individuals with disabilities. In other words, the ADA does not attempt to meet all the transportation needs of people with disabilities. Instead, the ADA is intended simply to provide individuals with the same mass transit opportunities that everyone else gets. In fact, the paratransit system must be equivalent in service criteria to the fixed-route system. For example, the service area and days/hours of service for paratransit and fixed-route service must be comparable.

All Rock Region METRO buses are equipped with wheelchair ramps and "kneeling" mechanisms, and other accessibility features. Many people who formerly used METRO Links are now able to ride the fixed route buses.

This handbook includes, rules, regulations, and guidelines for use of the METRO Links system, and will answer most questions about METRO Links operations. All paratransit customers should review this handbook carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise. For additional information, you may write to METRO Links at 901 Maple Street, North Little Rock, AR 72114, visit in person, call any time between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at 501-375-6717, fax to 501-476-3759, or email us at info@rrmetro.org.

General information on METRO Links is also available online at www.rrmetro.org

METRO LINKS PARATRANSIT SERVICE AREA

METRO Links is a van service that is specially equipped with wheelchair lifts and other accessibility features that allow maximum mobility for customers with disabilities. METRO Links operates on a demand-response basis for residents and visitors within 3/4 of a mile on each side of all Rock Region METRO Local Fixed Routes and the METRO Streetcar.

SHARED RIDES

METRO Links is a “shared ride” service. This means that other riders with different origins and destinations may be picked up and dropped off along the way. A METRO Links trip will take a comparable amount of time as the same trip would take on a Rock Region METRO fixed route bus, including transfers and wait times.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICE

METRO Links is available only to customers who meet the following criteria:

- Persons who are certified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as having disabilities.
- Functional limitations prevent them from using the regular fixed-route buses.
- There is some part of the regular fixed-route system that they cannot use because of a disability.
- Their pickup point (origin) and destination is within the service area (3/4 of a mile either side of a Rock Region METRO Fixed Route Bus or METRO Streetcar).

An individual is eligible if he or she has a permanent or temporary disability as described below.

Permanent Disabilities

CATEGORY 1

This category consists of persons who are unable to board, ride, or disembark from the bus even if they are able to get to the stop and the bus is accessible. Persons in this category include individuals with mental or visual impairments who cannot navigate the bus system. Examples of navigating the system include recognizing destinations and understanding the transfer process.

CATEGORY 2

This category consists of persons with specific impairment-related conditions, who cannot travel to or from a bus stop to their final destination. The specific impairment-related condition must prevent the person from using regular, fixed-route transit. A person is eligible if traveling to and from a bus stop is impossible when architectural and/or environmental barriers are combined with the specific impairment-related condition.

Temporary Disabilities

Persons with temporary disabilities may be eligible for METRO Links paratransit service. The standards for eligibility are the same as those for permanent disabilities. Persons with temporary disabilities who are eligible for service will be provided service only for the duration of their disability.

APPLICATIONS

All prospective users of the paratransit program must complete an application form to be eligible. Application forms may be faxed or mailed to you upon request by telephone at 501-375-6717, by emailing to info@rrmetro.org, by an in-person visit, or by writing to METRO Links, 901 Maple St., North Little Rock, AR 72114.

A variety of formats are available. Please specify the necessary format: Regular or large print, Braille, or audio disk. Assistance in completing applications will be provided upon request.

When you receive your application forms please complete all sections. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted for processing and will be returned to you for completion.** This will delay the eligibility determination for METRO Links paratransit service.

METRO LINKS

Certification of Eligibility Application

Part I - General Information: The applicant must provide all requested information including identifying persons (if any) who assisted them with the application. All information given will be verified, and providing false or misleading information will result in denial/termination of service.

Part II - Information on Disability & Mobility Equipment:

Part II of the METRO Links application requests additional information regarding the individual's disability and asks the applicant to identify any mobility aids they may use.

Part III – Questions on Using METRO's Fixed Route Bus Service:

Part III requests additional information from the applicant regarding the use of METRO's fixed route bus services.

Part IV – Acceptance & Understanding of METRO Links Policies:

Part IV of the application requires that the applicant read and initial eight (8) statements related to METRO Links policies. The applicant's initials next to each statement indicate they have read, understand, and agree to each statement.

Physician Verification of Disability Form:

This form must be completed by a licensed or certified professional familiar with the applicant's disability. The professionals can be a physician, nurse, occupational or physical therapist, QMRP, QMHP, rehabilitation counselor, or an independent living specialist. Ask the professional to complete the medical section of the Certification of ADA Paratransit Eligibility and return it to you.

Return the completed application to: METRO Links, 901 Maple Street, North Little Rock, AR 72114

The Application Process

Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving a completed application, METRO Links will contact the applicant to schedule an in person interview to determine their eligibility. If an applicant is approved, they will receive an approval letter and obtain an ADA photo-identification card (ID) at the METRO Links offices at 901 Maple in North Little Rock.

If the application for ADA Paratransit eligibility is denied, the applicant will receive a letter of denial with an explanation of specific reasons for the decision. This letter of denial will include instructions on filing an appeal. See the Appeals Process on Page 17.

If METRO Links has not made a determination of eligibility within 21 days following the receipt of a completed application, the applicant will be treated as eligible and provided service until approved or is determined to be ineligible for paratransit service.

PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION CARDS

The photo-identification card allows an applicant to schedule rides with METRO Links. Each rider is given a registration number that appears on the ID Card. The card must be presented to the Operator along with your fare every time you board the vehicle. Paratransit identification cards are not transferable. METRO Links customers who allow another person to use their card may be suspended from service. The ID card will be wallet-sized, and will contain the following information:

1. Name of the eligible individual and ID number
2. Name of the transit provider (METRO Links)
3. Expiration date

Your first photo ID and trip to and from the photo session will be provided at no charge. For conditionally eligible customers, the photo ID also allows you to ride METRO's fixed-route buses at the Discount Fare. Replacement cards are \$2.00 each.

RECERTIFICATION

All METRO Links paratransit customers are required to recertify every 3 years at a minimum. Recertification forms will be mailed well in advance in order to allow maximum time for you to provide updated information from your health care provider. Please notify the METRO Links office if there are significant changes in your physical condition that may affect your Trip Category status.

PLEASE NOTE: Service cannot be provided to persons whose eligibility has expired. If you wish your service to continue, please be sure to submit your recertification application as soon as possible.

METRO LINKS OFFICE & SERVICE HOURS:

METRO Links vehicles operate during the following hours:

Monday through Friday	5:00 a.m. – 9:15 p.m.
Saturday	5:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Sunday	8:00 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.

METRO STREETCAR SERVICE HOURS:

Paratransit service is provided $\frac{3}{4}$ mile either side of the METRO Streetcar route during the following hours:

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday	8:20 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Thursday, Friday & Saturday	8:20 a.m. - Midnight
Sunday	10:40 a.m. - 5:45 p.m.

TELEPHONES ARE ANSWERED DURING THESE HOURS:

Monday through Friday	5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Saturday	5:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Sunday	8:00 a.m. – 5:50 p.m.

Please Note: These times are different from Trip Reservation hours. See page 13 for the hours reservations are accepted.

If calling before or after the hours above, please leave your message, trip request or notice of cancellation on the METRO Links answering machine. The next Scheduler/Dispatcher on duty will return your call.

HOLIDAYS

There will be no METRO Links service on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Fourth of July	Christmas Day

On these holidays, please leave reservation requests or cancellations on the answering machine. The next available Scheduler/Dispatcher will return your call.

FARES AND PAYMENT POLICY

Every ADA paratransit certified customer is required to pay a fare for each one-way trip, payable with a personal check, ride ticket or in cash. METRO Links tickets are available in books of ten one-ride tickets and can be purchased from the driver or at the METRO Links office at 901 Maple, North Little Rock. All fares are subject to change. Cash paying riders should have exact change. Please keep tickets and ticket books in a safe place. METRO Links cannot replace or give credit for lost or stolen tickets and ticket books. METRO Links Operators cannot accept cash gifts or tips from riders. The ID card must be presented to the driver along with your fare every time you board the vehicle.

Fares

The one-way fare is \$2.70
The round trip fare is \$5.40
The ten ride ticket book is \$25.00

Please Note: One-way fare for METRO Links customers whose pickup point (origin) and destination are both within 3/4 mile either side of the METRO Streetcar route is \$2.00.

ADA TRIP ELIGIBILITY

The eligibility for each trip request is determined by the Scheduler/Dispatcher based on information provided in your application. Factors such as weather, terrain and site accessibility are considered. Having a METRO Links Photo-ID card does not guarantee that your trip is ADA Paratransit eligible. Trips that may be adequately served by a METRO fixed route bus will be denied ADA Paratransit Eligible status. Paratransit service may still be offered, however, if space is available.

Conditional / Unconditional Eligibility

In all cases, eligibility will be determined to be either “conditional” or “unconditional.” An individual with “conditional eligibility” is one who is approved for some trips or under certain conditions. An individual with “unconditional eligibility” is one who is approved for all trips.

TRIP CATEGORIES

All ADA-Paratransit Eligible service is scheduled within the following two categories:

1. An ADA Paratransit Eligible rider whose trip is ADA Paratransit eligible and wholly within the ADA service area.
2. An ADA Paratransit Eligible rider whose trip is not ADA Paratransit Eligible for reasons which may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Origin and/or destination outside the ADA service area;
 - b. Service can be provided by a fixed-route bus.

SERVICE PROCEDURES

Trip Reservations

All rides must be scheduled by calling the METRO Links Scheduler/Dispatcher at 501-375-6717. There are no restrictions on trip purpose. According to the ADA, no trips can be given priority. Medical trips, work trips, and recreational trips are handled on an equal basis.

TRIP RESERVATIONS ARE ACCEPTED DURING THESE HOURS:

Monday through Friday	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Sunday	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Before and after office hours and on holidays, trip requests and notices of cancellation may be left on voice mail for processing.

Trip reservations are accepted at least one (1) day in advance, or up to seven (7) days in advance of the time the service is needed. It is recommended that all trips be scheduled as far in advance as possible. **METRO Links does NOT offer same day service.**

If you want to reserve a ride for a specific appointment time, be sure to:

- Allow enough time to get from the bus to your destination.
- Be aware of opening and closing times at your destination so you do not have to wait outside the building; your arrival may be as early as thirty (30) minutes before your appointment.

When scheduling a paratransit trip, the following information is required:

- Name
- Pick-up date and time
- Pick-up address
- Destination address
- Pick-up time for the return trip if desired.
- Number of guests (companions), if any
- Accompanying Personal Care Attendant (PCA), if applicable; and if assistance is required beyond the curb.

A trip is defined as beginning with the pick-up location and ending at the destination location. No individual or agency can request trips for several riders at one time.

Vehicles and Operators

METRO Links service may be provided using a variety of vehicles, including taxis. METRO Links reserves the right to determine whether services will be delivered using its own operators and vehicles, or using operators and vehicles of other entities (for example, taxis). You must ride in the vehicle that is sent for you. Special requests for specific vehicles and vehicle operators cannot be honored.

Reservation Time-Frame

METRO Links may offer travel times one hour before or one hour after the requested travel time. At the time a reservation is made, the rider will be given a 30 minute time frame. The time you are given is called your pickup window. The pickup window is the time that the METRO Links vehicle will arrive. For example: Pickup time is 9:15 a.m. The rider will be given a 30 minute window of 9:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

This means that the rider is to be present by 9:15 a.m. and ready to board the vehicle upon its arrival. Customers should wait where they can see the van or where they can be seen by the Operator. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers can only wait five minutes upon arrival before proceeding on their route. A customer will be charged with a “No-Show” if the vehicle arrived to pick them up within their window and the customer was not ready to go within five minutes.

Request for Reservation Changes

If you place a request for a reservation and call at a later date requesting a change in pickup time(s), date, place of origin or destination, this will be considered a new reservation request and your original request will be cancelled.

INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE (OR IVR) SYSTEM

The system will provide you with the following benefits:

- When calling into METRO Links, you will be able to use the IVR system to review or cancel your upcoming trip times without talking to a reservationist.
- You will receive night before reminders informing you of your trip window times for the next day.
- You will receive arrival notification calls when your vehicle is a half mile from your pick up location.

You will need the following information to access the system:

- Client ID (located on your ID card)
- Password (6 digit date of birth, example: January 15, 1951 would be 011551). Please call METRO Links if you would like to change your password.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

If you require service to the same destination at the same time of day at least three (3) times per week for a minimum period of ninety (90) days, you may place a request for subscription service. When a rider subscribes for service, his or her trip is scheduled automatically. Subscription customers need not call to schedule their trip, but must call METRO Links at least 2 hours in advance, when possible, to cancel their ride. METRO Links will terminate any subscription service that is canceled 10% or more of the time during any thirty (30) day period, or if there is a consistent pattern of cancellations or no-shows of any part of a subscription.

PLEASE NOTE: The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act limit the number of customers who may be scheduled for subscription service.

Requests for subscription service status will be filled on a first-come first-served basis. Riders who discontinue METRO Links service for a period of more than 14 calendar days will be removed from subscriber status and will be required to call for reservations as needed. Riders may reapply for subscription service and will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis according to space availability. Subscription service is assigned only to riders who use the service at the same time of the week from the same point of origin to the same destination. Subscribers may request a change in service a maximum of three times per month and retain their subscriber status. Subscribers may request a temporary change, of not more than 14 days' duration, in reservation time and/or destination. A change of more than 14 calendar days' duration will require a new request to be submitted to the METRO Links office. Subscribers who are suspended from use of METRO Links service due to policy violations will forfeit their subscription service status. These riders may request subscription service when reinstated as a METRO Links customer.

NO-SHOW/SHORT-NOTICE CANCELLATION POLICY

In order to adequately provide service to all riders, it is very important that METRO Links receives cancellations in advance. Riders are asked, when possible, to call at least 24 hours prior to their pickup time. This allows reservations to be booked for others. The following No-Show/Short -Notice Cancellation Policy has been developed to control excessive cancellations or failure to appear for the service that has been requested:

No-Show

If you have a reservation for transportation on METRO Links and fail to appear for the appointment, this will be classified as a No Show. A doctor's appointment that runs over the expected pick-up time is not considered a No Show, provided the customer or doctor's office notifies METRO Links.

Short-Notice Cancellation

A Short-Notice Cancellation is defined as providing fewer than two (2) hours' notice to METRO Links that the requested service will not be needed. METRO Links will not penalize a rider for any No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation beyond the rider's control or due to METRO Links error.

Rules Regarding No-Shows

For the purpose of this policy, a Short-Notice Cancellation will be counted as one-half (1/2) of a No-Show.

METRO Links will track scheduled trips, No-Shows, and Short-Notice Cancellations by rider. METRO Links will identify riders who have, within a thirty (30) day period, a No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation which meets both of the following criteria:

- No-Shows (including Short-Notice Cancellations) represent ten percent (10%) or more of their scheduled trips; and
- The rider has three (3) or more No-Shows.

Riders who meet the above criteria will be in violation of the No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy. Riders will not be penalized for No-Shows or Short-Notice Cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control or due to METRO Links error. For example, if your medical appointment runs later than you anticipated, you will not be penalized.

The following progressive action will be taken to discourage violation of the No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy:

1. First No-Show within a 30-day period – A warning letter is issued.
2. Second No-Show within a 30-day period – A second warning letter is issued.
3. Third No-Show within a 30-day period – Rider receives a 7-day suspension if the three (3) No-Shows represent 10% or more of all scheduled trips in the preceding thirty (30) days.
4. Fourth No-Show within a 30-day period – Rider receives a 14-day suspension if the four (4) No-Shows represent 10% or more of all scheduled trips in the preceding thirty (30) days.

For each additional violation within a 30-day period, the rider will receive a 30-day suspension.

Right of Appeal: Anyone affected by this policy is entitled to request an appeal.

APPEALS PROCESS

An individual who wishes to appeal a decision of eligibility has sixty (60) days from the date of notice in which to submit a request to the Paratransit Appeals Committee. The committee will respond within thirty (30) days from submission of the appeal. If METRO Links has not made a decision within thirty (30) days after the hearing, temporary service will be provided. This temporary service will continue until a decision on the appeal is reached.

Customers who are suspended from use of paratransit service due to violation of the No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation policy as defined above may appeal the determination within 10 days of the Notice of Suspension to the Paratransit Appeals Committee. The Committee will issue a decision in writing, or in the format required by the customer, within 10 days from submission of the appeal.

Appeals can be made in person, by email to info@rrmetro.org, by telephone 501-375-6717 or fax to 501-476-3759 or in writing to METRO Links Paratransit, 901 Maple, North Little Rock, AR 72114. Be very specific as to reason for cancellation.

NOTE: If a customer is waiting to be picked up at an accessible designated point where he or she may be contacted by METRO Links and has waited 5 minutes past the end of the reservation window, he or she may leave without being penalized for a No-Show.

PCA's, COMPANIONS, VISITORS

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A Personal Care Attendant is someone designated or employed specifically to assist the paratransit-eligible individual in meeting their needs. METRO Links recognizes that a PCA is a mobility aide to the eligible customer. The PCA must have the same trip origin and destination as the customer. In addition, METRO Links requires that space for the PCA must be reserved at the same time that the customer reserves their ride. No fare is required for a PCA. METRO Links may determine that a PCA or companion is required for persons who repeatedly become ill or suffer behavioral problems while riding in a METRO Links vehicle.

If you will require a PCA, please indicate that on PART-1 of the Eligibility Application. METRO Links permits one registered Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to accompany the customer if the client has indicated on his or her application that a PCA is required, or has since submitted documentation that a PCA is now required.

Companions

Customers who are ADA Paratransit eligible will be allowed to travel with at least one companion (guest), such as a friend or relative. The fare for the companion will be the same as the fare for the customer. Additional guests accompanying the customer will be allowed on a space available basis only. Please note that METRO Links requires the customer to reserve a space for the companion when reserving their own ride. The companion must have the same trip origin and destination as the customer.

Visitors

METRO Links will honor paratransit certifications from other transit systems. An individual from out of town requesting service must present proof of their certification. A letter stating paratransit eligibility is acceptable. Documentation must include the name of the eligible individual, the name of the certifying paratransit provider, the telephone number of the provider's paratransit coordinator, an expiration date (if any), and any conditions or limitations on eligibility. If the individual has indicated the need for a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), this must be noted in the documentation. If the person does not have an identification card or other documentation from their local area, METRO Links will require the person to provide the scheduler with documentation of their place of residence, and their disability if the disability is not apparent.

METRO Links will not provide service to a visitor for more than twenty-one (21) days from the date of the visitor's first paratransit trip. Visitors will be required to apply for METRO Links in order to receive transportation beyond the twenty-one (21) day period. However, the twenty-one (21) days can be consecutive or divided over several shorter visits. A visitor who expects to be in the Little Rock/North Little Rock area for more than twenty-one (21) days should apply for a METRO Links ID card as soon as possible after arriving in the area served by METRO Links.

TRANSPORTING WHEELCHAIRS AND MOBILITY AIDS

A wheelchair or mobility aid is any class of three or more wheeled device that is usable indoors and designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairment. Devices may be operated manually or powered.

All wheelchairs and mobility aids shall be transported and properly secured if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with safety requirements. Safety requirements include such circumstances as a wheelchair of such size that it would block an aisle, or would be too large to fully enter a vehicle, or would interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.

All wheelchair users must ride in designated securement areas only. Persons who are not wheelchair users, but use other mobility aids will be allowed to use the lift mechanism provided that the mobility aid can be physically accommodated by the vehicle.

- Forward vs. Backward: For safety reasons, passengers using mobility aids are encouraged to back onto the lift when boarding; however, passengers are not required to do so.
- Non-ambulatory riders must be able to sit up without unusual restraints. METRO Links cannot transport any rider that is too ill to sit up and be secured in their seat, and/or nauseous, vomiting, bleeding or who is secreting body waste that may be hazardous to health. The operator will notify the dispatcher of the rider's condition and then if necessary advise medical authorities of the rider's need for medical attention.

- METRO Links Operators are not permitted to assist with a wheelchair on unstable or unpaved surfaces, or to lift a passenger or a wheelchair at any time. Assistance will be provided on firm, stable surfaces such as asphalt, concrete or other all-weather material. Operators may not assist customers on loose gravel surfaces. Ramps must have the most gradual slope practicable. METRO Links cannot risk injury to the rider or the Operator by providing assistance on steep or unstable ramps. The maximum running slope is 1:12. The maximum rise for any ramp is 30 inches and the minimum clear width of the ramp is 36 inches.
- METRO Links Operators are not trained to provide mechanical assistance if a rider's wheelchair malfunctions. If the wheelchair is easier to move with the clutch disengaged, the rider should provide the Operator with that information as well as instructions for performing the disengagement. Operators are not permitted to assist with a malfunctioning wheelchair that is extremely heavy and/or difficult to maneuver.
- The rider should have available the name and telephone number of the repair person or other assistant to call in the event of breakdown. The Operator will radio Dispatch to have the call placed for the rider.

Mobility Aid Securement

Mobility aids must be properly secured whenever possible. Operators will use their best efforts to correctly use the appropriate number of securement points. If the mobility device does not exceed the size and weight limitations for METRO Links vehicles, service will not be denied because the mobility device cannot be secured to the operator's satisfaction, either due to the awkward position of the securement points or the design of the mobility device. The Operator will inform the passenger that the wheelchair cannot be secured properly and also notify Dispatch. Safety of all passengers is a primary concern.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Customers may travel with service animals trained to assist them. Service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. The customer must inform the Scheduler/Dispatcher that they are traveling with a service animal when they make their ride reservation. Pets cannot be carried on METRO Links vehicles.

OTHER MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Customers may travel with portable oxygen or other equipment, provided that the equipment does not violate applicable Department of Transportation rules concerning transportation of hazardous materials. Equipment used in conjunction with a mobility aid should be mounted on the mobility device in a way that does not prevent proper securement of the mobility aid.

ON-BOARD POLICIES

METRO Links strives to provide the most efficient and pleasant transportation possible. So that we may serve you more efficiently, we ask that you show your ADA Eligibility Card or Discount Fare Card to the Operator when you board and be sure to have the correct fare. When riding METRO Links, please observe the following rules:

- Profanity or abusive language/conduct will not be permitted on the METRO Links vans, or when communicating with METRO Links staff.
- Weapons of any type will not be allowed on the METRO Links vans.
- Electronic equipment such as radios and music players must be equipped with headphones when used on METRO Links vans.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or use of other tobacco products will not be allowed on the METRO Links vans. (Medical exceptions may be made to the no-eating rule with appropriate documentation from a physician.)
- Liquids or foods to be consumed when off the vehicle must be in a spill-proof container. Liquids must be in a container with a tight fitting lid that will not leak if turned upside down and food must be in a closed container that will not drip or spill and be in a bag sufficient to contain an accidental spill.

- Bringing on-board any non-collapsible strollers, baby buggies, walkers, or carts which block the aisle and restrict the free movement of passengers is prohibited. All items must be removed and the device collapsed and placed under or between seats. If the device can fit safely and securely between the seats and out of the aisle, then items may remain loaded.
- Remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.
- Cell phones may be used, but keep your conversation short and at a low volume in consideration of other customers and the Operator.

Boarding and Exiting the Van

Operators shall position the vehicle to make boarding as easy as possible for everyone, and be available at the vehicle's door to provide assistance when boarding or de-boarding, as needed. All passengers must enter or leave the van at the curbside, even on one-way streets. Passengers have the right to determine how they will board (i.e., which way they will face), and boarding direction.

Use of Lifts

Upon request, operators will allow passengers who do not use a mobility aid to use a vehicle's lift or ramp to enter or exit the vehicle.

Assistance

METRO Links drivers will, upon request, carry a limited number of packages (with a combined weight of no more than 30 pounds) for customers. Please keep in mind that the Operator has other customers who need to reach their appointments on time.

Door-to-door assistance is available upon request, and should be requested when scheduling trips. The Operator will assist passengers on and off the vehicle, to or from the door or waiting area where the rider boards and gets off the vehicle and lend a steady arm and provide directions for the customer.

However, there will be some locations and/or situations where the Operator cannot leave the vehicle. If you are able to wait at the curb or a designated location, please do so whenever possible.

Your Operator will provide assistance beyond the curb upon request, but cannot enter your private residence.

Packages

Because the vehicle will be shared, customers must limit their packages to 3-5 grocery bags or similar-sized packages on board. Operators will assist with up to two parcels with a combined weight of no more than 30 pounds. Bags or packages weighing more than the limit will be the responsibility of the passenger. Customers are allowed to bring on board only what they, with the assistance of the Operator, can carry in one load. Once on board, the carry-on items must fit within a certain space either on your lap or in front of your area. Passengers are not allowed to get on and off the vehicle to load packages.

Transporting Children

Children traveling as companions or personal care attendants, who are under the age of six or weigh less than 60 pounds, are required by law to use a child safety seat or other safety restraint system. You are responsible for providing such safety equipment and for securing it and the child in paratransit vehicles.

Illegal or Disruptive Conduct

Service will be suspended or refused to customers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct. The severity of the incident will determine whether an individual is suspended temporarily or permanently. For example, a person whose behavior threatens or has threatened the safety of METRO Links personnel or other customers may be refused service (permanent revocation of eligibility). An individual who contests a refusal of paratransit service may appeal the decision through the Appeals Process (see page 19).

Pick-up/Drop-off Policies

The following general policies apply:

- Drivers will only wait five minutes upon arrival before proceeding on their route. A customer will be charged with a “No-Show” if the vehicle arrived to pick them up within the pick-up window and the customer was not ready to go within five minutes.
- METRO Links vehicles do not enter private driveways. Riders must be waiting at the sidewalk, or at another safe waiting area in front of, or as close as possible to, the entrance of the pick-up location.
- Operators will wait for a rider at the curb of a public street, in front of, or as close as possible to, the rider’s residence, a building or other designated pick-up location.

- Alley pick-ups and drop-offs may be allowed when safe and accessible as determined by METRO Links.
- Upon request, the Operator may provide assistance between the vehicle and the door, as long as the Operator is able to keep the vehicle in sight.
- Time constraints limit the Operator's ability to assist you beyond the front entrance of your destination. If your destination is a large building or expansive complex, it might be best to have a Companion or Personal Care Attendant accompany you to provide assistance.
- Operators will not enter your home other than assisting you in or out of the door threshold. If the operator feels there is an emergency, he or she will radio the Dispatcher for assistance.
- For drop-offs, the Operator will drop the rider off at the sidewalk, or another safe waiting area next to the curb, or a public street in front of, or as close as possible to the designated drop-off location. If a rider cannot be left unattended (as a result of his or her disability or impairment), a companion or personal care attendant is required to receive the passenger upon the vehicle's arrival.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

- METRO Links vans cannot enter areas where there are inadequate roadways, insufficient clearance or similar circumstances which may result in damage to the vehicle or personal injury.
- METRO Links Operators are not permitted to enter a rider's home at any time.
- METRO Links Operators cannot accept cash gifts or tips from riders.
- Customers are asked to leash their dogs or otherwise confine them on the premises while being served by METRO Links. METRO Links reserves the right to refuse service to customers who choose to not abide by this policy.

LOST ARTICLES

Articles found on METRO Links vehicles will be reported immediately and turned in to the LINKS office after the Operator's shift. Persons claiming lost items should identify the item to the METRO Links Operator or call the METRO Links office with a description of the item. All lost items and found items will be disposed of after thirty (30) days.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

METRO Links customers shall not engage in conduct that discriminates against someone or harasses someone because of that person's race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran's status, or any other status protected by state or federal law. Customers should be respectful of the rights of other customers and of the Operator.

Sexual discrimination/harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a METRO Links customer. This includes telling “dirty jokes” and other conversations which might be considered offensive to the METRO Links Operator and other riders who are in hearing range. Racial discrimination is defined as any derogatory acts, remarks, references to ethnic background or behavior toward other riders or the METRO Links Operator which might have a discriminatory impact. Discriminatory conduct is also defined as the use of racial slurs and jokes because of someone’s protected status. If you have any questions about these prohibitions, please contact the METRO Links Paratransit Manager.

YOU ARE A VALUED CUSTOMER

Service is foremost in the minds of our Operators, Schedulers and Dispatchers. METRO Links employees will always treat you with courtesy and respect. Our goal is to provide you with dependable service. We ask that you assist us by abiding by the rules and regulations contained in this document.

Violation of METRO Links policies may result in suspension of service.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. You may write to METRO Links at 901 Maple, North Little Rock, AR 72114, visit in person, call us at 501-375-6717 any time between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, fax to 501-476-3759, or email info@rrmetro.org. Updated information may be found on our Web site at www.rrmetro.org.

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