

Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit Service Guide



This publication was prepared in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, and Federal Transit Administration. The opinions, findings, and conclusions in these publications are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, or the Federal Transit Administration.

For more information regarding this plan or any other Liberty Transit activity, please contact us:

Liberty Transit
115 East M. L. King Jr. Drive
Hinesville GA 31313
912-877-1472 or e-mail www.libertytransit.org:

Visit our website for the most up-to-date information and downloadable documents:
<http://www.libertytransit.org/>

Liberty Transit is committed to assuring full compliance with all civil rights provisions of federal statutes and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

These laws include but are not limited to:
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI"),
Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259),
Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) (sex),
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and
Age Discrimination Act of 1975, all as amended.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Terms to Know.....4
Fixed Route Bus Service:5
Complementary Paratransit Service.....5
Holiday Service5
Complementary Paratransit Service in Gated or Secured Areas5
Applying for Complementary Paratransit Service5
Eligibility Notification.....6

Who is Eligible for Complementary Paratransit Service?	6
Unconditional Eligibility (1)	6
Conditional Eligibility (2)	7
Service for Visitors	7
Recertification of Eligibility	7
Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit Identification Card	7
Fares	8
Scheduling Rides on Complementary Paratransit Service	8
Military Time Clock	9
“Ready Time” and “Ready Window”	9
Subscription Service	10
How to Change a Scheduled Ride	10
How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride	10
No-Show Policy	11
Definitions	11
No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances beyond a Rider's Control	11
Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-shows	11
Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations	12
Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions	12
How to Ride	13
Ready for Pick-up	13
Operator Assistance	13
Paying Your Fare	13
To Check on Your Ride	13
Personal Care Attendants	13
Children	14
Wheelchairs and other General Devices	14
Scooters	14
Wheelchair Securement and Seat Belt Policy	15
Safety Belts	15
Packages and Personal Items	15
Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment	15
Service Animals	15
Pets	16
Emergency Procedures	16
Inclement Weather	16
Community Disaster Emergency Procedures	16
Rider Courtesy and Conduct	17
Penalties and Suspension of Service	18

Appeals	19
ADA Complementary Paratransit Appeal Process.....	19
Eligibility Appeal Process.....	20
Step 1: Filing an Appeal	20
Receipt of Appeals.....	20
Step 2: Review/Decision by the Appeal Committee	20
Preparing for the Hearing.....	20
Scheduling the Hearing.....	21
Documentation.....	21
Step 3. Appeal Committee Hearing	21
Step 4. Appeal Committee Decision	21
Notice of Appeal Determination	22
Appellants' Next Steps	22
Service Suspension/Termination Appeal Process	22
Suggestions and Comments.....	22

Information about this Guide

This Guide provides information about Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit Service. It explains how to become eligible to use Complementary Paratransit, where Complementary Paratransit operates, the days and hours of service, how to request a ride, fares, and other important information. If you still have questions after reading this Service Guide, you can call the Liberty Transit office at (912) 877-1472. Outside of regular business hours, you will be able to leave a message and we will get back to you the next business day.

Esta guía de servicios ofrece breve información sobre el servicio de paratransito libertad de tránsito. Explica cómo ser elegible para usar paratransito, donde Complementary Paratransit funciona, los días y horas de servicio, cómo solicitar un viaje, tarifas y otra información importante. Si usted todavía tiene preguntas después de leer a esta guía de servicios, puede llamar a la oficina de tránsito de la libertad en (912) 877-1472. Fuera de horas regulares de negocio, usted podrá dejar un mensaje y le responderemos a usted el siguiente día hábil.

Terms to Know

Fixed Route is what we call our regular bus service. It is scheduled to travel along set routes and at set times.

Complementary Paratransit is a term for service that parallels' fixed route service for passengers with disabilities.

Accessible means that a route or a vehicle is equipped to handle wheelchairs and other General devices.

Fixed Route Bus Service:

Liberty Transit issues reduced-fare cards for senior citizens and passengers with disabilities. This card allows an eligible individual to travel at a discounted rate when traveling on Liberty Transit's fixed route services. The Complementary Paratransit ID card also qualifies as a reduced-fare card when riding on fixed route bus services. We encourage our customers with disabilities to take advantage of the flexibility, independence and reduced cost that our fixed route bus services provide.

For route and schedule information, or any questions you may have about using Liberty Transit's fixed route bus services, visit our website at www.libertytransit.org.

Complementary Paratransit Service

For eligible customers who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on fixed route buses, Liberty Transit offers a shared-ride, origin-to-destination service. This service is sometimes called "ADA Complementary Paratransit service" because it is provided as part of our efforts to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The service is provided with lift-equipped vans.

ADA Complementary Paratransit service is designed to be "comparable to" (similar to) fixed route bus service, operating in the same areas and during the same days and hours. As a comparable service, ADA Complementary Paratransit service is only required to transport riders to and from locations that are within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile of existing local fixed routes and during the same days and hours of that fixed route bus service. Points of origin-to-destination beyond this three-quarters (3/4) of a mile corridor are not eligible for ADA Complementary Paratransit service. To confirm whether Complementary Paratransit can serve where you are traveling from and where you would like to go, contact the office at (912) 877-1472. Reservations must be made at least one (1) day, and up to seven (7) days, in advance. Complementary Paratransit trips can be scheduled for any purpose, whether for shopping, appointments, etc.

Holiday Service

Liberty Transit does not operate Fixed Route or Complementary Paratransit on the following Holidays: New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Please contact Liberty Transit if the holiday is on a Saturday or Sunday.

Complementary Paratransit Service in Gated or Secured Areas

Complementary Paratransit vehicles may not travel into areas that require security clearance, including the entry of a security code for access, unless cleared in advance. Should you travel to or from a gated/secured area, you will need to share this information with us when you make your reservation and make any necessary arrangements with that location's security or the Complementary Paratransit pick-up and drop-off point may be established outside the secured area.

Applying for Complementary Paratransit Service

Individuals interested in using Complementary Paratransit must first be determined eligible for the service. If a disability or health condition prevents you from using fixed route bus services under any conditions, you might be determined “unconditionally eligible,” meaning that you are eligible for Complementary Paratransit without any restrictions. If you can use fixed route buses some of the time, but not at other times, you will be determined “conditionally eligible” for those trips that you cannot make by bus.

To receive information about the eligibility process, visit our website or call Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit to request that an eligibility information packet be mailed to you. You may request this information in various formats. Once you have reviewed the eligibility information and feel that you might be eligible for Complementary Paratransit service, call Liberty Transit for an application

Eligibility Notification

After the completion of the application process, you will be notified in writing of your eligibility status within twenty-one (21) days.

- If you are determined eligible for Complementary Paratransit services, you will receive a Complementary Paratransit eligibility card. Your Complementary Paratransit eligibility card will also allow you to use Liberty Transit’s fixed route bus services at a reduced cost.
- If you are not eligible for Complementary Paratransit services but your disability qualifies under Liberty Transit’s reduced fare program, you will receive a reduced fare card.
- If a decision is not made within 21 days of a completed application process, Complementary Paratransit service will be provided until a final decision is made.

Once you receive your eligibility notification, if you do not agree with the decision that is made, **you can appeal the decision** to the Executive Director by following the information outlined in your eligibility letter. Also see the section in this Service Guide.

Who is Eligible for Complementary Paratransit Service?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for Complementary Paratransit services under one of the following two categories:

Unconditional Eligibility (1)

The first category of eligibility includes those persons who are unable to use fully accessible fixed route bus services. Included in this category is:

“Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.” [Section 37.123(e) (1) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who cannot independently negotiate the fixed route bus system (board, ride or disembark from a bus).

Conditional Eligibility (2)

The second category of eligibility includes:

“Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.”
[Section 37.123(e) (3) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who, because of his/her disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed route bus and cannot access his/her destination after disembarking from a fixed route bus. Two important qualifiers to this category are included in the regulations. First, environmental conditions and architectural barriers not under the control of the public entity do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. Second, inconvenience in using the fixed route bus system is not a basis for eligibility.

Eligibility is determined on a trip-by-trip basis for conditionally eligible customers.

Temporary Disabilities: Temporary eligibility is provided to customers who have a non-permanent disability that prevents them from using the Liberty Transit bus system. Eligibility will be provided for the expected duration of the disability, e.g., for the time expected to recover from a temporary impairment, or as a transitional period under specific circumstances. Customers must notify Complementary Paratransit if additional time is needed.

Service for Visitors

Visitors to the Hinesville area can use Complementary Paratransit service for up to 21 days a year by providing documentation that they have been determined eligible for similar ADA Complementary Paratransit services by a transit agency in another part of the country. Visitors who do not have this kind of eligibility because they live in areas without public transit service might be asked for documentation of their health condition or disability.

Recertification of Eligibility

Each Complementary Paratransit customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. Recertification may also become necessary from time to time if the condition of the disability changes or if the terms governing the program change. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. A customer’s Complementary Paratransit ID Card will indicate his/her Complementary Paratransit eligibility expiration date. It is the customer’s responsibility to reapply for services prior to his or her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew Complementary Paratransit eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the certification process.

Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit Identification Card

For eligible customers, your Complementary Paratransit Identification Card will be mailed at the time eligibility has been determined. Your Complementary Paratransit ID card is considered a Liberty Transit-approved reduced fare card, which allows you to ride for a **reduced fare** on Liberty Transit's fixed route services as well. If you lose your Complementary Paratransit ID card, there will be a \$5.00 replacement charge.

Fares

The one-way fare for Complementary Paratransit is \$2.00. This fare must be paid when boarding the vehicle. Riders who do not have fare will not be transported. Fares can be paid in the following ways:

- Cash – Exact fare only. Operators carry no change. Cash fares may be paid with coins or dollar bills.
- Complementary Paratransit Pass – you can purchase a Liberty Transit Fare Value Pass in increments of \$5, \$10, and \$20. You may purchase passes with a credit or debit card at Hinesville City Hall Water Department, located at 115 East M. L. King Jr. Drive Hinesville GA 31313

Please note that fares are set by the Hinesville Mayor and City Council and are subject to change.

Note: Operators are not permitted to accept tips. If you would like to commend an operator for service provided, call Liberty Transit at 912-877-1472.

Scheduling Rides on Complementary Paratransit Service

How to Book a Trip: You can reserve your Complementary Paratransit ride by calling the Liberty Transit office at 921-877-1472 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Reservations must be made at least one business day in advance and can be made up to 2 days in advance Monday through Thursday, and up to 4 days in advance Friday. Same day reservations are available but not guaranteed.

Reservations can be one-way or round-trip, and you will need to provide all the following pertinent information:

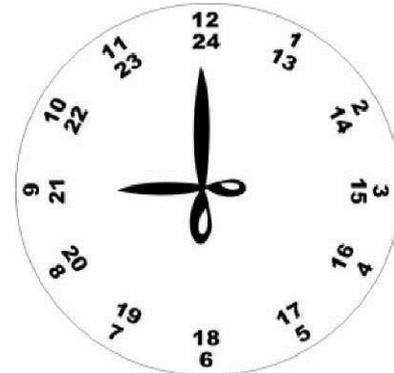
- Your First and Last Name
- The Date and Day of the week you need to ride
- Time of Your Appointment
- Address where you need to be Picked Up
- Address you are Traveling To
- Time you want your Return
- Return Trip Pick-up Address
- Return Trip Destination
- Phone Number where you can be reached (you may call back to confirm your ride time)
- Any accompaniment (PCA, guess, service animal, etc.)
- Special notification request, for example, asking for the operator to beep upon arrival if your disability affects your vision.

Please do not schedule a trip several days in advance if you are not sure that you will go or if you are not sure of the time you want to go. Reserving rides that are later cancelled or that result in a No-Show causes the vehicles to be less efficient, can significantly increase the cost of the service, and can lead to suspension of your Complementary Paratransit service.

It is very important for you to keep us updated on new phone numbers. From time to time it can become necessary for us to change a pick-up time to prevent multiple vehicles being sent to the same location or to better group customers on the same bus. If this occurs, we will notify you of the time change either by speaking directly with you or by leaving a message for you about the time change. Calls may be made up to 7:00 PM the night before your ride.

Military Time Clock

In case your pick-up time is given using military time, the following picture of a military time clock has been included for your reference. The numbers 1-12 refer to AM and 13-24 refer to PM times.



“Ready Time” and “Ready Window”

After you have provided the trip information, the reservationist will offer you your trip options. We will make every effort to offer you a pick-up and drop-off time that is as close as possible to the times you requested. Because Complementary Paratransit is a **shared-ride service**, and other customers may need to be scheduled on the same vehicle, it may be necessary to get you to your appointment a little early or to pick you up for a return a little later than your request.

To ensure that the scheduling options offered will meet your needs, Liberty Transit has established the following guidelines for the Complementary Paratransit scheduling process:

- Every effort will be made to schedule your trip so that you do not arrive more than 30 minutes before your requested drop-off time and no later than your requested drop-off time.
- Every effort will be made to schedule a return pick-up no later than 60 minutes after the time you have requested and no earlier than the time you have requested.
- Every effort will be made to schedule trips so that travel times are comparable to the time it would take to make the trip by fixed route bus. When comparing these ride times, walking distance to the bus stop will be considered as part of the measurement.

The **actual pick-up time** that is offered and accepted by you will be your **“Ready Time.”** The reservationist will then note that **a Complementary Paratransit vehicle might arrive up to 15 minutes before your Ready Time and up to 15 minutes after your Ready Time.** This is called the 30-minute **“Ready Window.”** This window of time is needed to group rides and to accommodate unexpected traffic conditions, weather conditions, or other delays and schedule changes. It is important that you be ready to meet the Complementary Paratransit vehicle during this 30-minute “window” of time.

EXAMPLE: A customer asks for a ride to and from work. They work from 9:00am to 5:00pm, so they request an 8:45am drop-off in the morning and a 5:15pm pick-up in the afternoon. The reservationist is able to offer an 8:30am pick-up in the morning and a 5:45pm return pick-up in the afternoon. In the morning, the Ready Time is 8:30am and the customer needs to be ready to meet the vehicle between 8:15am and 8:45am, the Ready Window. For the return, the customer's scheduled time is 5:45pm, which makes the Ready Window from 5:30pm to 6:00pm.

Riders must be ready to depart at any time during the thirty (30) minute Ready Window described when the reservation was made. Out of courtesy for other Complementary Paratransit customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the operator will wait at least five (5) minutes after arriving. The vehicle will depart when the five-minute period is up. If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within five (5) minutes of the vehicle's arrival, the vehicle will depart, and a No-Show will be assessed to the customer's record.

EXAMPLE: Your scheduled pick-up time is 7:50. The operator arrives at 7:40 and will depart at 7:45 if you are not out to catch the bus.

Subscription Service

If you need a ride to the **same place**, at the **same time**, at least once a week, "Subscription Service" may be a good option for you. This service allows you to schedule these recurring trips with one call. You will then automatically be placed on the schedule each week. Ask the reservationist about this option.

Depending on demand, it may sometimes become necessary to limit the number of subscription trips that we provide. If this happens, your request will be put on a waiting list and we will call you back when we are able to meet your request for Subscription Service.

NOTE: All subscription trips are pre-cancelled on holidays.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

If you have scheduled a trip and your plans (times) change, call Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit at 912-877-1472 at least one business day before your trip. Tell the reservationist that you would like to change a ride that has already been scheduled, and the reservation agent will ask you:

- Your first and last name.
- The date and time of the trip you are calling to change.
- The new times you would like to schedule or the changes you would like to make.

The reservationist will always try to accommodate your needs, but changes to your original ride request may result in adjustments to your pick-up times.

Every effort will be made to adjust your return trip pick-up time and assign another vehicle to pick you up later. However, since schedules are set the day before, **rescheduling may not always be possible or there may be a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.**

Remember to allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle and the inconvenience of an extra wait for you.

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

Scheduled rides that are cancelled after an operator is assigned (5:00 PM the night before), cost Liberty Transit thousands of dollars each year and affect our ability to provide trip opportunities to other riders. If you have scheduled a ride that you no longer need to take, please call Liberty Transit *as soon as possible* to cancel. Notice is required at least two (2) hours before your scheduled pickup time. Customers with Subscription Service also have the option to put service on hold for up to three (3) months.

To cancel a scheduled trip, call 912-877-1472 during business hours to talk to a reservationist who will take your trip cancellation information.

No-Show Policy

Liberty Transit understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. Liberty Transit also understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains Liberty Transit's no-show policy.

Definitions

No-show: A no-show occurs when a rider fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window and the driver waits at least 5 minutes.

Pickup Window: The pickup window is defined as from 15 minutes before the scheduled pickup time to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pickup window. The driver will wait for at least five (5) minutes within the pickup window for the rider to appear.

Late Cancellation: A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time or as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window.

No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances beyond a Rider's Control

Liberty Transit does not count as no-shows or late cancellation for any missed trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pickup window begins
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pickup window)
- Drivers arriving within the pickup window, but departing without waiting the required 5 minutes

Liberty Transit does not count as no-shows or late cancellations situations beyond a rider's control that prevent the rider from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

- Medical emergency
- Family emergency
- Sudden illness or change in condition
- Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice

Riders should contact the Liberty Transit when experiencing no-shows or late cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control.

Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-shows

When a rider is a no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the rider specifically cancels the trips. To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, riders are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day.

Suspension Policy for a Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-shows and Late Cancellations

Liberty Transit reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's account. Liberty Transit reserves the right to suspend from services any rider who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips.

Each verified no-show or late cancellation consistent with the above definitions counts as one (1) penalty point. Riders will be subject to suspension after they meet all the following conditions:

- Accumulate three (3) penalty points in one calendar month, and
- Have booked at least three (3) trips that month, and
- Have "no-showed" or "late cancelled" at least 10% percent of those trips

A rider will be subject to suspension only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of penalty points are reached during the calendar month.

Liberty Transit will notify riders by telephone after they have accumulated two (2) penalty points and would be subject to suspension should they have verified no shows or late cancellation exceeding 10% of total booked trips.

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows or late cancellations, and how to appeal suspensions. Suspensions begin on Mondays.

Violations result in the following:

- First violation: Triggers warning phone call and written letter, but no suspension
- Second violation: 7-day suspension
- Third violation: 14-day suspension
- Fourth violation: 21-day suspension

- Fifth and subsequent violations: 28-day suspension

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations

Riders wishing to dispute specific no-shows or late cancellations must do so within 15 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders should contact the Liberty Transit at 912-877-1472 or e-mail www.libertytransit.org on regular business days from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to explain the circumstance and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal by requesting in-person, via phone, email or Certified US Mail within 15 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from Liberty Transit on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals follow Liberty Transit appeal policy.

How to Ride

Ready for Pick-up

You are expected to be ready to ride when the vehicle arrives. Complementary Paratransit operator will stop the vehicle at the curb in front of the pick-up address you provided unless something is preventing them from doing so. If there is an obstacle, then they will park as close as possible to the location. You are expected to be at the curb so you can identify/be identified by the bus operator. ***Remember, the vehicle might arrive up to 15 minutes before your Ready Time and up to 15 minutes after your Ready Time.*** Please be ready to go when the vehicle arrives so that the operator can stay on schedule for all customers. The operator is not permitted to honk the horn to let you know the vehicle has arrived (unless previously authorized through Liberty Transit). Wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the operator will be able to see you.

Please note that the operators can only wait for you for five (5) minutes after they have arrived. If you are not ready, the operator will have to leave to avoid inconveniencing other customers.

Operator Assistance

Complementary Paratransit is an origin-to-destination service. Operators are not permitted to leave the vehicle or other customers unattended due to safety and security concerns, so if you need assistance getting to the curbside or from the vehicle to your destination, please arrange to have someone there to assist you. If requested, operators will assist you as you enter and exit the vehicle. Operators will operate the wheelchair ramp or lift and will assist customers with the securement of wheelchairs and General aids and with seat belts. See "Packages and Personal Items" section for more detail.

Paying Your Fare

Fares must be paid when boarding the vehicle.

If you do not pay the correct fare, the operator may refuse to provide the ride and you could have a No-Show marked on your record. Operators do not carry cash for safety reasons and will not be able to make change.

To Check on Your Ride

Unexpected delays can arise from road construction, traffic conditions, or bad weather, or on occasion mechanical problems with the vehicle. If a Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit vehicle has not arrived by the end of the Ready Window (15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time), call Liberty Transit at 912-877-1472 assistance. Stay within sight of the pick-up location if at all possible, in case the vehicle arrives while you are calling.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone you may bring with you to assist you while traveling or with personal care or activities. **A PCA may ride for free when traveling with you, but you must be registered with us as needing a PCA.** This is done as part of the eligibility process. A PCA must get on and off the bus at the same places and times as you, and you must tell us that your PCA is traveling with you when you schedule your ride. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders. Operators cannot add riders who do not have a reservation, so if you do not make a reservation for your PCA, they may not be allowed to ride with you.

Note: A customer registered as needing a PCA may not use another Complementary Paratransit client as their PCA.

Guests/Companions

A guest or companion is someone you want to bring along to share the trip, not someone you bring to assist you. Guests/companions must pay a fare when accompanying you and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you.

You may schedule only one (1) companion to travel with you, and you will need to tell the reservationist when you schedule trips that you will be traveling with a guest/companion. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your guest/companion, and other scheduled riders. Operators cannot add riders who do not have a reservation, so if you do not make a reservation for you guest/companion, they may not be allowed to ride with you.

Additional guests/companions may be accommodated if there is enough space on the vehicle. To schedule additional guests, you may call the day before your ride to see if there is enough space on the vehicle.

Children

All children under six (6) years of age must be accompanied by an adult. They cannot ride unattended. Liberty Transit policy allows two (2) children under six to ride for free with an eligible fare-paying adult. An adult accompanying a child on any LIBERTY TRANSIT vehicle (including Complementary Paratransit) is responsible for the child and for providing the appropriate car seat. Operators will not secure a child restraint or car seat, will not assist with strollers, and are not permitted to carry children on or off the vehicle for you. Operators can, however, assist with securing the child's seatbelt. If you will need assistance with the child, please bring someone

Wheelchairs and other General Devices

Complementary Paratransit vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and General aids. We highly recommend using the lap belt in addition to the wheelchair securements for your safety. It is Liberty Transit's policy that we cannot transport any General device that exceeds the "common wheelchair" dimensions as defined by the ADA.

We may not be able to transport a wheelchair or General device that exceeds the following dimensions:

- More than 30 inches wide.
- More than 48 inches long (measured 2 inches above the ground).
- More than 600 pounds when occupied.

Riders using wheelchairs or General devices must be in the upright position when boarding and during travel on the bus.

Scooters

Some three-wheeled scooters are difficult to secure on Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit vehicles. Some scooters also come with a warning from the manufacturer that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles. Because of this, the operator may recommend that you transfer to a vehicle seat if you can. While the operator may not require you to transfer, we strongly recommend that you do, so we can provide you and other customers with the safest ride possible.

Wheelchair Securement and Seat Belt Policy

It is the operator's responsibility on any Liberty Transit vehicle (including Complementary Paratransit) to ensure that all General devices are properly secured. Wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured into the four-point securement system at all times during the ride. Liberty Transit requests that riders also allow operators to secure the lap belts and shoulder belts to ensure the customer's safety.

Safety Belts

Although not required, but for your safety and security, Liberty Transit strongly encourages you to use a safety belt and remain seated while riding on Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit vehicles.

Packages and Personal Items

You may bring grocery bags, luggage, or other packages or (legal) personal items with you on Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit Service. Please do not bring more than you and/or the assistant who is traveling with you can manage without delaying the vehicle. Operators are not required to assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items. Delaying the vehicle occurs when you bring more items than you can carry on the vehicle at one time and you keep the vehicle from being able to move on to the next customer.

Additionally, please keep in mind that this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Grocery store carts are not permitted on vehicles, but you may bring packages on-board in a personal two-wheeled, collapsible cart. Packages may not take up seats on the vehicle and must be safely stowed out of the aisle, either under your seat or on your lap.

Remember, if you bring more bags/groceries than can be carried on or off and you delay the departure of the vehicle.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on all Liberty Transit vehicles. The operator will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Operators are not permitted, however, to assist you in using this equipment. If you need assistance with portable life support equipment, please arrange to bring someone who can help you.

Service Animals

Customers may travel on any Liberty Transit vehicle with a service animal. Service animals should be trained and certified and are only dogs, and miniature horses (24 to 34 inches and 70 to 100 pounds). If you are traveling with a service animal on Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit, be sure to inform the reservationist when you are scheduling a ride.

You are responsible for maintaining control of your animal while on board the vehicle. If you are planning on catching a Liberty Transit bus (including Complementary Paratransit) with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- Keep the animal on a leash or in a container when boarding, while riding, and when exiting the bus.
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians and rodents must be kept in an enclosed carrier/container.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The animal must not be aggressive towards people or other animals.
- You are responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well-groomed.

Pets

Animals that are not service animals may ride on Complementary Paratransit vehicles only if they are properly secured in a cage or kennel. For safety reasons, operators are not permitted to carry cages or kennels on or off the Complementary Paratransit vehicles. If you need assistance with a pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency, please remain calm and follow the operator's instructions. A customer who becomes ill, or who notices another customer who may be ill, should immediately inform the operator.

If a customer is to be met when they are dropped off, due to their disability, and the person meeting them is not there when the operator arrives, the customer will be transported back to a mutually agreed upon location or original point of origin.

Inclement Weather

Liberty Transit reserves the right to suspend, modify or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions that may jeopardize the safety of our customers, our employees, or our vehicles. On bad weather days, please listen to the school closure reports on the radio or television because Complementary Paratransit service announcements may be included with school closure information. You can always call the Complementary Paratransit office to find out whether service will be cancelled, but the phone lines may be tied up if everyone calls at once.

If your trip is for dialysis, chemotherapy, or another life-sustaining purpose, call Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit at 912-877-1472 to make sure you can get where you need to go. Every effort will be made to deliver life-sustaining and essential trips using Complementary Paratransit or by arranging other emergency assistance.

Community Disaster Emergency Procedures

During a community disaster, Liberty Transit will make every attempt to transport our Complementary Paratransit customers as scheduled. Due to the nature of the disaster, it might be necessary to establish pick-up points that either requires us to walk in to the area to get you or to have you get assistance from someone at your location to bring you to the vehicle. Through coordination with the local disaster control center, we will make every attempt to establish these locations to minimize your travel to and from them.

If you are at home when a disaster occurs, you should stay home. If we took you to a location and you make other transportation arrangements due to the emergency, please let us know so that we can account for all our customers who have scheduled trips

In the event of a community disaster, Liberty Transit will:

- “Freeze” our system. This means all vehicles will hold at their current or at a nearby safe location until contacted by the Control Center.
- Conduct an inventory of vehicles and passengers on board.
- Conduct an inventory of passengers delivered in the system.
- Hold off on any additional passenger pick-ups until we have been able to determine whether we can safely proceed.
- Determine whether it is necessary to drop off passengers already on vehicles at established shelters.
- If a vehicle is out of contact with the Control Center when a community disaster occurs, the operator will proceed according to pre-established protocol:
 - Determine whether it is safe to proceed.
 - Assess any passengers on board.
 - Make their way to a Liberty Transit facility while continuing to try to contact Control.

By keeping our customer records as up-to-date as possible, we feel we will be able to provide a better service to our customers in times of an emergency. As part of our preparation for an emergency, we may from time to time request your emergency contact information, including a telephone number—preferably your cell phone—as well as the name of a person to contact on your behalf and their phone

number. If you have common places that you travel, please provide us with telephone numbers to those locations as well. Make sure we have at least one emergency contact person or location on file for you. If the nature of the disaster requires that you need your Complementary Paratransit trip earlier than originally scheduled, contact the office and we will attempt to meet your scheduling needs. Keep in mind that our ability to respond immediately is limited to the nature of the disaster. You can also call Liberty Transit Complementary Paratransit if you have not yet been picked up for your trip or to confirm that we are able to safely get you where you need to go.

In the event that our internal phone system is not functional, listen for emergency news announcements.

If it is unsafe for Liberty Transit to travel into a disaster area, we reserve the right to suspend, modify, or cancel service without notice.

Rider Courtesy and Conduct

Liberty Transit uses common-sense rules to ensure the safety of all customers, operators, and others on the road. We ask that all customers, their personal care attendants, and any companions traveling with them observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- Customers shall maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene.
- Shirts and shoes or other footwear (if ambulatory) must be worn.
- Smoking shall be kept off and away from the vehicle.
- Eating or drinking shall be done before entering or after exiting the vehicle, unless required for health reasons.
- Illegal drugs and open containers of alcohol shall not be permitted on the vehicle.
- Abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions will not be tolerated towards the operator or other customers.
- Please be respectful of service animals and refrain from petting them without the permission of the owner.
- Use of electronic equipment (music, games, etc.) shall be with headphones and kept at a low enough volume so as not to be heard by and disturb other passengers.
- Operation of vehicle equipment is to be left to operators and other Liberty Transit employees; tampering can result in accidental injury.
- Trash shall be disposed of properly both on and around the vehicle.
- Baby strollers shall be folded and stowed to avoid blocking the aisle or causing injury to persons on the vehicle.
- Parents/accompanying adults shall make sure their children behave.
- Head, arms, and other body parts must be kept inside the vehicle.
- Objects may not be thrown from the windows.
- Federal regulations prohibit the transportation of flammable or explosive materials on transit vehicles.
- Dangerous weapons are prohibited on Liberty Transit vehicles.
- Deliberate fare evasion may result in loss of services.

- Passengers must depart the transit vehicle upon demand of any authorized Liberty Transit representative, including the operator.

Penalties and Suspension of Service

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who violate rules of courtesy and conduct may be subject to penalties up to and including suspension of that customer's service.

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another customer or the operator, or who engage in other illegal activities, may be subject to **immediate and permanent suspension** from receiving Complementary Paratransit service. They may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who engage in an activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of Complementary Paratransit services may be subject to a suspension of that customer's service. If a customer on their own is disruptive to Liberty Transit service, Liberty Transit reserves the right to require that a Personal Care Attendant travel with the customer as an alternative to service suspension.

Any customer who is suspended from service will be notified in writing and will be given an opportunity to appeal the suspension.

Appeals

ADA Complementary Paratransit Appeal Process

The ADA requires that transportation providers establish a process to appeal decisions if they are denied access to Complementary Paratransit service. Liberty Transit has established an appeals procedure for persons whose applications for Complementary Paratransit eligibility are denied or for persons who have received suspension notices for other reasons.

An individual may file an appeal when Liberty Transit denies Complementary Paratransit service for any of the following reasons:

- Denial of Eligibility
- Suspension resulting from excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations
- Suspension for Seriously Disruptive Behavior

The General Manager will inform an applicant or current customer of a decision to deny eligibility status or to suspend service by letter via certified US Mail. Individuals have sixty (60) days from the date of the letter informing them of an eligibility denial or service suspension to request an appeal. Requests for an appeal must be sent in writing to:

Liberty Transit
115 East M. L. King Jr. Drive
Hinesville, GA 31313

Within thirty (30) days from when the request for an appeal is received, the Appeal Committee will convene. The Appeal Committee consists of the Mayors or designee, Hinesville City Manager or designee. The Appeal Committee will issue a final written decision within thirty (30) days of the appeal hearing. Liberty Transit will not provide service to individuals who are pursuing an eligibility appeal. However, if the Appeal Committee has not decided 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.

Upon appeal for a No-Show suspension, Complementary Paratransit service will be provided pending the appeal; suspension of service will not begin until the appeals process is complete. If the decision is not made within thirty (30) days of the completion of the appeal hearing, the individual appealing the suspension shall be granted service until a final decision has been reached.

Persons requesting an appeal will be notified in writing via certified US mail of the time, date and location of the appeal hearing. Individuals are encouraged to attend the appeal hearing although attendance is not mandatory. If individuals requesting appeals cannot attend, they may have another person(s) represent them at the hearing. If the individual or a designated representative is not present at the appeal hearing, the Appeal Committee will base its decision on the documentation submitted by Liberty Transit.

Passengers who exhibit behavior that Liberty Transit documents as being seriously disruptive will be suspended from receiving Complementary Paratransit services until the Appeal Committee reviews the suspension. The ADA does not require a transportation provider to offer an appeal process if a customer is suspended because of seriously disruptive behavior.

Passengers who exhibit behavior that is violent or illegal will be denied Complementary Paratransit services. The Appeal Committee will review an incident of violent or illegal behavior upon request, but will only act to verify that such behavior occurred. Verification of violent or illegal behavior will result in denial of Complementary Paratransit service.

Eligibility Appeal Process

Step 1: Filing an Appeal

Applicants must file an appeal within sixty (60) days from the date of the eligibility determination letter or notice of the suspension.

Appellants may write a letter that includes the pertinent information or complete the Appeal Form or inform the General Manager verbally. Appellants are urged to include any additional medical or other documentation in support of their appeal.

The written appeal must be signed, dated, and contain: the name of the individual who was denied ADA eligibility certification or served with a notice of suspension of service, the nature of the disability, and an explanation or additional information describing the basis for the appeal. An appeal must include a return address and telephone number. A verbal appeal requires the same information as a written appeal except for the signature; the General manager will verify that all information has been obtained.

An appeal that does not include the required information is incomplete and will be returned for completion.

Receipt of Appeals

Upon receipt by the General Manager, appeals will be date-stamped. Appeals that are received after the 60-day time period will be returned to the sender. If the appeal is timely, the General Manager will review it to ensure that enough information is included.

The General Manager may contact the appellant for missing information. Appeals without the necessary information will be returned for completion.

Step 2: Review/Decision by the Appeal Committee

The General Manager will forward the completed appeal to the Appeal Committee. At this point in the review, the Appeal Committee may:

- reverse a determination of ineligibility or revise conditions of eligibility
- cancel or modify a suspension of service, or
- uphold the decision and forward the package to the General Services Manager, who serves as staff to the Appeal Committee.

Preparing for the Hearing

If the Appeal Committee upholds the decision denying eligibility or the Suspension, the General Manager will review the appeal for completion, schedule the hearing, and forward documentation to members of the Appeal Committee.

Scheduling the Hearing

The General Manager will schedule the hearing with the Appeal Committee. The Appeal Committee will hear appeals on an as needed basis. The hearings will be held at Hinesville City Hall 115 East M. L. King Jr. Drive 3rd Floor conference room. The day and time of the hearings will be decided by the members of the Appeal Committee. Appellants will be notified of the date in writing at least seven (7) business days prior to the hearing.

The General Manager will notify the appellant of the date, time, and room number for the hearing and advise the appellant of the necessity of producing all documentation and/or witnesses at the time of the hearing. The General Manager will also inquire whether the Appellant needs any accommodations for the hearing or transportation to the hearing and if requested, complementary Complementary Paratransit service will be provided to the appellant at no charge.

Documentation

For appeals of eligibility determinations, the General Manager will, at least seven (7) business days prior to the hearing, provide the Appeal Committee and other applicable staff with copies of the following:

- Original application submitted by the appellant
- Any medical verification
- Any additional information submitted by the appellant or provided by Liberty Transit

Appellants have the right to review all pertinent documents used by the Appeal Committee in determining their eligibility.

Step 3. Appeal Committee Hearing

At the formal hearing, the appellant will be provided an opportunity to address the Appeal Committee and present testimony, documentation and additional evidence. The hearing will not be open to the public; however, appellants may be accompanied by a personal care attendant and/or other representatives or witnesses who can provide pertinent testimony. Proceedings of the hearing will be recorded. In the formal hearing, the Appeal Committee shall hear and consider:

- Information provided in the appeal letter or on the appeal form
- Statement(s) of the appellant, his/her representative, or witnesses
- Report by General Manager
- Information from Liberty Transit staff (as needed)
- Other relevant information

Step 4. Appeal Committee Decision

After reviewing and considering the information presented as part of the appeal process, the Appeal Committee shall render its decision by majority rule. Appeal decisions will be forwarded to the General Manager.

The Appeal Committee must render and inform appellant of its decision within 30 calendar days of the appeal hearing.

If the decision is not made within thirty (30) days, presumptive eligibility applies until the decision is rendered and the appellant is informed.

Members of the Appeal Committee are strictly prohibited from discussing the details of the appeal, the name of the appellant, or any other information about the appellant with any person not directly involved in the appeal process.

Notice of Appeal Determination

The General Manager will prepare a letter to the appellant informing him or her of the determination of the Appeal Committee and forward a formal copy of the decision to Liberty Transit. The letter will specify in detail the reasons for the maintenance, modification, or reversal of the matter of appeal.

The decision of the Appeal Committee serves as the final decision for Liberty Transit.

Within three (3) days of the decision, all Appeal Committee copies of appellants' applications and supporting information will be returned to the General Manager.

Appellants' Next Steps

If there is a change regarding the disability, appellants may re-apply for Complementary Paratransit eligibility.

A customer who disagrees with their eligibility decision may request an appeal. The appeal request must be made in writing and must be received by Liberty Transit within sixty (60) days of the eligibility determination. Send written requests to:

**Appeals Committee
Liberty Transit
11 East M. L. King Jr. Drive
Hinesville GA 31313
c/o General Manager**

Service Suspension/Termination Appeal Process

Notification of suspension or termination of Complementary Paratransit service will always be sent in writing so that customers can discuss or perhaps appeal the circumstances. **You must follow the process outlined in your written notification.** Failure to follow the process described by the dates listed in the letter will result in the service suspension being upheld.

Suggestions and Comments

We welcome all feedback, suggestions, and comments about our Complementary Paratransit service. Call Liberty Transit at 912-877-1472, e-mail www.libertytransit.org:
Liberty Transit Authority
115 East M. L. King Jr. Drive
Hinesville GA 31313

Thank you for your support.