

# **Carroll Area *Transit* System**



## **Rider Policies & Procedures**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Carroll Area Transit System is a team of transportation professionals committed to providing safe, dependable and affordable transportation in Carroll County. This includes our CATS Demand Response (reservation) service, Carroll Transit Shuttles and agency transportation.

### **WHAT IS CATS?**

**CATS** is our countywide, shared-ride, door-to-door para-transit. This service is available to anyone in Carroll County. Anyone can ride. Passenger trips will be coordinated to serve as many people as possible and to use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.

### **POLICIES**

#### **General Policies**

The following policies apply to all of Carroll Area Transit System's services, including CATS, Carroll Transit Shuttles and Agency Transportation:

1. Passengers must pay the fare upon boarding the vehicle unless prior billing arrangements have been made. Exact change, valid ticket or pass is required.
2. For the comfort of all passengers, smoking, eating, drinking, chewing, and using illegal substances in Carroll Area Transit System vehicles are prohibited.
3. Passengers may not play an audio device unless using a headset and keeping the volume low so that others are not disturbed.
4. The driver's attention must be on safe driving! For the safety of all passengers, riders should refrain from speaking with the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
5. A driver may refuse to transport a passenger who appears to be under the influence of alcohol, illegal or dangerous substances, or whose behavior or language appears abusive, offensive, disorderly or dangerous to himself, the driver or other passengers.
6. Carroll Area Transit System will attempt to accommodate a reasonable amount of passenger packages provided that they do not disrupt or delay transportation for other passengers. Packages should be held by the passenger or secured under the seat, but must be safely secured. Passengers shall not place articles in the aisles. Carroll Area Transit System is not responsible for lost or damaged items.
7. Strollers are permitted on Carroll Area Transit System vehicles only if folded. Please fold the stroller before boarding and carry your child on the bus.

8. Children under age 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
9. Service animals trained to assist an individual in living independently are permitted on board Carroll Area Transit System vehicles. Service animals must be registered with Carroll Area Transit System. Other small pets may be transported in approved pet carriers and must not exceed 20 lbs.

The remaining policies are specific to CATS.

### **Eligibility**

Passengers must be registered with CATS before transportation service can be scheduled.

### **Geographic Areas Served**

CATS is available throughout Carroll County.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Regular hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In some limited areas, earlier or later service may be available. In order to complete your travel by 5:00 p.m., you should schedule your appointment no later than 3 p.m.

Service is **not** provided on the following County holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following day, and Christmas Day. For specific dates of these holidays during the current year, please call the Carroll Area Transit System office at (410) 876-RIDE.

### **Advanced Reservation Policy**

Trips must be scheduled at least one (1) business days in advance of the time requested. Reservations are accepted as much as two weeks (14 days) in advance.

### **Late Policy**

In order to provide service to as many people as possible, it is essential that all passengers be ready at their scheduled time. Passengers who are not ready for their scheduled pickup time cause the driver to fall behind schedule and inconvenience other passengers. Therefore, there is a five-minute limit, from the scheduled pick-up time, to the amount of time CATS drivers will wait for a late passenger.

It is the passenger's responsibility to be ready and waiting at their door (or curb, if they are able) by their scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger is not waiting outside

when the driver arrives, the driver will go to the door and knock. If the passenger is not ready and at the door within five minutes of the scheduled pickup time, and has not called the dispatcher to cancel the trip, the driver will notify the dispatcher and depart for next pickup, and the late passenger will be considered "no-show."

### **"No-Show" Policy**

From time to time, it may be necessary for a scheduled passenger to cancel a trip for unexpected circumstances beyond their control. Last minute cancellations, or "no-shows," are detrimental to the efficient and effective operations of a demand-response transportation system. No-shows waste resources that could be used to provide transportation to other passengers. Therefore, CATS has instituted a "no-show" policy to prevent and remedy abuse.

#### **What Constitutes a "No-Show"?**

If a passenger is unable to make his or her scheduled trip, and does not call the dispatcher to cancel the trip at least 2 hours in advance of the scheduled pick-up time, the trip will be considered a "no-show." Passengers who are not ready by their scheduled pick-up time may also be considered a "no-show" if they are more than five minutes late; the driver will leave after waiting five minutes and contacting the dispatcher.

#### **Consequences**

A "no-show" has the following consequences:

1. There is a \$2.00 charge for each "no-show".
2. A rider will be suspended from CATS service for one month if they have 3 or more no-shows in a 30-day period of time, or if there is an unpaid balance for any no-show more than 30-days in arrears.

#### **Appeals Process**

The passenger may appeal any of the above four actions if he or she feels a "no-show" occurred because of unexpected circumstances beyond his or her control (e.g. medical or family emergency). Written appeals should be addressed to the Director within ten (10) calendar days of notification of the offense.

## **FARE POLICY**

The fare policy is as follows: \$2.00 per each 5 mile zone.

### **Passenger Assistance Policy**

All CATS drivers are trained in passenger assistance techniques and will provide passenger assistance in boarding and disembarking from the vehicle. Passenger assistance may include guiding the passenger to the vehicle, lending a steady arm for balance in boarding the vehicle, finding a seat or securing a wheelchair.

CATS drivers will not provide assistance that involves bearing weight, including lifting and carrying passengers. Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling must arrange for a Personal Care Attendant to accompany and assist them. CATS does not provide Personal Care Attendants. The driver may refuse service if the passenger cannot safely travel to and from the vehicle without the driver lifting or carrying the passenger. For passengers using wheelchairs, the path between the door and the vehicle must be wheelchair-accessible. When service is first provided to a new passenger, a supervisor may be present to assess assistance needs of the new passenger.

CATS drivers will not enter passengers' homes. For the safety and protection of both drivers and passengers, it is against our policy to provide this type of assistance.

CATS is not a delivery service. Passengers are generally responsible for carrying their own belongings. Packages which cannot be stowed on your lap or the seat beside you are not permitted unless space provides and packages can be properly secured. CATS is not responsible for any items lost or damaged on the vehicle.

### **Personal Care Attendant Policy**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help an individual with a disability meet his or her needs in daily living activities.

Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling (beyond that which the CATS driver can provide), including lifting, carrying, support during the ride, and behavior control, must arrange for a PCA to accompany and assist them. CATS does not provide PCA.

Passengers needing the assistance of a PCA must register the PCA with Carroll Area Transit System. A registered PCA may accompany the passenger free of charge.

It is strongly recommended that a person who requires the use of a PCA to travel always travel with their PCA since drivers cannot provide assistance beyond that which is described in the previous section.

### **Policy on Portable Breathing Aids**

Portable oxygen supplies and respirators are permitted on board CATS with proper notification. Oxygen tanks must be secured so they do not move during transport. Information about the use of this equipment must be provided to the dispatcher when scheduling service.

### **Passenger Securement Policy**

#### **Wheelchairs**

All standard wheelchairs (those measuring no more than 30" wide, from outer sides of wheels, and 48" long, from the back wheels to the footrests, and weighing no more than 600 pounds total combined weight of chair and person) will be accommodated. If the total combined weight of the individual and their wheelchair exceeds 600 pounds, Carroll Area Transit System's ability to accommodate the wheelchair will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All wheelchairs must be secured to the vehicle in the designated area. The driver will provide assistance in securing the wheelchair.

Wheelchairs which cannot be properly secured (i.e. three-wheeled scooters) will be accommodated so long as they meet the size and weight restrictions above and fit within the securement area.

An individual using a wheelchair may transfer to a regular seat on the vehicle so long as they are able to accomplish the transfer independently or with the assistance of a personal care attendant. Drivers will not lift passengers.

#### **Seat Belts**

Carroll Area Transit System requires that all passengers wear seat belts in vehicles equipped with them. Persons using wheelchairs should be secured to their chairs in addition to having their wheelchairs secured to the vehicle. The driver will provide assistance in fastening seatbelts upon request.

#### **Child Safety Seats**

It is recommended that all children under the age of 6 or weighing less than 40 pounds be secured in a child safety seat. Carroll Area Transit System does not provide safety seats. Children under the age of 2 that are not in a child safety seat must be held by an adult

## **Lift Use Policy**

Carroll Area Transit System strongly recommends that persons who wish to use the lift to board do so only when seated in a wheelchair. Persons who do not use wheelchairs but wish to use the lift to board or de-board the vehicle must inform the dispatcher when scheduling service. This is necessary for vehicle scheduling considerations. Also, if requested in advance, Carroll Area Transit System will provide a manual wheelchair for use when riding the lift.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **How to Schedule a Trip**

Call the Carroll Area Transit System Dispatcher at **(410) 876-RIDE** between 7 AM - 5 PM, Monday-Friday, at least one (1) business days before your appointment time (reservations accepted up to 14 days in advance).

Hearing-impaired customers can use the Maryland TDD Relay System, 1-800-735-2258 to contact Carroll Area Transit System to schedule a trip.

### **What Information the Dispatcher Will Need**

When you call to schedule your trip, please be prepared to give the dispatcher the following information:

- Your name (and Medical Assistance card number, if applicable)
- Your daytime telephone number
- The date you would like to schedule your trip
- Where and when you need to be dropped off (complete address and phone number)
- Where and when you would like to be picked up
- Special assistance needed or other considerations (for example, if you use a wheelchair or travel with a Personal Care Attendant or service animal, or need the driver to meet you at your door).

Trips will not be scheduled until complete trip information is received.

You will be advised what time to be ready for pick up. It is our goal to pick up a passenger within 15 minutes of his or her “ready time.”

If your trip can be made using our shuttle-route bus service (deviated fixed-routes), the Dispatcher may recommend making your trip on the appropriate bus route.

### **How to Request the Return Trip**

Your return trip will be scheduled when you make the initial trip request. This reduces the possibility that you will have to wait when you are ready to return.

If you are not ready when the driver arrives for your return trip, you may call to request your return trip when you are ready. Return trips are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Please be patient as we cannot anticipate when all of our passengers will be ready to return. Most trips will be scheduled within 30 minutes after notification.

### **How to Cancel a Trip**

If you change your mind or are unable to make your scheduled trip, please let the Dispatcher know as soon as possible, but at least two hours in advance of your scheduled pickup. If you do not cancel your trip at least two (2) hours in advance, it will be considered a "no show" (see "No Show" Policy) and could result in suspension of service.

### **How to Pay the Fare**

Each time you board the vehicle you must either pay the fare in the form of money or tickets. You must pay for only the ride you are currently taking. Payment for return trips should be made on the return trip.

### **How to Purchase Tickets**

Tickets are \$1.00 each and are sold in books of 10 for \$10.00 through the mail or in person.

#### **By Mail**

To purchase tickets by mail, send a check or money order payable to CATS, along with a Carroll Area Transit System order form stating the number of CATS books requested, to:

CATS Tickets  
Carroll Area Transit System  
211 Greenwood Avenue  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Please allow 1-2 weeks for delivery.

**In Person**

Tickets may be purchased at the Carroll Area Transit System office at 211 Greenwood Avenue, Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Cash or checks payable to CATS are accepted.

**How to File a Compliment, Complaint, or Suggestion**

If you would like to recognize a driver or other member of our staff for excellent service, to file a complaint, or to make a suggestion for how we can provide you with better service, please use one of the mail-back cards supplied on the vehicle or write to:

Executive Director  
Carroll Area Transit System  
211 Greenwood Avenue  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Or call the CATS Hotline at (410) 857-0886.

**PASSENGER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The passenger has a right to:**

1. Safe, comfortable, and courteous service.
2. On-time service as scheduled by the dispatcher.
3. Information presented in an appropriate format.
4. Appeal any actions which result in a denial of service.

**The passenger has the responsibility to:**

1. Be ready for the driver by the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Inform the dispatcher of any special assistance needs.
3. Inform the dispatcher of cancellations at least two (2) hours before the scheduled pickup time.
4. Inform the Executive Director of any service problems (or exemplary service).

## **OTHER SERVICES WHICH MAY MEET YOUR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**

### **Carroll Transit Shuttles**

- Carroll Area Transit System operates four deviated fixed route (shuttle) services. These routes operate on a regular schedule for use by all customers and can deviate within a 3/4 mile corridor for passengers who are functionally unable to board the bus at a scheduled time point because of a disability. These shuttle routes include:
  - Westminster Shuttle
  - South Carroll Shuttle
  - Taneytown Shuttle
  - Westminster-Eldersburg Shuttle
- For more information, please call (410) 876-RIDE, or visit the Carroll Area Transit System office at 211 Greenwood Avenue, Westminster, Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or check website: [www.carrolltransit.org](http://www.carrolltransit.org). Schedules are also available by mail, on board Carroll Area Transit System vehicles, or at the following additional locations: Libraries, senior centers, county offices, and many other community service organizations.

### **Reduced Fare Program**

Senior citizens and persons with disabilities are eligible for reduced fares on our deviated fixed-route (shuttle) bus services upon presentation of a reduced fare I.D. card. For more information about the reduced fare program and how to get an I.D. card, please call (410) 876-RIDE, or visit the Carroll Area Transit System office at 211 Greenwood Avenue, Westminster, Mon-Fri, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### **Travel Training**

Carroll Area Transit System offers a travel-training program for anyone who needs a little help in learning to use deviated fixed-route (shuttle) bus service. If you would be interested in this program, please call the office at (410) 876-RIDE, Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.