

Access-A-Ride User Guide



CITY OF
Lethbridge

Access-A-Ride

Access-A-Ride is a transportation service operated by the City of Lethbridge Transit Department. All Access-A-Ride vehicles are easily identified through decals placed in plain view on the outside of each vehicle. The Access bus is an accessible door to accessible door public transportation service for trips within the City of Lethbridge that is available to anyone, regardless of age or income, who is unable to use the conventional accessible transit bus service without assistance due to physical, sensory or cognitive disability. All of the Access-A-Ride and conventional Transit buses are wheelchair accessible to accommodate clients with mobility needs.

Access-A-Ride is **NOT a direct ride service**; it is a shared, multi-stop public transportation service. Trips are scheduled to allow for as many riders as possible to get to their destinations safely and efficiently.

The Access-A-Ride bus is available to permanent residents of The City of Lethbridge, who cannot use conventional accessible transit bus service due to a disability.

- A disability is a physical, sensory or cognitive impairment that affects a person's movements, senses or activities. Many people have disabilities such as difficulty walking, seeing, hearing, learning, processing and remembering information.



Registration and Application

Those wishing to use the Access-A-Ride service must register and be approved before booking a trip. Application forms are available at:

- Transit Customer Service Center (Lethbridge Transit: 619 4 Ave N)
- Medical Clinics
- Or Online at www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/getting-around/transit/pagers/AAR-forms.aspx or www.lethbridge.ca/aar

TEMPORARY SERVICE

Individuals who are temporarily disabled and meet the registration criteria may be eligible to use Access-A-Ride for the duration of time they are unable to use conventional accessible transit.

CONDITIONAL SERVICE

Applications are sometimes approved with conditions attached. This means that Access-A-Ride can only be used for those trips where conventional accessible transit will not work for a rider. Examples of conditions may include “In winter Only”, “In dark conditions Only”.



Passenger Responsibilities

As a registered rider on the Access-A-Ride buses, it is your responsibility to:

1. Book or cancel trips well in advance, last minute changes may not be accommodated and may be charged as if the ride was used.
2. **Be ready 10 minutes before your scheduled pick up time.**
3. Have the exact fare or your Breeze Card ready when the Access-A-Ride Bus arrives. Drivers are not obligated to provide you with change.
4. Remain seated with the seatbelt or securement fastened while the vehicle is in motion.
5. Follow the Operators Instructions at all times while boarding, riding, and exiting the Access-A-Ride Bus. Improper conduct may result in a refusal of service.
6. Refrain from smoking within five meters of the vehicle. Smoking is Not allowed in the vehicles.



Passenger Responsibilities Continued

7. Refrain from wearing scented products such as after shaves or perfumes. Other passengers or Operators may have allergies to these products.
8. Do not consume alcohol or non-prescription drugs on the bus or before entering the bus for your scheduled ride.
9. Refrain from interfering with the operation of the vehicle and all equipment attached to it.
10. Wear appropriate attire and footwear, unless exceptions must be made for medical reasons.
11. Carry on Items: are allowed but limited to what the client can carry on at one time, conforming to the size restrictions if being attached to a wheelchair or scooter. Operators **DO NOT** assist clients with their carry-on baggage.



Your Pickup Window

When an Access-A-Ride Bus trip is booked, the Booking Agent will provide you with a pick-up time for the destination you have requested.

Please be ready, at the exterior set of accessible doors, 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time (i.e. the door closest to the street).

Upon arriving at the location Operators will wait for 5 minutes. **If passengers are not there within 5 minutes, the Operator will leave**, as per Access-A-Ride operational guidelines. This limited wait time is necessary to ensure punctual, safe and efficient service for all riders.

Note: Operators are not required to ring doorbells or search for passengers not present at the outside door at the designated pick-up time.

Remember to allow 45 – 60 minutes to get to your destination when riding the Access-A-Ride Bus, as there are often stops or possible pickups for other riders along the way.

Vehicle Assignment: We are not able to accommodate requests for specific vehicle types, seating, locations or Operators.



Trip Planning

- Access-A-Ride is a shared-ride service that attempts to meet the needs of multiple riders going in many directions and in varying traffic conditions.
- In order to provide the best service possible, passengers must be flexible when scheduling a pick-up time.
- It is very important for you to allow enough time for pickup in order to arrive at your destination within the desired time frame.



Booking a Trip

Advance bookings can be made up to seven (7) days ahead of the appointment date and are subject to availability. Last minute or short notice bookings are accepted, but these may be limited due to space.

Please have the following ready when calling:

- Have your name and AAR ID Number
- Day and Time to arrive at your destination
- **Exact location for pick-up and return trip**
- Type of mobility aid you will be using for the trip
- Will you be travelling with a Personal Care Attendant: yes or no

***As of April 1, 2019 group booking requests for more than 3 passengers will be considered a Charter. (ex. Lunches, special outings – all pick up and return trips to and from the same location) There is a flat rate available to Access-A-Ride Charters within city limits with a time limit of up to 3 hours. For more information with regard to Charters please call 403-320-3883.



Helpful Hints to Schedule your trip:

- Make your trip requests as early as possible, AAR rides must reserve trip at least the day before and can reserve a trip up to 7 days in advance.
- Reservation telephone lines are busiest in the morning and late afternoon hours, if possible call between: 10:30 am and 2:30 pm
- Our busiest time with heaviest loads are between: 7:30 – 10:00 am and 2:00 – 4:30 pm. When possible please schedule your trips outside of these hours.
- Know the location you are travelling to: Name and Address and be certain of the times it is “open” or “closed” for business.

Please note there is limited availability



Access-A-Ride Trip Booking

Access-A-Ride Bookings: 403 329 6464

Office Hours for Booking:

Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 4:00pm

Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays the Office is Closed

***Trip Bookings are not accepted after hours**

Hours of Operation for Access-A-Ride:

Weekdays 7:00 am to Midnight

Saturdays 7:00 am to Midnight

*** Please note:** Sundays 8:00 am to 7:00 pm

Statutory Holidays:

7:00 am – 11:30 pm limited availability



Web Booking Online: How To

Web Booking can be done at:

aarbooking.lethbridge.ca

To Book you **Must**:

- Be an Access-A-Ride Client with a Client ID
- Have a Client email address on file

Register today and have the freedom to book your own trips easily, on your own time and from the comfort of your own home!



HeadsUP Reminders

HeadsUP is a customized alert system for Access-A-Ride clients that provides a “heads up” about your scheduled trips via phone, email or text message. You can pick which alerts you want to receive and how you want to receive them.

HeadsUP includes trip notifications and real-time arrival information.

To sign up for HeadsUP:

- Fill out a form online at www.lethbridge.ca/transit
- Talk to your booking agent at 403-329-6464.

**Standard carrier charges for text messaging may apply.*



Cancelling a Trip

Your cooperation in phoning the Access-A-Ride Booking Agent promptly if you must cancel your trip, is greatly appreciated. This will help us provide better service for all passengers. Your prompt call to cancel helps us avoid making unnecessary trips and may allow another customer to use the newly opened time slot.

Cancelling a Trip:

Call Access-A-Ride Bookings: 403 329 6464 or E-Mail: aar@lethbridge.ca

Monday - Friday 7:30 am to 5:00pm

After hours and Holidays cancellation calls are accepted by TNS and relayed to an operational coordinator.

***Note: Trip Bookings are not accepted after hours or via the after hours TNS.**

Trips cancelled less than 2 hours before the scheduled pickup window are recorded as "Late cancellation".

Frequent cancellations may affect client trip booking privileges and lead to a possible suspension of service.



No Shows

What is considered a “No Show”?

- If the Operator arrives at the scheduled time and pickup location and no one is there to use the trip
- When the client cancels at the door
- When a trip is cancelled less than 2 hours before the trip “No Show” is recorded in the clients file at the Access-A-Ride office.

Note: The scheduled return trip will be automatically cancelled in the event of a “No Show”.

Frequent “No Shows” will be reviewed by the Access-A-Ride Supervisor and may lead to a suspension of service. Operators will wait for 5 minutes upon arrival within your scheduled pickup window. If you are not ready during this 5 minute period, your trip is considered a “No Show” and the Operator will proceed to the next scheduled call.



Consequences for “No Shows”

For Access-A-Ride Demand Clients who have 3 unexplained “no-shows” or late cancellations within 30 days, there will be a 2 week service suspension imposed. If this happens a second time the client will be suspended for 1 year.

For Access-A-Ride Subscription Clients who have 3 unexplained “no-shows” or late cancellations within 30 days, will **ALSO** lose their subscription trip status. They will only be allowed to book demand trips.



Trip Adjustments

Travel Time

The Access-A-Ride service tries to minimize travel time; however riders may be required to spend up to 60 minutes on the Access-A-Ride Bus due to conditions such as weather, traffic, and busy schedules. This is especially important to remember when scheduling appointments that are time-sensitive such as a Doctor or Dentist appointment.

NOTE: Drivers adhere to dispatch orders and do not accept changes based upon request only.

Trip Adjustments

Access-A-Ride operators will not accept requests for changes of destination or pickup times at the time of boarding. **This would disrupt the carefully planned schedule and negatively impact other riders.**

Changes must be made by calling the Booking Agent at 403 329 6464 a minimum of 2 hours in advance and requests may not be accommodated depending upon availability.



Boarding of Buses

Access-A-Ride will make every attempt to accommodate standard wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility devices

These devices are defined not to exceed 50 inches in length and 30 - inches in width and can not exceed 750 pounds when occupied.

Broda and Bariatrics Chairs will not be accommodated for safety reasons



Reasonable efforts will be made to transport persons in oversized mobility aids, however transportation can not always be guaranteed.

Electric wheelchair or other such mobility devices:

- Please shut off power to devices during transport.
- **Devices that have lost power cannot be boarded** onto the Access-A-Ride vehicle.

Access-A-Ride Operators

Operators will:

- Operate power lifts and ramps on the vehicle
- Secure wheelchairs and scooters in restraint devices to the floor
- Assist Clients with lap/shoulder straps and belts
- Assist clients on and off the bus
- Assist clients between the vehicle and the inside of the first set of accessible doors at the place of origin and/or destination. **An accessible door is an outside door with no more than one step.**



Access-A-Ride Operators

Operators will NOT:

- For the safety of both the client and operator, operators will not take mobility devices up or down more than one step or curb height. Please ensure your mobility aide is at ground level to accommodate loading.
- Enter a client's residence under any circumstances and/or lock any doors to your premises on your behalf.
- Make repairs or adjustments to the persons mobility equipment.
- Make multiple trips to load equipment on the bus. All equipment must be at ground level when the Operator arrives.

Carry on Items: are allowed but limited to what the client can carry on at one time, conforming to the size restrictions if being attached to a wheelchair or scooter. Operators **DO NOT** assist clients with their carry-on baggage.



Operators and Passenger Safety on Access-A-Ride Bus

The Access-A-Ride Bus is dedicated to the safety of every passenger on every trip. All passengers are required to use the appropriate securement system or transfer to a vehicle seat for the safest trip possible.

It is MANDATORY to use a seat belt on your mobility aide (wheelchair, scooter) *Service may be denied if the mobility aid seatbelt is not worn.*

It is Mandatory to use a securement safety system for any mobility aids and to wear a seatbelt/shoulder strap while being transported. If a rider is unable to wear a seatbelt/shoulder strap for health reasons, there must be a medical exemption on file.

Medical Seatbelt Exemption A written exemption (signed by a medical practitioner) must be kept on file if a client is unable to use the recommended restraints. The Province of Alberta has specific regulatory requirements that Access-A-Ride must follow regarding seatbelt exemptions for medical reasons. *All exemption letters must be updated annually by a licensed practitioner.*



Operators and Passenger Safety on Access-A-Ride Bus

Infants and Small Children

Due to Alberta Traffic Safety Act regarding child car seats and securement infants and or small children who are less than 18 kg, or 40 lbs or under the age of six (6) no longer can be accommodated on Access-A-Ride as passengers. Children over the age of six (6) or 40 lbs can ride Access-A-Ride as long as they are secured with the vehicle seat belt and wearing it correctly

Snow and Ice

For the safety of passengers and operators, If snow and/or ice is not cleared, Access-A-Ride WILL NOT provide service.



Pets on Board

Service Dogs

The Access-A-Ride Operators are required by law to transport service dogs, or a certified animal, that is accompanying people who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or persons with other disabilities.

Upon registration, clients are required to provide an identification card for the animal that verifies it has been certified, by a recognized service animal facility or trainer, for the purpose of serving as an animal companion aide.

A Service animal, usually a dog, can be recognized as follows:

- Visually Impaired – by its leather harness and the identification card.
- Hearing Impaired – by its bright orange leash and collar and/or vest and the identification card
- Other disabilities – black harness and leash and/or blue saddlebags and the identification card issued by a recognized dog school.
- Service dogs are trained to be non-threatening and unobtrusive and do not require a seat as they are trained to sit at the owners feet.



Pets on Board

Family Pets

The Access-A-Ride must balance the desire to be pet friendly with the comfort of all passengers on the bus. Therefore, some restrictions apply:

- Only small dogs and cats are allowed if they are contained in a fully enclosed, clean, hand-held crate appropriate to the animals size.
- All crates/kennels must have a solid bottom to contain any animal waste.
- Crates must be small enough to fit on the owners lap.
- Only one hand-held crate/kennel is allowed per passenger.
- Passengers are responsible for their pets and must hold onto crates at all times. If there is room on the bus, crates may be placed on the floor beside the owner without blocking the aisle or other passengers.
- Pets may be refused if they misbehave or pose a health or safety risk.
- Above restrictions **DO NOT** apply to Service Animals.

Concerns with allergies are minimized when pets are contained in crates, which reduces the spread of dander. If a Passenger with pet allergies notifies the driver of a problem, the passenger carrying a dog or cat on board may be placed in a different location or bus.

