



**ACCESSIBLE
SERVICE GUIDE *for*
PARATRANSIT USERS**

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Our VISION

MOVE EVERY LIFE FORWARD

We provide solutions that connect people to *prosperity* through innovation, dedication and teamwork.

THE *Purpose* OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Accessible Services Guide for Paratransit Users was prepared to familiarize customers with COTA's accessible services and answer questions about COTA's complementary paratransit services.

See page 45 to find important numbers or to request this document in an accessible format.

COTA MAINSTREAM

COTA and all partners will:

- Treat each customer with respect and courtesy in every aspect of our operation.
- Assist customers, upon request, from their door or first area of reception to the door of their destination without losing sight of the vehicle.
- Provide additional operator assistance; all requests for additional operator assistance (e.g., seatbelt extension) must be made when the trip is requested.
- Provide reliable and timely transportation in clean and well-maintained vehicles.
- Safely operate all vehicles according to the traffic laws of the City of Columbus and surrounding areas.
- Make every reasonable effort to meet the customer at the scheduled pickup location.
- Provide proper securement devices on the Mainstream vehicles for safety, including wheelchair lifts and designated securement areas.
- Advise customers who use scooters for mobility to transfer to a customer seat to improve customer safety, if necessary.
- Assist customer with no more than two large paper bags or four small plastic bags per trip.
- Accommodate all requests for ADA-mandated trips.
- Address customer concerns within three days of receipt, making every reasonable effort to resolve the issue.
- Provide an appeal process for service eligibility or suspension of service.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Fixed-Route Service

All eligible paratransit customers are permitted to ride fixed-route transit vehicles at no charge with their COTA Mainstream ADA ID card. All COTA fixed-route transit vehicles provide:

- Ramps or lifts to accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility devices
- A “kneeling function” which lowers the front of the transit vehicle for easier boarding
- Audible and visual announcements for all transit stops, so you know the next transit stop
- Service animals are welcome
- Your Personal Care Attendant (PCA) boards free. Just show your valid COTA Mainstream ADA ID card marked **“YES”** for the PCA free ride.

Travel Training for Fixed-route Service

Travel Training is a personal service focusing on the customer’s needs. Travel Training is free and available to those seeking independence by using public transit. The goal of the Travel Training program is to maximize each individual’s ability to travel safely and independently on COTA’s fixed-route mobility service.

COTA Travel Trainers are friendly and respectful. They customize individual training sessions to fit each customer’s needs. After working with a Travel Trainer, customers will feel confident and comfortable about riding a fixed-route transit vehicle.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Travel Trainees will learn the following:

- Plan a trip using the easiest and safest route
- Reach specific destinations on fixed-route
- Read and understand route maps and schedules
- Locate and transfer to other transit vehicles
- Board a transit vehicle safely with a mobility device
- Travel to and from a transit stop
- Recognize transit vehicle numbers, transit stops and landmarks
- Pay fares and purchase passes
- Board and exit a transit vehicle safely
- Know where and how to safely cross the street
- Travel independently and confidently by COTA fixed-route transit vehicles

For information regarding Travel Training contact COTA's Travel Trainer at **614-308-4355**.

Fixed-Route Emergency Service

Mainstream will provide emergency back-up services in the event a fixed-route customer with a disability cannot be otherwise accommodated.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What is COTA Mainstream?

COTA Mainstream is a complementary demand-response, shared-ride mobility service for individuals who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The service is designed to provide safe, clean and reliable transportation for those individuals who do not have the functional ability to ride fixed-route transit service.

Who can use COTA Mainstream?

- 1** You must complete the application process and be certified as eligible before scheduling any COTA Mainstream trips.

- 2** Trip origins and destinations must be within COTA's service area. Visitors with current eligibility status for transportation services through another public transit agency similar to COTA can use up to 21 days of trips a year before being required to become COTA Mainstream eligible.

- 3** COTA Mainstream service is available to people who have a disability that prevents them from functionally using COTA fixed-route transit vehicles for some or all of their trips.

- 4** COTA will notify you when it is time to re-certify your eligibility.

COTA MAINSTREAM

When and Where Does COTA Mainstream Operate?

COTA MAINSTREAM ADA SERVICE

The ADA-qualified service area is defined as being within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance around an operating fixed-route bus line. Hours of operation for both the origin and destination locations are the same as the hours of operation for fixed-route service. Only ADA-eligible trips are guaranteed.

COTA MAINSTREAM NON-ADA SERVICE

Any origin or destination location more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from an operating fixed-route transit line or trips made outside of the fixed-route hours of operation in any area is considered non-ADA. Non-ADA service is not a required service mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

How Does COTA Mainstream Provide Service?

- Using small transit vehicles
- Rides are scheduled by advance reservation
- The operator must remain within sight of the vehicle at all times
- Due to the nature of a shared ride service, vehicles may stop and travel in other directions during your ride
- Travel time will vary depending upon the trip distance and stops made to accommodate other customers.

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Do I Apply for COTA Mainstream?

To apply for COTA Mainstream, an application must be completed. You may obtain an application by calling Mobility Services at **614-275-5828** and request the application be mailed, faxed or emailed. You may also download an application from our website at cota.com.

Once you receive the application, Part 1 needs to be completed. A specialist that oversees your current functional limitation(s) that prevent you from using a fixed-route transit vehicle must complete Part 2 of the application. When both parts have been completed you can call **614-275-5833** to schedule an appointment to attend an interview/functional assessment. All applicants must bring their completed application with them at the time of their appointment. All assessments are conducted at the COTA Mobility Services Facility located at 1330 Fields Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43201.

All new applicants and re-certifying customers must bring their current valid photo ID at the time of their interview assessment appointment. Applicants must bring the mobility aid that they normally use when traveling (cane, walker, etc.).

It is important to note when re-certifying, an applicant may experience a lapse in service if they do not keep their assessment appointment or fail to complete the entire process by their expiration date.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What Type of Eligibility Do I Have and What Does it Mean?

Your type of eligibility is determined by the COTA Mobility Services Eligibility Administrator and is based upon the result of your functional assessment. When you are certified as a COTA Mainstream customer, you will receive a letter from COTA Mobility Services. The determined eligibility is written in your certification letter.

There are three types of eligibility:

- **Unconditional Eligibility:** No trip restrictions
- **Conditional Eligibility:** Trips are limited to the specific conditions which prevent an individual from riding fixed-route mobility service
- **Temporary Eligibility:** Given to individuals with short-term conditions. Trips are provided for the duration of time during which the individual is unable to use fixed-route mobility service

Please read your eligibility determination letter to find your specific eligibility condition. If you have questions about your letter, please contact Mobility Services at [614-275-5828](tel:614-275-5828).

How Do I Appeal my Eligibility Decision?

If you have been found to be conditionally eligible or ineligible for COTA Mainstream, you may appeal the decision. You must file your appeal within sixty (60) days of notification of your eligibility status. If you have questions about the Eligibility Appeal process, please contact the Manager, Mobility Special Programs at [614-275-5905](tel:614-275-5905).

COTA MAINSTREAM

When Would I Need to Reapply for my Current COTA Mainstream service?

COTA notifies applicants two months prior to their certification expiration date and provides the opportunity to reapply for the service if desired. All applicants must complete a COTA Mainstream application to be re-certified for the service.

Mainstream Orientation

COTA's Mobility Services Department conducts orientation sessions to assist customers with learning how to ride the service.

Attendees will learn:

- The difference between an ADA and Non-ADA trip
- How to make a reservation correctly
- Pickup time vs. Appointment time
- Fares and children on Mainstream
- Pickup Window
- No-shows, Late-cancelations & Cancels-at-door
- Plus much more...

Orientation sessions are for one hour. New and existing customers may attend an Orientation session. Orientation is **NOT MANDATORY**; however, it will be informative and customers will learn how to optimize all the services COTA offers. Customers must register for the session prior to attending by calling [614-275-5833](tel:614-275-5833).

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Do I Schedule a Trip?

You may either call the COTA Mainstream Reservations department at **614-272-3033**, or use Mainstream Web Booking at **passweb.cota.com**. All calls to the Reservations Department are recorded for quality assurance.

When Can I Schedule a Trip?

You can schedule your trips no later than a day before and up to 7 days in advance. Same day trips cannot be accommodated. Use Mainstream On-Demand if same-day travel is required (see pages 40-41).

The following are ways all qualified COTA Mainstream customers may schedule their trips:



Call the Reservations Department at **614-272-3033**.

Reservation hours are:

Monday – Friday: 7 am – 6 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 8 am – 6 pm



Log into Mainstream Web Booking, available 24 hours a day. You will need to create an account by following the “Enrollment” link on the sign-in page. A detailed Web Booking user guide and FAQ can be found in the “related links” section at **www.cota.com/services/cota-mainstream**.



Email trip reservations at **trips@cota.com***



Fax trip reservations at **614-272-3018***

***Please note: If you are scheduling a trip for next day service, emailed and faxed trip reservations must be received ½ hour prior to the Reservations Department close of business hours.**

COTA MAINSTREAM

What Information Do I Need When Calling to Schedule a Trip?

The Reservations Department will guide you through the process of scheduling a trip. When calling to schedule a trip, please have the following information available:

- Your first and last name
- The date and day of the week you need a trip
- Pickup or appointment time
- If pickup is not from home, provide address and a contact phone number
- If pickup is from a building, provide the name of the complex, business, suite number and building number or letter
- State where the vehicle should wait at the pickup or drop-off location (front door, side door, etc.)
- Provide a working cell phone number, if available
- State if a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will ride
- Give number of companions that will ride or if there are any children age 6 and under traveling
- State if a lift will be needed
- State if a mobility device will be used
- State how fare will be paid

The reservationist will repeat the day, date, time and address for each pickup location and destination to ensure it is correct. **Please verify that all trip reservation information is correct and write the information down.**

COTA MAINSTREAM

What Information Do I Need When Calling to Schedule a Trip? (continued)

Door-to-door service is provided only upon request. If you require assistance to or from the door beyond the Mainstream vehicle, you will need to let the reservationist know when scheduling your trip(s).

Please specify if the person who may be traveling with you will be using any mobility aids, i.e., motorized wheelchairs or scooters, walkers, canes, etc.

At times, a vehicle will not be available at your requested trip time. All transit providers experience high volume at certain times of the weekday, generally from 7-9 a.m. and again from 2-4 p.m. when people are traveling for work or school. To accommodate you, it may be necessary to offer you a different trip time. The reservationist can offer you a trip up to an hour before or after your originally preferred time. Or if possible, schedule your appointments at non-peak times to assist us in finding a trip closer to your request.

Pickup Time vs. Appointment Time

Provide the reservationist with a **pickup time** if the trip involves traveling to a destination where a specific drop-off time is **NOT** necessary. For example: trips to the grocery store, pharmacy or to visit a friend.

Provide the reservationist with an **appointment time** if the trip involves traveling to a destination where a specific drop-off time **IS** necessary. The best way to ensure that customers get to appointments on time is to schedule trips based on the stated appointment or desired arrival time. For example: trips to work or to doctor's appointments.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What If I Need to Go to More Than One Place During My Trip?

Three round-trip reservations or six one-way trips can be made per phone call, email request and fax request. Consecutive trips may be scheduled; however, at least two hours between the first pickup and the next pickup time must be maintained.

Operators are permitted to stop only at the location designated in the reservation. Travel arrangements with more than one destination will be scheduled as separate trips and will require a separate fare. Schedules are designed to keep vehicles moving; therefore, we cannot wait on a customer who expects to be at a destination a brief amount of time. You will need to schedule a return trip no less than one hour after arrival at the destination. Remember to allow yourself plenty of time at your destination before your return trip is scheduled.



COTA MAINSTREAM

What is the Pickup Window?

The reservationist will give you a scheduled pickup window. All COTA Mainstream trips are scheduled with a 30-minute time frame. This means that the COTA Mainstream operator could arrive any time between the scheduled pickup time and 30 minutes after the scheduled time.

For example:

Scheduled time:	10 a.m.
30-minute pickup window:	10-10:30 a.m.
Customer should be ready by:	10 a.m.
Operator is late:	10:31 a.m.

The vehicle can arrive anytime during the pickup window. Customers must be ready to leave. A courtesy phone call will be attempted in an effort to locate the customer. The operator will wait five (5) minutes for the customer before departing to their next destination.

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Do I Change My Scheduled Trip?

COTA Mainstream cannot change pickup times or pickup/drop-off locations on the same day of your trip. You can change a scheduled ride up to 6 p.m. on weekdays/weekends and up to 5 p.m. on holidays on the day before your trip. Tell the reservationist that you would like to change a trip that has already been scheduled.

They will ask:

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

Staff will always try to accommodate your needs, but changes to your original trip request may result in adjustment to your pickup times.

How Do I Check on My Trip?

Unexpected delays can happen because of road construction, traffic conditions, bad weather or many other reasons that could impact service. If the COTA Mainstream vehicle has not arrived after your pickup window (30 minutes after your scheduled pickup time), contact the Dispatch office at **614-272-3007**. The dispatcher will give you an update on your trip.

Stay within sight of the pickup location if at all possible in case the vehicle arrives while you are calling.

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Do I Cancel a Scheduled Trip?

A trip canceled at least one day prior to your scheduled pickup time is considered an advance cancellation. For all advanced cancellations, you must call the reservations department at **614-272-3033**.

A trip canceled at least 2 hours prior to your scheduled pickup time on the day of your trip is considered a same-day cancellation. For all same-day cancellations you must call the dispatch office at **614-272-3007**.

No penalty will be enforced for advanced and same day cancellations. In order to prevent a late-cancel, you must call at least 2 hours in advance to cancel. You are encouraged not to schedule trips if you are not certain the trip will be needed. Late trip cancellations cause COTA Mainstream service to be less efficient and can inconvenience other customers. ([See no show policy on page 36](#)).

What If My Appointment Is Running Late?

If your appointment is running later than you expected and there is a chance that you will not be ready for your scheduled return trip (or if you have missed the transit vehicle), contact the dispatch office as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to adjust your return trip pickup time and assign another vehicle. Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available to accommodate your request.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What If My Appointment Is Running Late? (continued)

Remember: Allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the chance of you having to wait until another vehicle is available. If a vehicle is sent and you are not ready or if you call to change your appointment because you are running late, your record may be given points in accordance with the “No-Show Policy” ([See page 36](#)).

What If I Go To The Same Place Every Day/Week - Do I Need to Call Each Time?

If you need a trip 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 for current eligible customers to make regular trips without having to schedule trip reservations on a daily basis. Customers requesting subscription service must demonstrate travel to their destination consistently over a 30-day period before subscription service can begin. Consistent travel means customers must complete travel to the same destination, with similar pickup and drop-off times, at least once a week, for a 30-day period. Individuals who have schedules that change frequently are not eligible for subscription service.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What If I Go To The Same Place Every Day/Week - Do I Need to Call Each Time? (continued)

As capacity allows, subscription reservations may be made for the following trip types:

- Life-sustaining medical trips such as dialysis
- Work trips (where employment provides the primary means of support)

If you are receiving Subscription Service, it is important to let us know immediately if you don't need a trip on a particular day. For example, if you have a Subscription Service for a trip to work each weekday, keep us updated on holidays when your work is closed. This will help you avoid unnecessary trips, missed connections or no-show penalties.

Subscription trips are automatically canceled on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Independence Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

You can put your subscription on hold for up to 4 months (120 days). When you are ready to have your subscription taken off hold, contact the reservations department 7 days in advance to reinstate the service. If you need to put your subscription on "hold" for a longer period, we may ask you to call back and request a new subscription service when you need it again. When any request is made to change the trip origin, destination or time, the change will be considered as a new subscription service request and you must meet the 30-day travel demonstration requirement before subscription service can begin.

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Much Are My Trips?

ADA trips - \$3.50 per one way

Acceptable payments for COTA Mainstream ADA trips include:

- Cash (exact change)
- COTA Mainstream ticket (valued at \$3.50 per ticket)
- COTA Mainstream monthly Pass (\$105 per month)

Please have exact fare ready when boarding the vehicle. Operators do not carry change. Customers who do not have the fare will not be transported.

Companions pay full one-way fare for each trip. When approved, Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) ride at no charge when accompanying a Paratransit customer. Children age 6 years and under will not be charged a fare. Children age 7 years or older must pay full one-way fare for each trip.

Mainstream Customers who have an Ohio State University BuckID card, Capital University I.D. card or Columbus College of Art & Design (CCAD) I.D. card pay no fare but must present their current student I.D.

Mainstream Customers who have a Columbus City Schools student I.D. pay no fare during approved times throughout the year. Blackout dates and times do apply. Contact Columbus City Schools to verify those blackout dates and times.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Can I Tip the Operator?

No. Operators are not permitted to accept tips. If you would like to compliment the operator for service provided, please contact COTA's Customer Service at [614-228-1776](tel:614-228-1776).

What Do I Do When the COTA Mainstream Vehicle Arrives?

Upon arrival to your pickup location, if the operator does not see you waiting for the vehicle, the operator will knock on your door and/or ring your doorbell to inform you of their arrival. Operators are not allowed to enter a private residence.

Please remember that the vehicle may arrive anytime within the 30-minute pickup window. It is important to be ready when the vehicle arrives so that the operator can stay on schedule for all customers. Wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the operator will be able to see you.

The operator will wait five (5) minutes upon arrival to your pickup address. If you are not at the destination address within the 30-minute window, the operator will notify dispatch that you cannot be found. Dispatch will try to contact you to verify the pickup address and let you know that the operator is outside waiting. If dispatch is unable to contact you by phone, the operator will have to leave to avoid inconveniencing other customers and you will be charged with a No-show after five (5) minutes.

Customer Tips: Make sure your address is clearly visible from the street, especially at night. If you are being picked up at a large building, make sure when you schedule your trip to tell the reservationist the entrance where you

COTA MAINSTREAM

What Do I Do When the COTA Mainstream Vehicle Arrives? (continued)

will be waiting. Carry needed medication with you in case we are delayed or a trip takes longer than expected. If you use oxygen, bring an adequate (extra) supply. If you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, please bring a small snack with you in case the trip is longer than planned.

COTA Mainstream is shared ride, public transportation, which means that more than one customer may be scheduled with you on the vehicle. A customer may not refuse to ride with other customers. You must ride in the vehicle sent for you.

If a customer requires assistance to or from the door, or up or down one step, it must be safe for both the operator and customer. Operators may assist ambulatory customers up or down a maximum of one step. Operators may also assist customers in a manual wheelchair up or down a maximum of one step, as long as it is safe for both the operator and customer.

A step is defined as a platform where both the customer and the assisting operator can stand before encountering another step. Operators will not move electric-powered wheelchairs or scooters up or down steps.

Operators cannot clear an accessible path to the vehicle obstructed by ice, snow or other physical barrier. Customers who require additional assistance are encouraged to apply for authorization to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

COTA MAINSTREAM

What is a Personal Care Attendant (PCA)?

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is a person who assists the eligible customer either in leaving their trip origin location, boarding and disembarking from the vehicle, while traveling to or upon arrival at the destination, or whose assistance is required in completing the trip purpose. The PCA must have the same origin and destination as the customer. Eligibility for a customer to travel with a PCA will be determined during the eligibility application process.

You must tell us that your PCA is traveling with you when you schedule your trip. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA and the other scheduled customers. You may schedule only one (1) PCA and they may ride for free when traveling with you. Operators cannot add individuals who do not have a reservation, so if you do not make a reservation for your PCA, they will not be allowed to travel with you. Customers are required to provide their own PCA. COTA does not provide PCAs.

What is a Companion?

A companion is someone you want to bring along to share the trip. Family members and friends not designated as a personal care attendant to you are considered companions. Companions must pay the full fare when accompanying you and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you. You will need to inform the reservationist when you schedule trips that you will be traveling with a companion. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your companion and other scheduled customers. Other additional individuals accompanying the customer shall be provided service, only if: **Space is available for the person and transportation of additional individuals will not result in a denial of service to other eligible individuals**

COTA MAINSTREAM

Do I Need to Bring a Special Seat for My Child?

All child restraint laws apply to children riding COTA Mainstream vehicles. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to comply with all regulations. If customers want to use a child safety seat, they are required to secure the child and the seat. Children must be removed from strollers and the strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the rider. A child that is either (or both) less than 4 years of age or under forty (40) pounds must be properly secured in a child restraint safety seat. In addition, children less than 8 years of age and less than 4'9" in height must be transported in a booster seat meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Are There Any Weight or Size Restrictions for Mobility Devices?

A COTA Mainstream vehicle lift can accommodate mobility devices with the dimensions of 33" wide by 49" in length with a weight, when occupied by the applicant, of no more than 800 lbs. The mobility device must be fully operational and must be operated solely by the user of the device or their designated personal care attendant.

Do I Have to Wear the Safety Seat Belt?

For your safety and security, it is required that you use a safety belt and that you remain seated while riding in COTA Mainstream vehicles.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Does My Wheelchair Need to Be Secured?

It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that all mobility devices are properly secured. Operators can assist you with fastening and unfastening seat belts.

You must have your seatbelt fastened before the vehicle leaves.

Customers with wheelchairs and scooters can expect the operator to attach wheelchair securements, a lap belt, and a shoulder harness and set the wheel brakes before the vehicle leaves. When a customer chooses to independently transfer onto a vehicle seat for the trip, the operator must secure the unoccupied wheelchair or scooter.

Walkers and Rollators: FOR EVERYONE'S SAFETY

- Walkers and Rollators (4-wheeled walkers with seats) must be folded and placed out of the aisles.
- Walker and Rollator users must always sit in a regular bus seat.
- Customers cannot use Walkers and Rollators as a seat while riding the bus and may not secure them in the wheelchair securement area.

Can I Bring My Pet, Comfort or Emotional Support Animal?

Animals, to include comfort and emotional support animals that are not service animals, can be taken on the COTA Mainstream vehicles when they are transported in a pet carrier that zips or latches, which prevents the pet from getting out of the carrier. For safety reasons, operators are not permitted to handle pet carriers on or off the vehicle.

COTA MAINSTREAM

How Many Pets, Comfort or Emotional Support Animals are Permitted Per Trip?

One pet, comfort or emotional support animal per trip is permitted to travel with the customer.

What About Traveling with a Service Animal?

If you are traveling with a service animal, be sure to inform the reservationist when you are scheduling your trip. This ensures there will be room on the vehicle for you and your service animal, along with other scheduled customers. If you are planning on riding COTA Mainstream with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- You are responsible to maintain control of your animal while on board.
- 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 toward people or other animals.
- You are responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well groomed.

The same policy for service animals apply to pets, comfort and emotional support animals.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Can I Bring Packages and Personal Items?

Carry-on packages must be comfortably handled by the customer, PCA and/or companion. Operators only help with packages when a customer is getting on or off COTA Mainstream vehicles. All carry-on items must be taken to and from the vehicle in one trip. The operator will assist with two (2) large paper bags or four (4) small plastic bags per trip. Simply ask the operator to assist you. No more than two (2) large paper bags or four (4) small plastic bags per trip will be allowed. Operators must keep their vehicle in sight at all times. COTA Mainstream will allow one (1) small personal shopping cart, filled to normal capacity, per certified customer. The cart must be secured. Large commercial grocery carts are not permitted on the vehicle.

If this policy is not followed, your trip will be considered a No-show. Customers abusing the policy will receive one (1) warning letter. A second occurrence could result in suspension of COTA Mainstream service. **Please be kind to our operators and understand that since COTA Mainstream is a shared-ride service, the vehicle has to keep on moving.**

What If I Lost Something on the Vehicle?

Be sure to collect all of your belongings before leaving the vehicle. COTA Mainstream assumes no responsibility for items left on board the vehicle. Items found on the vehicle will be stored at COTA Mobility Services Facility located at 1330 Fields Avenue. Items will only be held for 7 days. Items not claimed will be disposed of after 7 days. To check if your item is in lost and found, please contact the Dispatch office at [614-272-3007](tel:614-272-3007).

COTA MAINSTREAM

What If I Lose My COTA Mainstream ADA ID Card?

If you lose your COTA Mainstream ADA ID card, please contact the COTA Customer Experience Center at **614-228-1776**. There will be a \$10 replacement fee.

What Emergency Procedures Are in Place in Case Something Happens When I am on the Mainstream Vehicle?

In the event of an accident or emergency, please remain calm and follow the operator's instructions.

- Personal Medical Issues – a customer who becomes ill, or notices another customer who may be ill, should immediately inform the operator. Because operators are not trained to provide medical assistance, they are required to notify the dispatch office for instruction.
- If an operator determines that a customer could threaten the health or safety of other customers, the operator may deny service. Prior to denying service, the operator will contact the dispatch office. A dispatcher will then contact a supervisor to coordinate a response.

Will the Vehicle Still Pick Me Up During Bad Weather?

During inclement weather COTA will make every attempt to continue to provide service.

COTA MAINSTREAM

Tips for Dialysis Customers and Others Using COTA Mainstream for Transportation to Medical Treatments

The same rules and procedures apply to all COTA Mainstream customers. There is no special service for those using COTA Mainstream to go to medical treatments. Please read through the following tips on how to help make your ride to the clinic go smoothly.

1. Consider setting up Subscription service for your trips. (See page 19).

Those customers using COTA Mainstream for life-sustaining medical trips on a regular basis may want to consider setting up Subscription Service. Sometimes the exact appointment time is not available, but we will do our best to set up a schedule that works for you.

2. Know the pickup time for both your trip to treatment and your return

trip home. COTA Mainstream has a 30-minute pickup window and you must be ready to go at the start of that window. The vehicle could arrive at any time in the 30-minute window. Operators have to follow a schedule because they have other customers to pickup and drop off.

3. Be sure the operator can find you. Operators cannot enter buildings beyond the first point of entry. If your residence or clinic has more than one entrance, make sure that you inform the reservationist when making your trip, what entrance you will be using. Wait where the operator can see you without going past the door.

COTA MAINSTREAM

4. Allow ample time for all medical appointments. Plan for the unexpected.

If you need extra recovery time, you may miss your scheduled return trip. If you are not ready when the operator comes, you must contact the dispatch office to arrange for another trip. Do not ask the operator to return. The operator has a schedule to follow and must proceed on their route. COTA Mainstream cannot transport you if you have body fluids on you. If you are found to have body fluids after departure from the clinic, the operator may request emergency personnel (911) who are equipped to handle medical emergencies.

5. Pack a Snack. Some customers may need to eat soon after their dialysis treatment. If you bring a little food, you will be prepared if your vehicle is delayed or if other customers need to be dropped off first. We do our best to avoid unnecessary delays on return trips; but no customer can be guaranteed a direct trip home. Please note that snacks must be eaten before you board COTA Mainstream. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the vehicles.

6. Call us if your vehicle has not arrived within your 30-minute pickup window.

If your vehicle has not arrived within your scheduled window, contact the dispatch office at [614-272-3007](tel:614-272-3007) to check on your trip.

7. Let us know as soon as possible if your treatment schedule changes.

If you have a subscription service and the schedule of your treatments changes, you must contact the Reservations Department immediately. If we send a vehicle for you based upon your old schedule, and you are not available for the ride, you will be considered a no-show. Also, if you are going to be missing treatments for a few days, (for example, while in hospital), you must call [614-272-3033](tel:614-272-3033) to place your trips on hold ([see page 20](#)).

COTA MAINSTREAM

If we send a vehicle and you are not there, you may be no-showed multiple times and possibly penalized. On holidays, your clinic may operate on a different schedule. Check with your clinic staff before a holiday.

How Can I Keep My Records Up to date?

By keeping your records up to date, we will be able to provide a better service to our customers in times of emergency. Please remember to keep your telephone number and mailing address current in our records. If there is a change, be sure to inform the COTA Mobility Services staff at **614-275-5828** that you are making a permanent contact information change.

COTA Mainstream No-show Policy

When an individual no-shows for a scheduled trip, it is very expensive and takes away the opportunity that a trip could have been scheduled for someone else. There are consequences when customers have a pattern of either not being ready, late-canceling trips or simply not showing up to take their scheduled trip.

What is a No-show?

A no-show trip is when the customer is not available and the vehicle arrives for pickup within the 30-minute window. If a customer is a no-show for the first half of a trip, he/she is responsible for calling the dispatch office to cancel the return trip if they will not need it. Otherwise, he/she will be charged with a second no-show.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What is a Cancel-at-door?

A trip is considered a cancel-at-door when the vehicle arrives on time within the 30-minute window and a customer (or the customer's representative) cancels a scheduled trip during the pickup window.

If an operator arrives to pick up a customer before the start of the customer's 30-minute window and the customer is not ready to be transported, the customer is not required to board the vehicle. The customer may board if they are ready and does not oppose to departing early. The customer will not be charged a no-show (or cancel-at-door) should they decide not to board the vehicle early.

What is a Late-cancel?

A trip is considered a late-cancel when the customer (or the customer's representative) cancels less than two hours before the beginning of the pickup window.

COTA's No-show, Cancel-at-door and Late-cancel policy is designed to identify those customers who have a pattern and practice of violating the policy based on their frequency of use and percentage of trips missed. No-shows, cancel-at-doors and late-cancels will be tracked on a rolling six (6) month cycle.

Customers who have accumulated five (5) penalty points with a combination of no-shows, late-cancels and cancels-at-door in a calendar month will trigger a review of their trip history.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What is a Late-cancel? (continued)

No-show = 1 penalty point

Cancel-at-door = 1 penalty point

Late-cancel = 1 penalty point

Penalties for suspension of Mainstream service will be determined by utilizing a 15% and pattern of abuse rule. A customer's number of trips and their pattern of trips along with their total number of violations will be taken into consideration when determining if the customer is considered for suspension. If a customer's penalty points exceed 15% of their scheduled trips, this would be considered a violation month.

Examples:

Non-Penalty Month	Events	Penalty Points	Scheduled Trips
Late-cancels	1	1	
No-shows	4	4	
Total	5	5	40
		12.5%	

Penalty Month	Events	Penalty Points	Scheduled Trips
Late-cancels	1	1	
No-shows	4	4	
Total	5	5	14
		35.7%	

COTA MAINSTREAM

What is a Late-cancel? (continued)

The length of a customer’s suspension will adhere to the following schedule:

Violations	Penalties
First violation exceeding 15% of scheduled trips	Warning letter, copy of suspension policy; education
Second violation	7 days suspension (1 week)
Third violation	14 days suspension (2 weeks)
Fourth violation	21 days suspension (3 weeks)
Fifth and subsequent violations	28 days suspension (4 weeks)

With each consecutive no-show, cancel-at-door and late-cancel, the percentage will be recalculated monthly. If the percentage is greater than 15% within a rolling six (6) month period, further violations of this policy will result in suspension, per the above schedule.

COTA will work with a customer to reduce a customer’s no-shows, cancels-at-door and late-cancels prior to suspending a customer’s Mainstream service. Prior to sending a warning or suspension letter, COTA will review all no-shows, cancels-at-door and late-cancels to ensure that the process was followed properly and an accurate count is represented. Any no-shows, cancels-at-door or late-cancels that are found to be in error will be removed from the customer’s record.

COTA MAINSTREAM

What if I Disagree with my No-show suspension?

A written copy of the COTA Mainstream Suspension Appeal Process may be obtained by contacting Mobility Services at **614-275-5828**. COTA will give you advance notification of a service suspension. A customer whose service is to be suspended has the right to an appeal. Contact Mobility Services immediately upon receipt of your letter. Failure to follow the instructions in your notification letter will result in your Mainstream service suspension being upheld.

Does COTA Automatically Cancel my Later Rides/ Return Trips if I No-show a Trip?

No. Later trips and return trips for that day will not be automatically canceled when you no-show for a trip. It is your responsibility to cancel trips that are no longer needed. Failure to do so will result in a no-show penalty.

COTA MAINSTREAM

(Non-ADA and Same Day Trips)

COTA Mainstream On-Demand is powered by UZURV. This service is the new Non-ADA trip provider for all Non-ADA and same-day trips.

On-Demand Customer Benefits:

- UZURV provides private, accessible, same-day, non-stop, door-to-door service.
- Reserve Non-ADA trips up to 30 days in advance.
- With UZURV you can request your favorite driver.
- Bring guests (space permitting), a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or a service animal.

Trips may be scheduled at least one hour in advance or further in advance with greater flexibility. Call the UZURV Call Center at [614-344-4488](tel:614-344-4488). You will need your Mainstream ADA I.D. client number available when scheduling your trip(s).

UZURV Service Hours (7 days a week)*

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

Saturday-Sunday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

***Service hours subject to change**

Call Center Hours of Operations

Monday-Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

On-Demand Fares:

The total fare depends on trip mileage, which is calculated at the time of booking. It will not be less than \$5. Customers may pay with credit or debit cards. Mainstream tickets and Cash will not be accepted as payment. All Mainstream customers must have their Mainstream ADA I.D. with them when riding the service.

Are There Other Customer Rules That I Need to Know?

COTA and its partners will not make exceptions to the Americans with Disabilities Act or following COTA policies:

- Customers must comply with safety policies and regulations, including passenger, wheelchair and securement requirements; wheelchair brakes must be locked in position when on the lift and when the vehicle is in motion.
- Customers cannot transport any item that may pose a threat to the health or safety of the operator and other customers.
- Mainstream will not transport customers who fail to control their conduct or pose a threat to the health and safety of the operator, other customers or the vehicle.
- Pet owners are required by Ohio law to secure their dogs when operators are on their property. A violation of this requirement is considered a strict liability offense.
- Customers must pay the required fare — \$3.50 per one-way trip for ADA trips.
- Customers must pay the required fare when boarding the vehicle.
- Customers must show their current Mainstream ADA I.D. card when boarding the vehicle.

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

Are There Other Customer Rules That I Need to Know? (continued)

- Customers may only transport 2 large paper bags or 4 small plastic bags per trip. Customers may transport 1 small personal shopping cart filled to normal capacity when boarding the vehicle.
- Smoking, eating, drinking, carrying illegal weapons or playing electronic devices without headphones while on the vehicle is prohibited.
- Operators will not make unscheduled stops along a route.
- Travel training is available to help customers learn how to use COTA's fixed-route service.

Disruptive Conduct

Customers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct will be refused service. A customer whose behavior threatens, or has threatened the safety of any COTA personnel, service provider personnel or other customers may be denied service. Customers who engage in violent, threatening or illegal behavior may lose the privilege of riding COTA's services.

For the safety and comfort of all Mainstream customers and employees, COTA has established the following definitions and consequences to address inappropriate customer conduct:

Hazardous misconduct is defined as any customer act which creates the potential for injury or death to any customer, transit operator or the general public.

Abusive misconduct is defined as any verbal or physical act that is generally offensive, invades the privacy rights of others or involves touching another person in a rude, insolent or angry manner. Hazardous or abusive misconduct may result in a service suspension:

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

Disruptive Conduct (continued)

- A first offense may result in a suspension of service of up to sixty (60) days
- A second offense within a one (1) year period may result in a suspension of service for up to one (1) year. At the end of the suspension year, a customer must reapply for Mainstream service.

Unintentional misconduct is defined as any act that would qualify as hazardous or abusive misconduct, but is the direct and immediate consequence of the customer's disability.

Consequences of Unintentional Misconduct:

- A customer may be required to ride with a Personal Care Attendant
- A customer may be subject to any reasonable accommodation that will ensure safety. This accommodation may last for a time period sufficient to allow the customer to learn appropriate behavior, or the accommodation may be permanent if the conduct is beyond the customer's control.

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

Helpful Information for Mainstream Users

Mainstream Mobility Services

1330 Fields Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Call: 614-275-5828

Fax: 614-272-3018

Email: paratransit@cota.com

Customers may contact Mobility Services via phone call or email to request documents in an accessible format.

Reservations and Advance Cancellations for Mainstream Trips

Call: 614-272-3033

Email: trips@cota.com

Reservation Hours

Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Holidays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Due to high call volume, customers should remain on the line for assistance. Calls will be taken in the order they are received.
- Email and fax requests are handled by Reservationists throughout the day.
- Email and fax requests must be received at least ½ hour prior to each day's close of business.

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

Mainstream Dispatch Office

Call: 614-272-3007

Dispatch Hours

Monday-Saturday, 4:30-1 a.m.

Sunday and Holidays, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Hours for Lost and Found

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Call the Mainstream Dispatch Office to:

- Inquire about pickup status - “Where’s My Bus?”
- Cancel same-day trips
- Inquire about Lost and Found items

COTA Mainstream On-Demand (Non-ADA and Same Day trips)

Powered by UZURV

Call: 614-344-4488

Reservations for Non-ADA trips

UZURV Call Center hours

Monday - Friday: 5:30 am. to 8 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday: 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND

COTA Mainstream Pass and Ticket Sales

COTA Mobility Services Facility

1330 Fields Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

COTA Customer Experience Center

William J. Lhota Building

33 N. High Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

614-228-1776

Mainstream Complaints and/or Commendations

(614) 228-1776

- Report safety issues
- Submit compliments for exceptional service
- Submit suggestions or concerns about service
- When calling in a compliment or concern, remember to mention the date, time, pickup and drop-off location of the event

MOBILITY ROUNDTABLE WITH ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATAC) MEETINGS

The purpose of the Mobility Roundtable with ATAC is to bring together a group of individuals to discuss concerns, compliments and solutions to COTA's transportation services and mobility services within Franklin County. The Mobility Roundtable with ATAC meet quarterly for one hour from 7-8 p.m. For more information on attending a meeting, please contact **614-275-5833**.

ADA COMPLIANCE

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is committed to complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all of its programs and services. The ADA prohibits discrimination against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service.

Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of a disability may file a formal complaint with COTA no later than 180 calendar days after the alleged discrimination occurred by filling out COTA's ADA Complaint Form and forwarding the completed form by email or postal service to:

Central Ohio Transit Authority

Customer Service, Attn: ADA Coordinator
33 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Complaints may also be taken by phone at 614-228-1776, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday.

If you have any questions regarding COTA's ADA policy you may contact COTA's ADA Coordinator by email or by phone at 614-308-4338, or at 33 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43215, Attn: ADA Coordinator

ADA COMPLIANCE (continued)

REASONABLE MODIFICATION

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) provides reasonable modification to policies and procedures to customers to ensure they can effectively use the agency's transit services. Individuals requesting a modification should clearly describe what they need in order to use COTA fixed-route transit and paratransit services.

To make a request, please contact:

COTA Mobility Coordinator



PullinsTL@cota.com



614-275-5833

Attn. Mobility Coordinator
Central Ohio Transit Authority
1330 Fields Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43201

Please note, COTA may deny a requested modification if:

- 1.** The modification will fundamentally alter the nature of service, program or activity;
- 2.** The modification will result in a direct threat to the health and safety of others;
- 3.** The individual is able to use the service, program or activity for its intended purpose without the requested modification, or;
- 4.** The modification will result in undue financial or administrative burden on COTA.