



CATS Paratransit Services Passenger Guide

Serving the Disabled of Cherokee County

Reservations	(770) 345-6241
Operations Manager	(770) 345-6238
Fax Line	(770) 345-6239

CHEROKEE AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (CATS)

884 Univeter Road
Canton, Georgia 30114

Cherokee County, Georgia

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Complementary Paratransit Service Area MapAppendix

Who's Eligible?

Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS) is a public, mass transportation program. Paratransit, as a part of CATS, is neither a personal taxi nor a social services agency. The DOT ADA regulations at 49 CFR section 37.121(a) state:

...each public entity operating a fixed route system shall provide paratransit or other special services to individuals with disabilities that are comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights statute. It clearly emphasized nondiscriminatory access to fixed route service, with **ADA Complementary Paratransit acting as a "safety net"** for people who do not have the functional ability to use the fixed route system. Under the ADA, Complementary Paratransit service is **not** intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation for individuals with disabilities, and **simply having a disability or multiple disabilities does not, in and of itself, entitle a person to ride**. Rather, the DOT ADA regulations provide for three categories of ADA Complementary Paratransit eligibility.

Persons who are unable to board, ride or disembark from a fixed-route bus, regardless of their ability to get to the bus stop or availability of accessible vehicles.

Persons with specific impairments who cannot travel to a bus stop or board the fixed-route bus, or travel to their final destination after disembarking from the fixed-route bus.

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.

The determining factor in deciding whether the passenger qualifies for ADA Complementary Paratransit is whether the passenger can functionally ride or access the bus. It is not a medical determination; it is a functional ability analysis. Eligibility is good for three (3) years, unless temporary eligibility is given. Temporary eligibility is based on a temporary functional need. The eligibility date will be noted in the eligibility letter.

What Areas Are Served?

CATS Paratransit service will operate 3/4-mile on either side of both Canton Fixed Transportation Routes. All passenger trips must begin and end within the CATS Paratransit area. Transfer points will be established for passengers traveling outside the service area. The CATS Paratransit service area is shown on the map included at the end of this guide.

When Does This Service Operate?

Paratransit services are provided in Cherokee County, Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 4 PM; with no service between 12 noon and 1 PM. Weekend service is not available. Service will not be available in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the Day after Christmas.

How Do I Apply For Service?

To request an application, please call (770) 345-6238 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. An application will be mailed to the passenger. To request an application in alternative format, contact the CATS Operations Manager at thinton@cherokeega.com, (770) 345-6238 or fax (770) 345-6239.

Complete **Part A** and return to CATS. All questions must be answered completely and signed by applicant or designated signer, otherwise, the application will be returned to the passenger. The information about the **licensed/certified Healthcare Professional** familiar with the passenger's history must be completed on the application. **Part B** will be faxed by CATS to the licensed/certified Healthcare Professional listed on the application. After the licensed/certified Healthcare Professional returns **Part B** with all of the information that is required, the application will be considered complete. Once the completed application is received and in the possession of CATS, eligibility will be determined within 21 days. If this process is not completed within 21 days, according to the ADA requirements, the passenger is presumed eligible and may use paratransit service until a decision is made. The passenger will be notified of the final decision in writing.

If a passenger needs help completing out the application, contact CATS and special arrangements will be made to assist in completing the application.

Return the application in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope to:

Operations Manager
Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)
884 Univeter Road
Canton, Georgia 30115

How Long is My Certification Valid?

All passengers are required to be recertified every three (3) years. An application will be mailed three (3) months prior to expiration, along with an enclosed letter informing you that your application is up for renewal. Failure to return the application in a timely manner may result in a loss of service.

If the application for recertification is denied, the passenger may continue to use the service for 60 calendar days from the date of the notification letter. If the passenger does not file an appeal within those 60 days, the passenger's service will be discontinued on the 61st calendar day. If the passenger does file an appeal within the 60 calendar days, service will be continued until the Paratransit Appeals Board determines the passenger's eligibility. The passenger will receive written notification of the Appeals Board decision within thirty days. If the passenger's application is denied, service will be discontinued ten business days from the date of the notification letter.

How Will I Know If I Can Use CATS Paratransit Service?

The passenger will be notified by mail of their eligibility status. If the passenger is approved as eligible, they must go to the CATS office at 884 Univeter Road, Canton, Georgia, to process their identification card. CATS ADA eligibility card is accepted at other transit agencies within the United States.

If a passenger is denied eligibility, the passenger may appeal the decision to:

Operations Manager
Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)
884 Univeter Road
Canton, Georgia 30115

Or email thinton@cherokeega.com.

Appeals must be submitted within 60 calendar days from the date of the notification letter of the passenger's eligibility status.

If the passenger is submitting an application for recertification and the application is denied, the passenger may continue to use the service for 60 calendar days from the date of the notification letter. If the passenger does not file an appeal within those 60 calendar days, the passenger's service will be discontinued on the 61st calendar day. If the passenger does file an appeal within the 60 calendar days, service will be continued until the Paratransit Appeals Board determines the passenger's eligibility.

Lost Card

If the passenger misplaces the CATS ADA eligibility card, a replacement card can be obtained for a fee of \$5.00 at the CATS office at 884 Univeter Road, Canton, Georgia. Contact CATS at (770)345-6238 for questions about a Paratransit ID card. Trips cannot be taken without showing a valid ID card.

Temporary Disabilities

Persons with temporary disabilities may obtain a CATS Paratransit ID card valid for the expected time of the disability by using the same application eligibility process. If the disability continues longer than identified on the application, or becomes permanent, CATS will require a new application to be submitted.

How Do I Make A Reservation?

Reservations may be made by calling (770) 345-6241, Sunday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Same day reservations are not available. Reservations are accepted up to seven days in advance. The reservation line is not open on Saturday. There are no daily limits on the number of reservations the passenger can request; however, please refer to the penalty associated with numerous cancellations under the section entitled "How Do I Cancel a Reservation". Please remember, a reservationist is the only person who may make the passenger trip reservation; **drivers are not allowed to make reservations for a passenger.**

Every effort will be made to accommodate the passenger's requested pick-up time; however, demand at certain times of the day may require that the passenger adjust his/her desired time by up to one hour before or one hour after the desired pick-up or drop-off time. Reservation space is assigned on a first come, first serve basis.

Whenever the passenger makes a reservation for a trip, the passenger must be prepared to give the reservationist the following information:

- First and last name.
- Address of pick-up location including an apartment number if appropriate.
- Address of the passenger's destination. Without an address, a trip cannot be scheduled.
- Location of the ADA accessible entrance to the facility.
- Requested appointment time.
- Whether or not a companion, Personal Care Assistant, or child is traveling with the passenger. Whether any of them will be using a mobility device.

A reservationist is required to ask for complete information and will repeat the information back to the passenger to make sure everything is correct. A driver or passenger cannot change the location of the pick-up or drop-off on the day of the trip.

If a passenger chooses to schedule trips too close together and the return trip vehicle arrives before the passenger is at the location, a no-show will be given to the passenger for the return trip and the vehicle will not return to pick them up after it leaves the pick-up location. If the passenger is not ready for their return trip after the vehicle arrives and does not board the vehicle, a no-show will be issued to the passenger.

Reservation Confirmation

Passenger may call and confirm reservations at any time. Reservation changes will only be accepted Sunday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. up to the day before the passenger's scheduled trip.

How Do I Cancel A Reservation?

To cancel a reservation **prior** to the day of the trip, please contact reservations at (770) 345-6241, Sunday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Please note: **Do not call reservations for same day reservation cancellations.** Any same day cancellations must be made by calling the Paratransit dispatcher at (770) 345-6238 Sunday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Be sure to give the passenger's name, address, date of travel, scheduled pick-up time and return trip information. A cancellation number will be given. **Any cancellation less than one hour before the scheduled pick up time will be considered a no-show and a violation notification will be mailed to the passenger.**

A passenger that shows a pattern or practice of cancelling 5 same day trips within 30 calendar days of the first infraction, no matter if they were cancelled prior to one hour of the trip, will be penalized with one no-show violation; this includes cancelling multiple trips on the same day. On the 5th cancellation, a no-show will be recorded. Depending on the number of no shows already on the passenger's record, a notification letter, warning letter, or suspension letter will be sent to the passenger. As with all no-shows, the passenger may appeal to the Paratransit Appeals Board and provide documentation of any extenuating circumstances for consideration.

Same Day Hold

A same-day hold occurs when a passenger calls and indicates she/he is not ready to be picked up and requests that the trip be placed on hold. The passenger then calls back to notify dispatch of the time she/he would like the bus to arrive. This is a same day reservation, and same day reservations are not permitted.

However, because some delays are beyond the control of the passenger, calling for a same-day hold is permitted only under the following circumstances:

1. Return trips from medical facilities, or governmental offices: or
2. Return trips if CATS arrived at the passenger's destination point after their appointed arrival time.

Subscription Trips

A subscription must be a minimum of three (3) days per week with the same destination and time. If a passenger chooses to change the subscription time, it will be handled as a new subscription request. If a corresponding time slot is immediately available, then the passenger's new subscription will take effect on the date requested by the passenger. If no corresponding time slot is available, the passenger may place their name on the subscription waiting list. Subscriptions will be assigned as space becomes available. Once a subscription is assigned, it will not be necessary to call back and reserve that trip individually.

As traffic patterns and demographics change, CATS Paratransit reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to existing subscriptions. Should a passenger's subscription need to be adjusted, these changes will be made on an individual basis with input from the passenger and/or his/her guardian/care taker. At no time will CATS adjust or change a passenger's subscription requested drop off time unless requested by the passenger. If an agreement cannot be reached between CATS and the passenger, it may result in the passenger's subscription being dropped from the subscription list and placed back on the request list until an appropriate time slot can be found. These changes will allow CATS to make the best use of its resources while providing the timeliest service possible to all its passengers.

The passenger may temporarily change the destination or pick-up address on a subscription per year for a minimum of two weeks if the time slot is available. All changes to subscriptions must be made at least one day in advance. Same day address changes cannot be accommodated. If the passenger chooses to change the subscription permanently, it will be handled as a new subscription request and placed on the waiting list if the time slot is not available.

A subscription passenger that is suspended due to "no-show" violations will lose his/her current subscription status and may reapply after the suspension is completed.

How Do I Ride The CATS Paratransit Vehicle?

Pick-up Times

A pick up time will be based upon appointment times. A pick-up window of 30 minutes allows CATS to arrive at the passenger's location up to one-half hour after the scheduled pick-up time. This "30 minute

policy” was adopted to accommodate as many passengers as possible during a particular time period. If the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute period, please contact CATS at (770) 345-6238.

Gated Communities

Those passengers who reside or travel to or from a gated community should remain in their apartment until the vehicle has arrived at the gate. The passenger will be notified that the vehicle has arrived at the gate. If the buzzer at the gate does not work, the driver will call dispatch and dispatch will notify the passenger to open the gate.

Boarding the Vehicle

Passengers must have their CATS Paratransit identification card, fare ticket(s) or money (exact change is required) ready to present to the driver when boarding the CATS vehicle. **Failure to provide a ticket, pass or exact fare currency at the time of boarding will result in the disruption of a passenger’s service and a no-show will be added to the passenger’s record.**

Driver Assistance

CATS paratransit service is a curb-to-curb service (and extends further upon request). Drivers will provide assistance on and off the vehicle from the curb of the address. Drivers are not permitted to take passengers up or down steps, ramps or walks. The driver shall provide assistance with the use of lifts, ramps, and securement devices. The driver shall assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp or onto the lift of the bus. Drivers do not assist with packages (see section “May I Transport Packages”). If assistance is needed beyond the curb due to disability, make this known to the reservationist at the time of scheduling the trip.

Driver Wait Time

It is important to be at the designated pick-up location at the scheduled pick-up time indicated by the reservationist when passengers made their reservation. The vehicle **will wait up until five minutes** past the scheduled pick-up time for a passenger to arrive at the curb or designated pick-up point. If the vehicle arrives after the scheduled pick-up time, the driver is instructed to wait five minutes before contacting dispatch for instructions. **The vehicle is not scheduled to wait while the passenger conducts business at their destination.** The passenger will need to make a reservation for their return trip for a designated pick-up time. Pick-up time and driver wait time requirements will also apply to the return trip.

Closed Business

If a business is closed upon the arrival of the vehicle, the passenger can choose to stay on the vehicle and be dropped off at the return address at the convenience of CATS (return trip fare must be paid), or the passenger can get off the bus and wait for the return trip vehicle to pick them up.

Early or Late Pick-up Requests

CATS is not obligated to comply with a change for an early or late pick-up on the day of the scheduled trip. CATS will try and accommodate an early or late pick-up request on the day of the scheduled trip; however, other scheduled trips cannot be disrupted. Drivers are not allowed to start earlier than the first scheduled pick-up on their manifest nor are drivers allowed to stay later than the last scheduled drop-off on their manifest for an early or late pick-up request.

Pick-up Locations Procedures

To provide safe, on-time service for all passengers, CATS Paratransit has developed the following pick-up procedures:

- **Apartments**
Passengers who live in a large, multiple unit apartment complexes must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to their address. Passengers in apartment complexes that are inaccessible to CATS vehicles must meet the vehicle at the main entrance to the complex. If the facility has a guarded gate or limited access, the passenger should inform the security staff the scheduled pick-up and return times. If a passenger is visiting someone inside a guarded gate or limited access, it is the passenger's responsibility to advise the person they will be visiting ahead of time for access. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside apartments.
- **Office Complexes**
Passengers traveling from a large office complex, medical facility or other similar area must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility.
- **Adult Day Care and Dialysis Centers**
Passengers should be waiting in a designated area when the vehicle arrives to pick them up at the centers. Drivers will assist passengers in boarding the vehicle. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility. It is highly recommended that the center contact dispatch at (770) 345-6238 if there is a problem with the scheduled pick-up time. CATS does not handle emergency trips to the hospital.
- **Malls**
Passengers will be picked up and dropped off nearest the main door of the food court location. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the mall.
- **Churches**
Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the church.
- **Other Large Areas Not Specified**
Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Drivers remain with the vehicle and do not go inside any facility.
- **Exception:**
If the main reception desk or main lobby entrance does not meet ADA accessibility standards, it is the passenger's responsibility to contact the facility administrator for determination of their designated accessible entrance and notify CATS **prior** to the trip.

What If I Fail to Show Up For A Scheduled Trip?

CATS No-Show Policy

Scheduling a ride and then failing to use the service without proper two-hour cancellation causes serious transportation and scheduling problems for all CATS customers. A no-show will be added to a passenger's record when the following situation(s) occur:

- Not being at the pick-up point within five minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. (Do not leave the pick-up location until the 30-minute window has passed.) If the vehicle arrives after the scheduled pick-up time, drivers are instructed to wait five minutes and notify dispatch for further instructions.
- Cancelling a ride less than two hours before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Choosing not to ride after the vehicle arrives for pick-up.
- Not taking the trip due to not having the proper fare to ride after the vehicle arrives for pick-up. Drivers do not make change.

If a passenger fails to show up for a scheduled trip and a no-show is recorded, any other trips for that day will remain on the schedule. It is the responsibility of the passenger to cancel any other trips for the day if not needed. Under Federal law, CATS may not assume that a passenger will not take the other scheduled trips for that day.

Vehicle Wait Times and Customer No-Shows

Drivers are obligated to wait for customers five minutes from arrival within the pick-up window at the pick-up location. Upon arrival, drivers will proceed to the outermost exterior door and announce themselves. They will wait one minute at the door for the customer. If the customer is not present for boarding within that time, the driver will return to the vehicle and request that the CATS Paratransit dispatcher begin the no-show authorization process.

The CATS Paratransit dispatcher will then verify that the driver is at the correct location and make a good faith effort to call the customer before authorizing the driver to proceed to the next destination. If the customer can be reached and becomes available for boarding while the driver is still on site during this process, the driver will return to the door to assist the customer. Customers who are not ready for boarding upon the driver's arrival and are still not present at the end of the five minute waiting period, will be considered a "No-Show" and will be subject to the terms and conditions of the CATS No-Show Policy as described above.

In any calendar month, any customer who has booked ten trips or more and has "no-showed" or "late cancelled" at least 10% of those trips will receive a suspension notice. (A trip cancelled in accordance with our policy, i.e. more than two hours before the start of the pick-up window, will not be counted in the total number of trips booked, nor will it receive penalty points.) Additionally, to ensure that only habitual offenders are suspended, a customer will have to accumulate three or more penalty points to receive a suspension. A customer 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.

A "No-Show" occurs when a customer does not board the vehicle within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival within the 30-minute pick-up window. Each No-Show is counted as one penalty point.

A "Late Cancellation" occurs when a customer cancels a trip less than two hours before the start of the 30-minute pick-up window. Each Late Cancellation is counted as one-half (1/2) a penalty point.

Violation Penalties

All suspension periods will begin on a Monday. The length of a customer's suspension will adhere to the following schedule:

- Upon a first violation in the calendar year, a customer receives a warning letter.
- Second violation:
7-day (1-week) suspension
- Third violation:
14-day (2-week) suspension
- Fourth violation:
21-day (3-week) suspension
- Fifth and subsequent violations:
28-day (4-week) suspension

CATS will retain records on customer compliance with this policy for the current calendar year. A warning letter and copy of this policy will be issued upon the first violation of the year.

Further violations of this policy will result in suspension, per the above schedule. If you no-show or late cancel because of circumstances beyond your control, please call the CATS Operations Manager at 770-345-6238 to explain the circumstance, and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation. The hours of operation for the CATS office are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

No-shows or late cancellations must be disputed within two business days after the end of the calendar month in which they occur. Prior to sending a suspension letter, CATS will review all no-shows and late cancellations to ensure that the process was followed properly and an accurate count is represented. Any no-show or late cancellation that is found to be in error will be removed from the customer's account.

If you dispute a suspension under this policy, you have the right to file an appeal. Appeal requests must be filed in writing, by the deadline and per the instructions within the appeal packet. If you miss the Appeal request deadline, your CATS service will be suspended on the date listed on your CATS Service Suspension Notice. A copy of the appeal process will be sent to you with your suspension letter.

What If My Caretaker Is Not Available At the Drop-off Location?

If the passenger cannot be left unattended after exiting the vehicle and the caretaker is not at the drop-off location when the vehicle arrives, the passenger's service will be suspended for 14 calendar days. If this situation happens a second time, the passenger's service will be suspended for 30 calendar days. If this situation happens a third time, the passenger's service will be suspended for 60 calendar days. If the situation happens a fourth time, the caretaker will have to show cause why the service should not be permanently removed.

May Someone Ride With Me?

If a passenger is unable to travel alone because of a functional disability and require a personal care attendant (PCA), CATS will not require a fare for the attendant. The passenger must provide their own attendant; CATS cannot provide attendants. If a passenger must use a PCA, this must be noted during the initial application process.

49 CFR Part 37 Subtitle A, Appendix D states that a PCA is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his or her personal need. To prevent potential abuse of this provision, the rule provides that a friend or family member does not count as a personal care attendant unless the eligible individual regularly makes use of a personal care attendant and the companion is actually acting in that capacity.

An adult personal care attendant must accompany a CATS Paratransit passenger under the age of 16.

Please inform the reservationist when scheduling the passenger trip(s) if a personal care attendant will be traveling with the passenger and also if the PCA will be using a mobility aid.

Companions, personal care attendants, escorts, and children are not allowed on a vehicle without the eligible passenger aboard.

Traveling companions, including children, that ride with the certified paratransit passenger do not need to be certified by CATS and do not need an I.D. card. One traveling companion may ride with a passenger. Appropriate fare must be paid for a traveling companion. Additional companions may ride on a space available basis only. Each traveling companion must pay the appropriate fare. Child companions, over 42 inches, riding with eligible passengers must pay the appropriate passenger fare. When scheduling trips, passengers must inform the reservationist if they are going to be accompanied by a companion and any mobility device(s) the companion will be using.

CATS requires that all children less than four years of age, or weighing less than forty pounds, must ride in a child's safety seat. Adult passengers accompanying the child must provide the safety seat.

What Is The Fare?

Current fares are \$2.50 per person per one-way trip; \$1.00 for seniors, Medicare and passengers with disabilities. Passengers must have their Medicaid card available to show the driver. Fares may be paid with exact cash, monthly pass, single-ride ticket or 10-ride ticket upon boarding. Fares will be collected in the farebox at the front of the vehicle. Drivers cannot make change.

Tickets may be purchased at the CATS office, 884 Univeter Road, Canton, Georgia. Tickets may be paid with a personal check, money order, or cash. Debit cards and credit cards are not accepted at this time. Tickets are also available by mail. There is a no refund policy on all purchases. CATS cannot replace tickets lost in the mail or stolen. Tickets should be kept in a safe place. Call CATS at (770) 345-6238 to purchase tickets or request an order form. Drivers do not handle the purchase of passes and tickets.

A personal care attendant may ride at no charge. The original application must state that a personal care attendant is needed. One companion may travel with the passenger. Additional traveling companions may ride on a space available basis and must pay the applicable adult or the passenger fare.

Transfers to the local fixed route are free upon request when boarding.

What About Visitors With Disabilities?

Visitors to Cherokee County, who are functionally disabled, will be given “presumptive eligibility” and can ride for up to 21 days each year without being certified by CATS. Fare structure is still \$1.25 per passenger. Visitors must supply documentation of their place of residence, and if it is not apparent, of their disability.

CATS ADA eligibility card will be recognized throughout the country and passengers may use it to ride paratransit service whenever it is applicable and available. Check with the transit system for the exact rules and regulations for scheduling a trip.

How Do I Board The Vehicle With A Mobility Aid?

Lift Requirements

A vehicle lift can accommodate 800 pounds or less. Any passenger may use the lift at any designated stop. Drivers are instructed to deploy a lift, at the request of the passenger, to board or exit the vehicle. CATS vehicles are equipped with lifts that can accommodate mobility aids measuring 30” in width and 48” in length. Passengers whose wheelchairs exceed the capacity of the lift may not be able to be transported.

For passenger safety and comfort while traveling on CATS, the following procedures are recommended:

- Lock brakes, if applicable, while on the lift.
- Turn off electric power on wheelchair. The driver will instruct the passenger when to reengage the power.
- Wait for the driver’s assistance and follow instructions when entering or exiting the vehicle.
- CATS cannot transport passengers with inoperative mobility devices.

All wheelchairs and scooters must be secured. Any passenger refusing for his/her wheelchair or scooter to be secured will not be allowed transportation. Failure for CATS to provide securement devices will not disrupt the trip.

May I Transport Packages?

Packages are allowed on the vehicle. The number of packages allowed is only what a passenger (or the passenger’s PCA, companion, or child) can carry on or off the vehicle in one trip. Drivers do not provide assistance loading or unloading packages, groceries or luggage.

- Excessive luggage and large boxes cannot be accommodated. The maximum combined weight of all packages cannot exceed twenty-five (25) pounds.

- Passengers will be required to secure their packages at their seats, as storage space on the vehicle is limited.

May I Transport Animals?

Service animals are allowed in all CATS vehicles and facilities. A service animal is defined by ADA as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. Please describe to the driver/employee what physical function or task the service animal will be providing. For safety reasons, drivers are not permitted to handle service animals. A passenger may board a vehicle at any time with a service animal with no prior arrangements. Pets, however, are not allowed in any CATS vehicle or facility.

What Is My Responsibility When Riding CATS Paratransit Service?

The following rules are provided to ensure the safety and comfort of all CATS passengers:

- No eating, drinking or smoking in a CATS vehicle.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol and/or intoxicating drugs in a CATS vehicle.
- No operating or tampering with any equipment while in the vehicle. This rule includes operating the hydraulic lift and attempting to remove wheelchair tie-downs.
- Use earphones with radios and tape players.
- Fold strollers.

What Are The Driver's Responsibilities?

Drivers are expected to obey the same rules as passengers. The following rules also apply:

- Drivers may assist passengers when boarding or exiting the vehicle.
- Drivers may assist from the curb when boarding or exiting the vehicle.
- Drivers are not allowed to assist with packages with the exception of a wheelchair passenger's packages.
- The driver shall assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp or onto the lift of the bus.
- Drivers are not allowed to accept tips or gratuities, or act in any manner that would suggest that tipping is appropriate. This includes special occasions such as birthdays and/or holidays.
- Drivers are not allowed to talk with passengers or engage in any other distracting activity (i.e. using a cell phone or electronic audio and/or video device) while operating a vehicle.

How Can I Make Suggestions, Inquiries, Complaints or Commendations?

CATS seeks to provide the citizens of Cherokee County with safe, reliable and efficient transportation. We look forward to working with the passenger to provide the best service possible. If the passenger has any suggestions, questions, complaints or commendations, please call the Operations Manager at (770) 345-6238, or write CATS at the following address:

Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)
884 Univeter Road
Canton, Georgia 30115
Email: thinton@cherokeega.com

Specific details help CATS thoroughly address the passenger's comments. Please include the following information when calling or writing:

- Name, address and telephone number.
- Date and time of experience.
- Vehicle number and/or operator's name.
- Employee's name, if concerning telephone reservation.
- Explanation of the occurrence or suggestions.

If the passenger's complaint is not satisfactorily addressed, please contact the Operations Manager or (770) 345-6238.

What If I Realize I Have Lost Something On The Vehicle?

Any article left on a vehicle will be turned into the CATS lost and found department at the CATS office. Articles will be held for 30 days. To claim a lost article, call the CATS office at (770) 345-6238. Passengers must come to CATS to recover lost items.

What About ADA Compliance?

Regarding ADA compliance, we wish to meet every customer at his/her point of need, so we welcome the passenger's suggestions, comments, feedback, and any concerns. Please help us improve our service to the passenger by communicating with the ADA Coordinator/Operations Manager at:

Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)
884 Univeter Road
Canton, Georgia 30115
Email: thinton@cherokeega.com

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of hazardous weather or potentially hazardous weather such as snow, ice or flooding or in the case of emergency situations, CATS will cancel paratransit service. CATS paratransit will not transport in unsafe conditions. CATS paramount concern is the safety of its riders and employees. While every effort will be made to operate vehicles according to confirmed schedules, recognized weather conditions or treacherous surfaces may cause operation of vehicles to be unsafe and, therefore, temporarily terminated.

If Cherokee County schools are closed due to inclement weather, CATS will not transport passengers. Regular service will resume once all roads are clear and safe for travel.



Cherokee County.....Where metro meets the mountain

This is an official publication of the
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