



Rockford Paratransit Guide to Ride

Effective June 2022

**(This Guide replaces ALL proceeding Guide
to Ride Documents)**

www.rmtd.org

815.961.2255

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NOTE: This document is also available in Spanish. Alternative formats such as Braille or audio are also available upon request.

General Information About Our Service

What is Rockford Paratransit?

Rockford Paratransit, the District's origin to destination service, serves the needs of customers who, because of a disability are unable to ride RMTD's regular fixed route service and who meet the criteria established by the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. **Any person wishing to utilize the Paratransit service must first have their eligibility certified by Rockford Paratransit and then must be registered into the system.** The purpose of this guide is to walk riders through the eligibility process and answer any questions about the operations of our service. If you wish to speak with someone in the Paratransit Department, please call 815.961.2255 or use the Illinois Relay Works System. If you require this information to be in a more accessible format, please let us know by calling us at 815.961.2255.

Paratransit Service Area

The Rockford Paratransit service area is equivalent to the RMTD Fixed Route System. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, service for Paratransit is required to be available $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond the RMTD fixed route system and/or jurisdictional boundaries. Due to an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the cities of Rockford, Loves Park and Machesney Park, Rockford Paratransit will service the entire jurisdictional boundaries of these cities, regardless of where the fixed route service begins and/or ends. Paratransit service in Belvidere will be maintained within the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor of the fixed route.

Paratransit Hours of Operation

Rockford Paratransit operates during these hours:

Monday thru Friday:

4:15 a.m. until 12:45 a.m.

5:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. (Loves Park and Machesney Park)

8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (Belvidere)

Saturday:

6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. (Rockford)

6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. (Loves Park and Machesney Park)

Sunday:

8:15 a.m. until 5:15 pm. (Rockford only)

There is no Paratransit service available on the following holidays:

New Year's Day · Memorial Day · 4th of July
Labor Day · Thanksgiving · Christmas Day

Cost To Ride

The cost to ride RMTD Paratransit for eligible riders is \$3.00 each one-way trip. A zone fare of \$.50 is required for each passenger to any destination in Cherry Valley. Cash fares in the exact amount, pre-purchased tickets or the Token Transit app are accepted forms of payment at the time of the ride. The Token Transit app can be downloaded from the RMTD web site: www.rmtd.org.

Please note if paying with cash, our drivers do not make change nor do they accept personal checks, debit cards or credit cards.

- 10 Ride Ticket Books, which sell for \$30.00 each, can be purchased
- in person at either of our Transfer Centers or the RMTD Administrative Offices, 520 Mulberry Street during normal business hours of operation.
 - via the mail
 - by phone

Via Mail: Tickets may be purchased via mail by downloading our Tickets by Mail form from our web site and mailing in the form and payment as instructed. The Tickets by Mail form can be found at www.rmtd.org/tickets/tickets-by-mail/.

Ticket by Mail order forms can also be requested by calling (815) 961.2255. Mail the form and check, money order or credit card information to Rockford Mass Transit District, 520 Mulberry Street, Rockford, IL 61101.

Via Phone: Ticket books can also be ordered via phone by calling 815.961.9000. Phone orders must be paid with a credit card.

Personal Assistants, if needed and noted on your paratransit application, may ride free of charge. Companions are welcome to ride for \$3.00 cash per person per one-way trip. Children accompanying you are considered travel companions and will be charged \$3.00 each. Children under 5 are free. Personal Assistants and any companions you are travelling with must have the same reservation as the passenger they are accompanying and should be made at the same time you make your reservation.

The next section of this Guide to Ride will outline what a potential rider will need to do to become certified.

Becoming Certified

To ride Rockford Paratransit, you must be certified as eligible by Rockford Paratransit. Examples of people who may be eligible are those who, because of a disability are unable to:

- board, ride or disembark from an accessible bus
- use the fixed route system due to visual or mental impairments
- reach boarding locations or situations due to a specific impairment related to condition.

There are other considerations in determining eligibility; however, these conditions alone do not guarantee eligibility. These conditions are:

- Age, distance to a stop or illiteracy by themselves are not considered a disability but may be considered in the determination
- People who are visually impaired may be eligible if they cannot use the RMTD fixed route system
- People with medical conditions such as epilepsy, kidney disorders, diabetes, may be eligible depending upon their ability to use the RMTD fixed route system.

Any person wishing to utilize the Paratransit service must first have their eligibility certified by Rockford Paratransit and then must be registered into the system.

The first step toward becoming certified is to complete the Paratransit Application. Please come in person to our Paratransit Office at 520 Mulberry Street to complete the application. You may also print the application off of our website, complete it and drop it off in

person. If you do not have transportation to our office, please call us at 815.961.2255 and we will schedule a complimentary round-trip ride to our Administration office to complete the application in person.

Rockford Paratransit will only accept applications via fax from nursing homes, assisted living facilities or doctors' offices. We do not accept completed applications via email or online from any other source.

Once we have received the completed application it will be reviewed within 21 days of receipt. After reviewing, Rockford Paratransit will notify the applicant in writing of the determination of eligibility. If Rockford Paratransit has not made a determination on eligibility within 21 days, the applicant will be treated as eligible and provided service. Once approved, the applicant is eligible for Paratransit services for a period of 3 years before renewing. The renewal date is noted in the initial eligibility letter. The renewal process follows the same procedure as the initial eligibility process.

If Rockford Paratransit denies the application, an opportunity to file an appeal will be given.

Provisional Paratransit Eligibility:

Any person can apply for and may be granted provisional paratransit eligibility for paratransit services if they can provide a physician's certificate demonstrating that they have a hypersensitivity to extreme weather conditions or that extreme weather adversely affects or limits their mobility.

Temporary Paratransit Eligibility

An individual coming to the RMTD service area from another location who is already ADA Paratransit eligible can request temporary eligibility by faxing over their current certification. They will then be able to schedule rides with Rockford Paratransit for up to 21 days while their RMTD application is being processed.

How to Appeal a Decision

Applicants whose requests for certification are denied have the right to an appeal. An Appeals Board, appointed by RAMPCIL, will review each appeal request. To file an appeal, applicants must:

- Present a written appeal to the Rockford Paratransit Appeal Board. It may be mailed to 520 Mulberry Street or presented in person at the same address. It must be filed within 60 days of the denial of an individual's application
- Applicants will be given an opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to the Appeals Board.
- Written notification of the final decision and justification will be mailed to the applicant.

Rockford Paratransit will not provide Paratransit service to the individual pending the determination on appeal. However, if Rockford Paratransit has not made a decision within 30 days of the completion of the appeal process, Rockford Paratransit will provide service from the 31st day of appeal until a decision is reached.



Reserving and Cancelling a Ride

Reservation Hours

To schedule a ride with Rockford Paratransit, call 815.961.2255 or use Illinois Relay Works by dialing 711 or 1.800.526.0844. Reservations can be made Monday thru Saturday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Reservations can be made on Sundays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. but only for rides for the next day.

If a rider has a question about a scheduled night ride **after 6:30 pm only, call 815.961.2250.**

Riders should please note that no changes can be made to a reservation after 5:00 p.m. the day before your trip.

Information Needed to Schedule a Ride

The following information will be helpful when scheduling your ride:

- If at all possible, please do not wait until the last minute to make a reservation
- When making a reservation, please remember to schedule your return trip at the same time
- Please be ready to provide the following information when making your reservation:
 - Your name
 - The date you want to be picked up at your point of origin
 - The pickup address or point of origin
 - The address of your destination

- The time you would like to arrive at your destination
- The time you would like to be picked up for your return trip
- Whether you use a wheelchair or other mobility device
- If a personal assistant will be riding with you. If so, there is no charge
- If a companion will be riding with you. If so, his/her fare is \$3.00 cash for each trip
- For safety reasons, the paratransit rider must provide an infant seat for all children under the age of 5. Children under 5 can also ride for free.

Same Day Rides:

Rockford Paratransit can now provide Same Day Ride Service to ADA Paratransit riders for **Healthcare purposes only**. If you are a registered paratransit rider and you live in the ADA paratransit service area, you are eligible for Same Day Ride Service. Rides will be scheduled up to 3 hours before pick up and must be for a health-related activity such as Dr. appointments, therapy or prescription refills. Same Day Rides will be booked on a first come, first serve basis and will only be booked from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Trips will only be scheduled during the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 7:00p.m. The cost is \$3.00 per one-way trip. For more information, please call 815.961.2255.

Medicaid Services:

Rockford Paratransit is one of the local Medicaid transportation providers. Medicaid rides are available at no charge for persons holding a medical card who need transportation to medical facilities only and who may not be eligible for Rockford Paratransit.

Medicaid riders must schedule a ride 24 hours in advance. To

schedule a Medicaid only ride, the passenger must provide Rockford Paratransit with an 8 digit or higher approval number along with the pick-up and drop-off identifiers which they can obtain from First Transit. **To get an approval number from First Transit, call 1 (877) 725-0569.**

Once the approval number is given, passengers should then call (815) 961-2255 Monday through Saturday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. When calling to schedule a ride, please have the First Transit approval number ready to give to the scheduler. Medicaid trips are available only if Rockford Paratransit has availability. Priority is always given to certified Paratransit riders under the provisions specified under the ADA.

If you are a Medicaid rider covered by an MCO (Managed Care Organization), **please contact your MCO transportation broker directly and inform them that you would like to be transported by Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to your medical appointments.** The MCO transportation broker may then send you MCO vouchers to be used for your trips. Once you receive the MCO vouchers just call RMTD at (815)961-2255 and schedule your ride. At that time, please inform us that you will be using MCO vouchers as payment and provide the MCO voucher numbers which are stamped on each voucher. Rides must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. The driver will collect the voucher when you board the vehicle.

How to Cancel a Ride:

Rockford Paratransit understands that sometimes plans change and rides occasionally need to be cancelled. To cancel a ride, please call 815 961.2255, or use **Illinois Relay by dialing 711**. Rockford Paratransit would appreciate at least a 1-day notice however, please call no later than two hours before your scheduled trip.

No Show Policy

If a rider does not give proper notice and does not take the trip reserved, this could be considered a no show. A pattern of repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely manner could lead to a suspension of service. The DOT ADA regulation Appendix D defines a pattern or practice as involving intentional, repeated, or regular actions, not isolated, accidental or singular in incidents. After reviewing a rider's history of no shows and/or late cancellations, each verified incidence is counted as (1) penalty point. Rockford Paratransit may consider suspension at any time after the rider meets all of the following conditions:

- Accumulate (5) penalty points in (1) calendar month
- Have booked at least (25) trips that month
- Have no showed or late cancelled at least 15% of those trips

Riders will be subjected to suspension only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of penalty points are reached during a calendar month. Rockford Paratransit will notify riders by telephone after they have accumulated (3) penalty points and would be subject to suspension should they accumulate (2) additional penalty points that month consistent with the criteria previously stated.

The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning call and a letter but no suspension of service. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

2 nd violation	3 day suspension
3 rd violation	5 day suspension
4 th violation	15 day suspension
5 th and subsequent violations	30 day suspension

Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-Shows

When a rider is a no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the rider specifically cancels the remaining trips. **To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, riders are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day by calling (815) 961.2255.**

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations

Riders wishing to dispute specific no-shows or late cancellations must do so within 10 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders should contact Rockford Paratransit office at (815) 961.2255 Monday thru Friday, between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to explain the circumstance and request removal of the no show or late cancellation.

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in writing by letter to Rockford Paratransit at 520 Mulberry St. Rockford, IL 61101. Riders must submit written appeal requests with (7) days of receiving suspensions letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from Rockford Paratransit on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals follow Rockford Paratransit appeals policy with RAMP.

Passenger Expectations

Our service is an **origin to destination service.**

Once eligible for the service, you may ride from any origin in the Paratransit service area to any destination in the service area for any purpose as long as a reservation has been made.

Riding Rockford Paratransit is equivalent to riding RMTD's fixed route system. There is a scheduled arrival time and you must be ready when the vehicle arrives. The driver will only wait only five (5) minutes for you to board. When scheduling a ride, our scheduler will give you a timeframe to expect your vehicle.

As our service is a shared ride service, please note that there may be additional stops before reaching your destination. Paratransit riders should also remember the following when utilizing the service:

Pick-up

- The vehicle is allowed to arrive for passenger pick up, one hour and fifteen minutes prior to the time you scheduled to arrive at your destination. Therefore, if you are scheduled to be dropped off at 8:00 a m, you must be ready to leave your point of origin at 6:45 a m. Your vehicle may arrive anytime thereafter.
- When scheduling a pick-up time, riders should allow time for exiting the vehicle, entering buildings and general wayfinding. Therefore, it is recommended that a rider schedule an appointment time pick up 15 minutes prior to the actual appointment time.
- Conversely, when being picked up from your drop off location, or the return trip, the driver has a 15-minute window to arrive from your scheduled time.

- If your driver has not arrived during the allotted time, please call Rockford Paratransit at 815.961.2255.
- Rockford Paratransit allows riders five (5) minutes after the arrival pick up time before it can be considered a consumer no show. If the passenger is not at the pick-up location within these 5 minutes and has not communicated to the driver that they will be running late, Rockford Paratransit will consider it a no show and leave. The 5 minutes starts at the time the driver arrives at the pick-up location.

Return

- On a return trip, if you miss the vehicle for your scheduled ride, please call Rockford Paratransit at (815) 961.2255. We will send the next available vehicle to pick you up as soon as possible.
- If there are no openings for the time requested, you may be offered an alternate time, up to one hour before or after the original time requested.

General

- In order to ensure the vehicle will be on time for other customers, the driver will not make unscheduled stops
- If other customers get on or off the vehicle before your stop, it may be necessary for you to temporarily move
- Drivers may assist passengers upon request
- A rider may not refuse to ride with other customers
- Before departure, the driver will secure your wheelchair and fasten your seat belt and shoulder strap.
- Be prepared for delays due to bad weather or traffic
- Passengers can expect a maximum ride time of 60 minutes

Conduct and Policies Guidelines

It is our policy to provide the safest and most efficient service in the Rockford community. To provide the highest number of rides as required by the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, Rockford Paratransit must rely on certain guidelines to ensure all participants of the paratransit benefit. Customers who abuse these guidelines can adversely affect the paratransit as a whole.

Therefore, it is necessary to have policies that ensure all customers are afforded the opportunity to utilize the service to its maximum potential. The following identifies the Rockford Paratransit policy on customer misconduct.

Unintentional Misconduct

Unintentional Misconduct is any act that is the direct and immediate consequence of the customer's disability, such as abusive language that is the consequence of Tourette's Syndrome. If a customer commits an act of misconduct that he or she has been trained as inappropriate, that act is then considered intentional.

The consequences of Unintentional Misconduct are as follows:

- A customer may be required to undergo behavior modification
- A customer may be subjected to any reasonable accommodation that will ensure the safety of all customers and drivers
- The accommodation may last for a time period sufficient to allow the customer to learn appropriate behavior
- The accommodation may be permanent if the conduct is beyond the customer's control

Hazardous and Abusive Conduct

Hazardous conduct is defined as a verbal or physical act that is generally offensive invades the privacy rights of others, or touching another person in a rude, disrespectful or angry manner.

Abusive conduct is an act which created the potential for injury or death to a customer, driver or the general public.

The consequences of Hazardous or Abusive Misconduct are as follows:

- 1st offense, depending on the severity of the abuse, may result in suspension of service up to 30 days
- 2nd offense within a one year period may result in suspension of service for 60 days
- 3rd offense within a one year period may result in suspension of service for one year. At the end of the suspension period, a customer must reapply for eligibility for paratransit service.
- The accommodation may be permanent if the conduct is beyond the customer's control.

Riders will be notified in writing before Rockford Paratransit takes these steps. An eligible customer whose services are to be suspended because of misconduct has a right to request a hearing through an appeal process. This procedure is outlined on page 8 of this Guide.

Driver Assistance

Customers should request assistance when they make their reservation. However, customers may also request assistance at the time of pick up or drop off. Drivers may assist customers with boarding and exiting the vehicle and to/from the ground-level exterior door of the

building. Drivers will provide assistance up/down two steps to/from a building if it is safe to do so. Drivers are not allowed to enter residences and must maintain a visual sight line for their vehicles at all times.

Drivers are required to make sure that all wheelchairs and scooters are properly secured per RMTD requirements.

Drivers are not allowed to lift or carry passengers. Customers are expected to carry their own bags and packages and are responsible for the safe keeping of these packages while in transit.

Visitor Policy

Visitors from other cities who are eligible under the ADA criteria are welcome to use Rockford Paratransit during their visit to Rockford for up to 21 days.

Visitors or out of town citizens with disabilities who possess a valid ADA certification card are eligible for immediate Paratransit service within the period of three (3) days upon arrival.

Citizens with disabilities visiting the area for more than three weeks, or have utilized Rockford Paratransit service for a total 21 days over any given calendar year will need to follow the RMTD certification enrollment process. Rockford Paratransit customers are also offered the same service in other cities.

Service Animals

Guide dogs and other service animals are allowed to accompany you if such a need was indicated on your Rockford Paratransit application. Please remind Rockford Paratransit dispatchers when scheduling your trip that a service animal will be accompanying you. Family pets will be allowed if confined to a pet carrier.



General Considerations to Others

To ensure a pleasant experience for all riders, we ask that the following etiquette be observed:

- Please to not operate any audio or visual equipment that infringes upon other riders' comfort or safety or impairs the driver's ability to transport passengers safely unless necessary for communicating between the driver and the rider.
- Eating, drinking and smoking are not allowed on the vehicle
- When having a conversation with others on the bus, please keep the volume to a minimum.

Title VI Policy & Complaint Procedure

The Rockford Mass Transit District unequivocally seeks to provide fair and equitable transportation to all persons with the District's service area. No persons shall be shorted, limited, or in any other way be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, physical or mental abilities or disabilities, ability to speak or understand the English language or financial wealth or the ability to earn financial income. If you feel you have been discriminated against, to file a complaint or for more information on our policy, please contact 815.961.9000.

Important Numbers to Know

Eligibility and/or Eligibility Appeals Process	815.961.2255
General Information about Paratransit	815.961.2255
Requests for Paratransit Information in an accessible format:	815.961.2255
Illinois Relay Works System	711 or 1.800.526.0844
Boone County Council on Aging	815.544.9893
Stateline Mass Transit District	877.561-3330
RAMP	815.968.7467

Rockford Mass Transit District is an equal opportunity employer.

Our service is financed in part through grants from the State of Illinois Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration and the City of Rockford.

