

ADA Complementary Paratransit Bus Service



Rider's Guide



500 East Sixth Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
(605) 367-7613 • www.siouxfalls.org/transit

Dear Paratransit Rider:

Subject: Rider's Guide

This Rider's Guide is a compact booklet filled with answers to many questions you may have about Sioux Area Metro's Paratransit service. If you would like the guide in another format, such as large print, on a CD, or in audio form, you may contact the Paratransit manager at 367-7613.

Sioux Area Metro sincerely hopes this comprehensive guide will answer your questions. If not, feel free to call Sioux Area Metro for assistance. Our goal is to provide an efficient, low-cost Paratransit service for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Sioux Area Metro

The information in this Rider's Guide describes policies and procedures for the riders of Sioux Area Metro Paratransit service. The Rider's Guide is not a listing of legal advice and does not create any legal obligation on the part of anyone. In the event of a conflict between the Rider's Guide and any current law, or any policy or contractual obligation of Sioux Area Metro, the law, policy, or contract will prevail. This is merely a reference for riders and others and may be modified occasionally. If you have any questions about its content, please contact Sioux Area Metro at 367-7613 for clarification.

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INTRODUCTION

Sioux Area Metro provides public transportation within the city of Sioux Falls. Occasionally, there are people who are not able to ride a regular fully accessible bus because of limited functional abilities. In such cases, an eligibility review will be required to determine whether a person is eligible for Paratransit service. If it is determined that you are eligible for Paratransit service, this Rider's Guide outlines the policies of the service and procedures you need to follow. Please read it carefully.

In the event the rider of the Paratransit service is not capable of reading this Rider's Guide, the rider is still required to follow the basic responsibilities outlined. The caregiver of the person eligible for service may need to assume the responsibility of reading and understanding this information as well as making reservations and other arrangements for the rider. Alternative formats for this Rider's Guide are available upon request.

ELIGIBILITY

There are three types of eligibility status. The eligibility notification letter sent to you tells you which eligibility type you are qualified for. The eligibility status types are as follows:

Full Eligibility

Full eligibility is given if boarding, riding, and/or deboarding a regular fully accessible bus is not possible for you without the help of another person. Full eligibility may also be available to you if you

cannot understand the transfer directions needed to complete a trip without the help of another person. If either of these situations exists, you will be able to take your transit trip on a Paratransit bus.

Conditional Eligibility

If you are able to ride the regular fully accessible bus sometimes, but, due to functional limitations, are not able to ride it at other times, you may be given conditional eligibility. The conditions under which you are eligible for Paratransit service will be listed in your eligibility letter. If your Paratransit service is conditional under certain weather-related conditions, you have access to Paratransit service when the types of weather conditions exist that affect your functional abilities.

Temporary Eligibility

Temporary eligibility is given to you if you are experiencing a health condition that is expected to improve, but, for a limited time, the condition prevents you from riding a regular fully accessible bus. Until the health condition improves, you can take your transit trip on a Paratransit bus.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN 10 YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER

All children under 10 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. They cannot ride unattended.

Children under 10 years of age will be considered for Paratransit eligibility based on the functional ability of

both the accompanying adult and the child (as a team) to use fixed-route bus service.

NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

You will be notified of your eligibility status within 21 days after the completion of the application process. If a decision is not made within 21 days of a completed application process, Paratransit service will be provided until a final decision is made.

ELIGIBILITY APPEALS PROCESS

Once you receive your eligibility notification, if you do not agree with the decision that is made, you have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be received within 60 days of Sioux Area Metro's determination. Appeals must be made in writing and sent to:

City ADA Coordinator
 Human Relations
 P.O. Box 7402
 Sioux Falls, SD 57117-7402

If you would like to request a hearing, this must be indicated in the written request. If you require special accommodations to attend the hearing, please specify your needs in the letter.

PARATRANSIT IDENTIFICATION CARD

For Paratransit-eligible riders, your Paratransit identification card will be mailed at the time eligibility has been determined. Your Paratransit ID card is considered a Sioux Area Metro-approved reduced fare card, which allows you to ride for a **reduced** fare on Sioux Area Metro's fixed-route services. We encourage

our customers with disabilities to take advantage of the flexibility, independence, and reduced cost that our fixed-route buses provide.

RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Each Sioux Area Metro Paratransit customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. It may also be necessary from time to time or if the condition of the disability changes to reevaluate an individual's eligibility before his/her eligibility ends. Typically, eligibility extends for three years from certification. A customer's ADA Paratransit ID card will indicate his/her Paratransit eligibility expiration date. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for services prior to his or her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew Paratransit eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the certification process.

SERVICE FOR VISITORS

Visitors to the Sioux Area Metro area who are unable to use the local fixed service because of their disabilities are eligible to use Paratransit for up to a 21-day period.

Visitors must either present documentation that they are eligible for ADA Paratransit service in their home area, or document their place of residence and document the limitation that prevents them from using the regular fixed-route bus.

Sioux Area Metro will also accept a certification by the visitor that he or she is unable to use the regular fixed-route bus by reason of a disability.

To use Paratransit beyond the 21-day period, you will be required to apply for or obtain Paratransit eligibility. Please call 605-367-7613 to arrange visitor service.

SERVICE AREA

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Sioux Area Metro is required to provide Paratransit services to eligible riders with an origination point and destination point within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed-route bus route. This ADA service area is outlined in yellow, pale yellow, and orange, as shown on the map on the inside back cover of this packet.

HOURS OF SERVICE

Riders have the following options for Paratransit service areas, days, and hours. A Paratransit service area map is available on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Day Service Hours:

Monday through Friday: 5:15 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. Inside the required ADA service areas (pale yellow, bright yellow, and orange colored areas).

Saturdays: 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Inside the required weekend ADA service areas (pale yellow and bright yellow colored areas only).

Exception: Any rider who acquired eligibility for Paratransit services prior to January 1, 2015; service is also available to ride anywhere during day service hours inside the thick red bordered area. (This exception ends if the rider moves to a residence outside of the required ADA service area.)

Evening Service Hours:

Services available for all riders only within the required evening ADA service area (pale yellow colored area) during the following hours:

Monday–Friday: 7:15 p.m. to 9:15* p.m.

**Service ends at 9:30 p.m. if coming from area of Route 6.*

Sioux Area Metro’s regular buses and Paratransit buses do not run on Sundays. Sioux Area Metro is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

FARES

Paratransit Services

All riders are required to pay a fare of \$2.50 for each one-way ride on the SAM Paratransit service.

The fare must be paid when boarding the vehicle. Riders who do not have fare will not be transported and will be assessed a no-show.

Fares can be paid in one of the following ways:

Cash. Exact fare only. Drivers carry no change. Cash fares may be paid with coins or dollar bills. Note: Round-trip payments are not accepted by the drivers. Each trip must be paid for separately.

Check. Checks should be made out to Sioux Area Metro (or SAM). Checks must be written in the amount of each separate trip (\$2.50).

Paratransit Tickets. One ticket is valued at \$2.50. One ticket must be paid for each separate trip. Tickets are nonrefundable. Sioux Area Metro is not responsible for lost tickets.

Medicaid. If you qualify for Medicaid, Medicaid may pay for transportation. Sioux Area Metro will bill Medicaid directly for the Paratransit service provided. Please note: Medicaid will only pay for trips that are to and/or from home **and** to and/or from a medical facility, or from a medical facility to a medical facility.

A customer service representative can tell you if you are eligible for Medicaid transportation. Please have your Medicaid number ready and available at the time of your call.

Note: Drivers are not permitted to accept tips. If you would like to commend a driver for services provided, call Sioux Area Metro's Paratransit customer service representative at 605-367-7613.

RIDE TIME

A trip on Paratransit Services can take approximately the same amount of time as a trip on a Sioux Area Metro Fixed Route bus, including the time it takes to walk to and from the bus stop and any transfers. Paratransit Services are not designed to follow a direct route between your pick up and drop off locations. If

you use medication, we suggest you carry it with you in case your trip is delayed.

SHARED SERVICE

Sioux Area Metro provides a “shared-ride” Paratransit service. This means that other riders with different destinations may be picked up and/or dropped off along the way to your destination. This can result in your trip taking longer than if you were to take a taxi or drive yourself. Occasionally, it may take more than one hour for your Paratransit trip.

UNATTENDED OR SUPERVISED PASSENGER POLICY

Sioux Area Metro (SAM) Paratransit passengers will be categorized into two capabilities:

- Unattended passenger; or
- Supervised passenger.

A self-certification determination shall be made for each SAM Paratransit eligible passenger based on:

- Age,
- Cognitive limitations; or
- Special request of the responsible party.

A “Sioux Area Metro Paratransit Certification as Unattended or Supervised Passenger” form must be completed and on file to certify if a passenger allows unattended status or if a passenger requires supervised status at the destination of the passenger’s trip. All riders may schedule rides and ride unattended.

A certified *unattended passenger*, indicates to SAM Paratransit that it is acceptable to leave the passenger unattended at the destination of the paratransit ride. Any SAM passenger that has **agreed** to be certified as an *unattended passenger* will be left alone or unattended at the end of a trip. It is also allowable for passengers or legal guardians to identify certain locations where it is acceptable to be left unattended. For example, some passengers may certify to be an *unattended passenger* at home and in all other locations they may certify to be a *supervised passenger*.

A certified *supervised passenger* must make arrangements to have an attendant meet the Paratransit vehicle at the destination of the ride. The *supervised passenger* certification indicates to SAM Paratransit that SAM is not allowed to leave the passenger unattended or unsupervised at the destination of the paratransit ride.

The SAM driver will only wait five minutes for the attendant to meet the Paratransit vehicle for any passenger that has certified as a *supervised passenger*. If no one arrives, the SAM driver will notify the SAM Paratransit Office and continue their route with the passenger still on-board. The SAM Paratransit Office will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the passenger is not met by the end of the route, the passenger that is classified as a *supervised passenger* will be returned to the bus garage or an attempt will be made to return the supervised passenger to their home (if a ride is been booked later in the day. If the rider cannot be returned

home, the passenger will not be left unattended and the SD Department of Social Services (during business hours) or local law enforcement (during all other hours) will be notified to assist in locating designated emergency contact. Passengers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination will be subject to the SAM No-Show Policy (see page 15).

PARATRANSIT IN GATED OR SECURED AREAS

Paratransit vehicles will not travel into areas that require security clearance, including the entry of a security code for access. Should you travel to or from gated/secured area, the Paratransit pickup and drop-off point will be established outside the secured area.

RESERVATIONS

All ride information is recorded for future reference if necessary.

Travel on Sioux Area Metro's Paratransit service is by advance reservation only. You or a caregiver can make a reservation by calling 367-7613 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., 7 days a week. A reservation can be made as early as ten days in advance but no later than 5 p.m. the day before a trip.

Calls made Monday through Friday will be answered by a Sioux Area Metro customer service representative. Calls made on Saturdays, Sunday, and holidays will be answered by voicemail.

Scheduling Tip: When you call to schedule trips, have a pen and paper handy so you can write down important information like your pickup times. If you are scheduling several trips, have all the information for each trip available when you call. This will help the customer service representative to serve you with efficiency.

Please do not schedule a trip several days in advance if you are not sure that you will go or if you are not sure of the time you want to go. Reserving rides that are later canceled (even if they are canceled earlier the night before) or you no-show, causes buses to be less efficient and can significantly increase the cost of the service, and can lead to suspension of your Paratransit services.

It is required to have the following information **ready and available** for the customer service representative (or voicemail) to schedule a trip:

- Your customer ID number (found on your eligibility card)
- Your name (both first and last).
- The date and day of the week you need to ride.
- The time you need to be picked up (or your appointment time).
- The address where you are being picked up **from**.
- The name of the facility **and** the exact address you are traveling to.
- The time you want your return trip (if applicable).

- Any special instructions that the driver may need, such as which door, directions to a hard-to-find address, etc.
- If a personal care attendant or a companion will be traveling with you.
- If a service animal will be traveling with you
- Whether you will be using a mobility aid such as a wheelchair, walker, or scooter.
- Any other information you feel we should know to safely and comfortably serve you.

The customer service representative will enter this information into our computer scheduling system. The customer service representative will repeat what they understood your request to be. **Pay close attention to what is repeated back to you.**

It is helpful to use a calendar or journal to note the date of call, time of call, and the person you spoke with to assist you and us in researching any concern regarding scheduling that you might have.

It is very important for you to keep us updated on new phone numbers. From time to time, it is necessary for us to change your pickup time to prevent multiple buses being sent to a location, or to better group riders on the same bus. Your requested time may be negotiated up to one hour before or one hour after the requested time. If this occurs, we will notify you of the time change either by speaking directly with you or leaving a message for you about the time change. Calls may be made up to 7 p.m. the night before your ride.

Scheduling Tip: Although it is difficult to know ahead of time exactly when you will be ready for your **return** trip, it is very important to schedule the time as accurately as possible. **Leave some extra time if you are not sure.** If you are going to a doctor's office or other medical appointment, let the person who is making your medical appointment know you will be using Sioux Area Metro's Paratransit service. Ask them how long the appointment will take. This will help you to set your return time with Paratransit. If you have an appointment, allow some extra time to get from the Paratransit vehicle to your destination. For example, if you have an appointment at 9 a.m., you might want to tell the customer service representative you would like to arrive no later than 8:45 a.m. Similarly, leave time to get to the place where the Paratransit vehicle will pick you up for your return trip. For example, if you work until 5 p.m., you might want to ask the customer service representative for a 5:15 p.m. pickup.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

If you need a ride 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 you to schedule these trips with one call. You will then be automatically placed on the schedule each week. Ask the customer service representative about this option.

If you are receiving subscription service, it is important to *let us know immediately if you don't need a ride on a particular day*. This way, we can make the change on our schedules. For example, if you have subscription service for a trip to school each weekday, keep us

updated on holiday and vacation times when school is not in session or your work is closed for the holiday. This will help us avoid unnecessary trips.

However, it is important to note that Sioux Area Metro will not approve any additional or changed subscription trip requests that will require an additional paratransit vehicle run to be put into service at any time during the service day. Subscription service requests may be changed or added when an existing paratransit vehicle run is able to provide the service. A vehicle run is defined as a vehicle and driver that are put into service at any time during the day. Paratransit staff will let you know if subscription service is available for your trip request when the subscription trip request is made.

CHANGING YOUR RESERVATION

If you need to change a reservation, you must call a Sioux Area Metro customer service representative between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. no later than the day before your scheduled trip. Requests for changes to your reservation on the day of your trip cannot be accepted. Do not ask the driver to make changes to your trip, such as dropping you at a different address. Drivers are not allowed to make changes to their assigned trips.

CANCELING YOUR RESERVATION

Scheduled rides that are canceled after a driver is assigned to drive you (5 p.m. the night before) cost Sioux Area Metro (SAM) thousands of dollars each year and affect our ability to provide that trip opportunity to

other riders. If you have scheduled a ride that you no longer need to take, please call the Paratransit office **as soon as possible** to cancel. You can cancel all trips up to ten days in advance, or put subscription service on hold for any amount of time.

During regular business hours (8 a.m. and 5 p.m.), you can cancel your trips with a customer service representative.

After regular business hours, rides can be canceled by leaving a message on the voicemail. You must leave your first and last name, the date, and time of the trip(s) information you want to cancel.

No-Show Policy

A no-show ultimately results in a wasted trip. This is both very expensive and may take away a trip that could have been scheduled for someone else.

To emphasize the importance of avoiding no-shows, Sioux Area Metro (SAM) has the following No-Show Policy.

The rider will be given points for the following types of no-shows:

- 1) **3 points**—The ride was canceled within the time frame of 2 hours before the scheduled ride, but no earlier than 30 minutes before the scheduled ride.
- 2) **5 points**—The following instances will create a 5-point charge to your record:

- a. The ride is canceled less than 30 minutes prior to the ride.
- b. The ride is canceled at the door after the driver has arrived.
- c. The rider is not present after the vehicle has waited five minutes, and the driver departs the pickup location.
- d. The rider is not present after the vehicle has waited five minutes, but before the driver departs, the rider arrives to take the ride.
- e. The driver arrives at a drop-off location and the rider delays the bus by not getting off the bus promptly, or when no one is at the location to receive the rider and the rider cannot be left unattended.

If enough points are accumulated, the rider could be suspended from using the Paratransit service for a specified period of time (see chart below for further clarification).

Point Accumulation and Suspension Period Chart

Accumulated Points	Within the Time Frame of	The Suspension Period Will Be
12	30 days	1 week
24	60 days	2 weeks
36	90 days	6 weeks

A practice of No-Shows is considered when No-Shows total 7.5% or more of a customer's total

trips in a rolling 90-day period and may result in suspension of service. Suspension times increase each period that the customer exceeds the No-Show point accumulation. No-Show percentages are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(\text{No-Shows}/(\text{Scheduled Trips}-\text{Canceled Trips})) \times 100}{100} = \% \text{ of No-Shows.}$$

In accordance with U.S. DOT ADA Regulations Part 49 CFR 37.131(b), when a rider is a no-show for the first leg of a trip, **all later rides for the day will not automatically be canceled.** It is the rider's responsibility to cancel rides (service) they no longer need.

If a rider is a no-show on the first leg of a scheduled trip, a bus will not be sent to pick up the rider for that trip. If a rider no-shows another trip in which Paratransit took the rider to that location, Paratransit will schedule a return trip upon request as scheduling permits. However, the return request must be before 8 p.m., otherwise, the rider will need to find another means of transportation.

If a rider schedules a one-way ride and no-shows, no other bus will be sent to pick up that rider. This means that if Paratransit did not take the rider to the location and the rider no-shows the trip, no Paratransit bus will be sent back to get the rider.

Failure to cancel rides that are no longer needed will result in the assessment of points as outlined in the current No-Show Policy. Each trip that is a no-show is assessed independently in accordance with ADA

regulations. Riders will be assessed no-show points for each trip they no-show regardless of whether there are multiple no-shows for the same day.

If a schedule delay, bad weather, or breakdown causes Paratransit to be late and the rider decides to find another way to their appointment after waiting 30 minutes from the scheduled time, it is the rider's responsibility to let Sioux Area Metro know another ride was found so a bus is not sent out. If a rider neglects to do this, points will be assessed on their record for a no-show.

Sioux Area Metro will not suspend any rider without advance notification of a service suspension. A rider will be given the opportunity to meet with Sioux Area Metro management staff prior to a suspension.

If a rider feels a no-show was Sioux Area Metro's error, the rider should call 367-7613 immediately. The customer service representative will research Sioux Area Metro's records for accuracy. Although our call information is recorded, it is impossible for us to check every record. If you are unable to provide specific information on the date/time of the scheduled trip and who the trip was scheduled with, Sioux Area Metro staff will not be able to research the dispute and will have to rely on the data it has to determine the validity of the error.

If a rider feels the no-show was outside of their control, the rider should call 367-7613 and explain to the customer service representative what prevented them from taking the scheduled ride. The rider may be

requested to provide documentation. The purpose of the documentation is to provide a fair and consistent policy for all.

Appealing a No-Show Suspension

A rider can appeal a service suspension by making either a verbal or written appeal of suspension to the Sioux Area Metro Paratransit Manager no later than the appeal deadline date listed on the suspension letter. A verbal request can be made by calling 605-367-7613. A written request may be sent to Paratransit Manager, Sioux Area Metro, 500 East Sixth Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103.

If an appeal is received, designated staff will review the rider's No-Show Point Record as well as any additional information the appellant provides at the time of the appeal. A decision to either uphold the suspension or excuse it will be made within five business days.

If the customer is not satisfied with the review by the designated staff, they may request a formal review by SAM's Assistant General Manager. A review will be scheduled and a decision made within ten business days.

AUTOMATED TRIP REMINDERS

Riders of Sioux Area Metro Paratransit Services may elect to receive reminder telephone calls on the evening prior to their scheduled trips. These evening before calls will generally be placed between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Riders may also choose to receive imminent arrival telephone calls the day of their trip,

informing them that their paratransit vehicle is in route to the pickup location.

A rider may choose to receive only the evening before calls, the imminent arrival calls, or both calls. These calls can also be ended at any time.

Riders' Tip: No-show points will not be deferred due to not receiving a scheduled imminent arrival telephone call on the day of their trip. It is still the rider's responsibility to be at the door at their scheduled pick-up time.

TAKING YOUR PARATRANSIT TRIP

Pickup

You are expected to be ready to ride when the vehicle arrives.

The Paratransit driver will stop the bus as close to the front door of the pickup address as possible. You are expected to be at the front door of your pickup location so you can identify/or be identified by the bus driver. Please be ready to go when the vehicle arrives so that the driver can stay on schedule for all passengers. **The driver is not permitted to honk the horn or ring apartments to let you know the vehicle has arrived.** Wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the driver will be able to see you.

Remember, when you make your reservation, the customer service representative will confirm your trip by giving you a 30-minute "pickup window." The bus

may arrive to pick you up at any time during the pickup window.

Riders' Tip: Make sure that 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 ride to tell the customer service representative which entrance you will be at. Carry needed medication with you in case we are delayed and your 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.

Out of courtesy for other Paratransit customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the driver will wait **no longer than five minutes** after their arrival time within the pickup window. The vehicle will depart when the five-minute period is up. You can check your clock with Sioux Area Metro at any time to make sure the times match by asking the customer service representative when you call in.

Riders must be ready to depart at any time during the 30-minute pickup window described when the reservation was made. If a rider has not boarded the vehicle within five minutes after the vehicle arrives, the vehicle will depart and a no-show will be assessed to the rider's record.

The driver and/or dispatcher will not be able to call the customer to advise that the vehicle has arrived. It is the rider's responsibility to be at the front door, prepared to board, when the vehicle arrives. If the

rider does not board the bus within the five-minute period, the driver will contact dispatch for permission to depart and the trip marked as a no-show.

If the trip is the originating trip of the day (first trip of the day), a bus will not be sent back (unless we were in error in scheduling or the driver was at the wrong location).

Early Pickup

Sometimes your vehicle will arrive before the start of the pickup window because of a cancellation or especially light traffic. If your bus arrives before the start of the pickup window, you may wait to get on the vehicle until the start of the pickup window time, or you may get into the vehicle and leave right away. It is your choice.

Late Pickup

Unexpected delays can happen because of road construction, traffic conditions, bad weather—or on occasion—mechanical problems with a vehicle. If a Paratransit vehicle has not arrived 30 minutes after your scheduled pickup time, you can call Sioux Area Metro to find out the estimated time the bus will show up. Stay within sight of the pickup location if at all possible in case the vehicle arrives while you are calling.

Origin-to-Destination Service

Sioux Area Metro's basic service policy for Paratransit service is origin-to-destination. This type of service requires you to be at the curb in front of your

residence or in front of your destination point after your business is complete within five minutes of the bus's arrival. For some individuals and at some locations, this may not be possible. It may depend on:

- The nature of a particular individual's disability.
- Adverse weather conditions.
- Whether a physical barrier exists (e.g., sidewalk construction).

Whether or not you require door-to-door service will be determined in the Paratransit eligibility review process and noted on your application. If door-to-door service is required every now and then, advance notice will be required at the time of making the reservation for the trip.

Due to safety reasons, Sioux Area Metro requires that the driver not leave their vehicle unattended or lose the ability to keep their vehicle in sight when assisting a rider that requires door-to-door service.

Steps and Ramps

In order to ensure the safety of the bus drivers and Paratransit riders using a wheelchair or mobility aid, when door-to-door service is provided to a rider that is eligible for this service, it may be provided only if ramps are available that meet the following specifications:

- A nonslip surface is on the ramp to provide sure footing. A nonslip surface can be achieved by applying adhesive nonskid strips or wooden cross-strips. If wooden cross-strips are used, the

strips must be placed in the center of the ramp and cannot exceed the width of the wheelbase on the rider's wheelchair or mobility aid.

- Protection is installed at the edge of the ramp at a minimum of 2 inches high to protect the wheelchair or mobility aid from going off the edge.
- There is a minimum of 60 inches of maneuvering space at the top and bottom of the ramp to minimize the lifting needed to maneuver a turn and to protect the wheelchair from going off the landing at the top.
- The slope of the ramp does not exceed 1:12 (12 inches long for every 1-inch change in elevation) or is in accordance with ADA guidelines.

If a ramp does not meet these criteria, Sioux Area Metro will provide service, but will not assist you up or down the ramp at that location.

Sioux Area Metro drivers are not allowed to assist a Paratransit rider using a wheelchair up or down any steps.

BRINGING OTHER PEOPLE

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone you need to help you with daily activities such as opening doors, traveling in a wheelchair, or finding your way. You must inform the customer service representative that a PCA will be riding with you when scheduling a ride request

or any time before 5 p.m. the day before your scheduled trip. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders. You may schedule only one PCA and they may ride for free when traveling with you. A PCA must get on and off the bus at the same places and times you are. Drivers cannot add riders who do not have a reservation, so if you fail to make a reservation for your PCA, they will not be allowed to ride with you as a PCA.

Unless otherwise requested, the PCA is responsible for assisting you when on the bus, not Sioux Area Metro.

To be able to have one PCA ride free with you, you must be **registered with us as needing a PCA**. This is done as part of your eligibility process. If you did not indicate a need for a PCA when you first applied to be eligible for Paratransit and now need a PCA, you should call the Paratransit office at 367-7613 and request the PCA application form be mailed to you.

NOTE: A registered rider who is listed as needing a PCA cannot ride as a PCA for another registered rider. In this case, the "PCA" will have to travel as a guest and pay for their ride.

Guest

A guest is a friend, relative, or other person who is traveling with you but is not coming along to assist you. Guests must pay a \$2.50 fare when accompanying you, and must get on and off the vehicle at the same places and times as you. You must inform the customer service representative that a

guest will be riding with you when you schedule a ride request or any time before 5 p.m. the day before your scheduled ride. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your guest, and other scheduled riders. You may schedule only one guest to ride with you.

If a guest was not scheduled at the time the reservation was made, the driver will accommodate if there is enough space on the vehicle. This policy will also apply for the return trip. Both PCA and guest must be ready for boarding when the rider boards. Drivers will not wait for a PCA or guest if they are not ready.

Children

All children under 10 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. They cannot ride unattended.

If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, Sioux Area Metro's policy allows children under six to ride for free with a full-fare paying adult. Children ages six to ten can ride with a full-fare paying adult at a discounted fare. The maximum number of children riding with a full-fare paying adult is two children.

An adult accompanying a child on Paratransit is responsible for the child. Drivers can assist with securing the child's seatbelt. The driver will not secure a child restraint car seat, will not assist with a stroller, and is not permitted to carry children on or off the vehicle for you. If you will need assistance with the child, please bring someone else along to help you.

MOBILITY DEVICES

Wheelchairs

Paratransit vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. It is required that you allow the driver to use the lap belt in addition to the wheelchair securements for your safety.

Riders using wheelchairs or mobility device must be in the upright position when boarding and during travel on the bus.

Scooters

Some three-wheeled scooters are difficult to secure on Paratransit vehicles. Some scooters also come with a warning from the manufacturer that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles. Because of this, the driver may recommend that you transfer to a vehicle seat if you can do this. While the driver will not require you to transfer, we strongly recommend that you do, so we can provide you and other customers with the safest ride possible.

BRINGING THINGS ALONG

Package Limitations

You may bring grocery bags, luggage, or other packages or personal items with you on Paratransit. Because drivers are not required to assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items, please do not plan to bring more than you and/or the assistant who is traveling with you can manage without delaying the vehicle. **If you delay the departure of the bus beyond 5 minutes at the pickup location**

and/or the drop-off location, you will be assessed a no-show.

Grocery Policy

1. A passenger may carry only as many bags as they (the passenger) can carry on and off the bus in one trip by themselves. Drivers will not assist in carrying groceries on or off the bus.
2. A passenger carrying groceries on or off the bus, whether by the passenger or in a shopping cart must request the use of the lift or ramp if needed.
3. Any groceries or shopping carts must not block the aisle and must be secured by the passenger so as not to present a safety hazard to the other passengers or driver.
4. Carts must be completely out of the aisle and secured by the passenger. If this is not possible, the driver may refuse to transport the passenger.
5. If the bus is full, the passenger must use only one seating area to secure the cart and groceries.
6. Under no circumstances will the groceries and/or cart be stored in the wheel well area or in an area that blocks access to either the front or rear doors.
7. The cart and groceries may be stored in the wheelchair securement area if they are secured by the passenger. If the wheelchair securement area is needed for a passenger who uses a

wheelchair as a mobility device, the passenger with the groceries and the cart must move to another area.

8. A passenger who uses a wheelchair as a mobility device is limited to the number of bags and other groceries that can safely be attached to the wheelchair. The amount and location of the bags and/or groceries must not interfere with the process of safely securing the wheelchair using a four-point tie-down.
9. If the groceries or shopping cart cannot be accommodated under these guidelines due to the size of the cart and/or the groceries blocking or narrowing the aisle, the driver may deny the passenger a ride.

Life Support

You may bring your respirator, portable oxygen (attached to your wheelchair if you have one), or other life support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to the transportation of hazardous materials. Your equipment must be small enough to fit into the Paratransit bus and managed by you or your personal care attendant.

Service Animals

Riders may travel on all Sioux Area Metro vehicles with a service animal. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. If you are traveling with a service animal, be sure to inform the customer service representative when you are scheduling a ride. This ensures there will be room on

the vehicle for you and your service animal, along with other scheduled riders.

You are responsible to maintain control of your animal while on board the bus. If you are planning to ride Sioux Area Metro with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- To maintain control of your service animal, it may need to be on a leash and in a cage or container when boarding, while riding, and when exiting the bus.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- You are responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well groomed.

Pets

Animals that are not service animals may ride on Paratransit vehicles only if they are properly secured in a cage or kennel. For safety reasons, drivers are not permitted to carry cages or kennels on or off the Paratransit vehicles. If you need assistance with a pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you.

TRAVEL TO OTHER CITIES WITH PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Most public transit agencies in the United States offer Paratransit services to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you travel outside the Sioux Area Metro service area, the

eligibility determination made by Sioux Area Metro allows you to use the ADA Paratransit service of other public transit agencies in the United States for a period of up to 21 days.

CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

If a rider cannot be left on their own without safety concerns at either the pickup point or the drop-off point due to mental or cognitive disabilities or because of severe memory problems, it is the responsibility of the rider's caregivers or family to clearly identify them to the customer service representative when making the reservation. The driver will be informed of the rider's condition and take appropriate precautions as necessary. The driver cannot act as an attendant for a rider in this condition. Riders with mental or cognitive disabilities will be allowed to travel without an attendant only if they exhibit safe behavior on the bus.

An attendant or caregiver must be present at the pickup point or drop-off point for riders who cannot be left alone. If a responsible attendant or caregiver is not present when the driver attempts to pick up or drop off a rider with a disability of this type, it can seriously disrupt the driver's schedule. If this does happen, Sioux Area Metro may suspend service to the rider and report the situation to adult protective services.

RIDER COURTESY AND CONDUCT

Sioux Area Metro has a list of common sense rules to ensure the safety of all riders and drivers. We ask that all riders, their personal care attendants, and any

companions traveling with riders observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- Board the vehicle promptly.
- Remain seated once on board.
- Wear the seat belt.
- Depart the vehicle upon demand of an authorized Sioux Area Metro representative, including the bus driver.
- No smoking on the vehicles.
- Riders shall maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene.
- No eating or drinking on board (unless for health reasons).
- No riding with open containers of alcohol or with illegal drugs.
- No abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions.
- No deliberate fare evasion.
- No physical abuse of another rider or the driver.
- No petting guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner.
- No playing of radios, cassette tape players, or compact disk players or other noisy electronic equipment (without headphones), or other noisy equipment while on board.
- No operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment.

- Littering is prohibited.
- Shirts and shoes or other footwear (if ambulatory) must be worn.
- Baby strollers must be folded and stored to not block the aisle or cause injury to persons on the bus.
- Head, arms, and other body parts must be kept inside the bus.
- Objects must not be thrown from the bus window.
- Parents must control children.
- Federal regulations prohibit the transportation of flammable or explosive materials on transit vehicles.
- Dangerous weapons are prohibited on Sioux Area Metro buses.

Riders, personal care attendants, or guests traveling with riders who violate rules of courtesy and conduct may be subject to penalties, up to and including suspension of service.

Riders, personal care attendants, or guests traveling with riders who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or driver, or who engage in other illegal activities, may be subject to **immediate and permanent suspension** from receiving Paratransit service. They may also be subject to possible criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

Riders, personal care attendants, or guests traveling with riders who engage in an activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of Paratransit services may also be subject to a suspension of service. If a rider is disruptive to Sioux Area Metro service, Sioux Area Metro reserves the right to require that a personal care attendant travel with the rider as an option instead of service suspension.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULES

Sioux Area Metro recognizes that some disabilities and health-related conditions may cause people to act in ways that may break some of the Sioux Area Metro Paratransit rules. Sioux Area Metro will take disability-related conditions into consideration before suspending service. However, suspension will still be an option if it is necessary to maintain a safe operating Paratransit service. In such cases, service can be reinstated when the rider and the rider's caregivers develop a plan to ensure that the safety of the Sioux Area Metro Paratransit service is not compromised.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

You are responsible for snow and ice removal to make your home accessible to the Sioux Area Metro bus driver. If the home is not accessible, the ride will be considered a door cancel. If you live in an apartment complex, it is your responsibility to make the apartment manager aware of the policy. If there is a recurring problem with the apartment management not removing the snow, please contact the Paratransit manager.

Winter Weather Procedures

In the event of an accumulation of snow or ice, Sioux Area Metro will follow the procedures listed below:

- If weather conditions and/or snow or ice accumulations do not allow the bus lift to be safely deployed, the driver will not attempt a pickup. The driver will notify dispatch, who will then contact you to notify you of your ride cancellation.
- If the lift can be safely deployed, but the sidewalk or driveway to or from the bus is not sufficiently clear of snow or ice to enable you to proceed to and from the bus safely, the driver will notify dispatch of the condition. Dispatch will then notify you of the condition and you will have one hour from the time of contact to clear a pathway. After the task is complete, call the customer service representative for a driver to return to the pickup location. A driver will return for you as soon as a bus is available.
- If the pathway at your pickup location is impassable, you are encouraged to notify Sioux Area Metro before the scheduled pickup time. Your ride can either be canceled or you can let the customer service representative know that you will need the extra hour to clear a pathway.

Cancellation of Service

Sioux Area Metro reserves the right to suspend, modify, or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions that may jeopardize the safety of our riders, our employees, or our vehicles. On bad

weather days, listen to the school closure reports on the radio or television. Paratransit service announcements may be included with school closure information. The customer service representatives will also be able to tell you if service will be canceled.

If your trip is for dialysis, chemotherapy, or another life-sustaining purpose, call the Paratransit office to make sure you can get where you need to go. Every effort will be made to deliver life-sustaining and essential trips using Paratransit vehicles.

If you are traveling during times of inclement weather, be sure to be prepared for longer ride times. For example, bring any medication you may need. If you use oxygen, bring an adequate (extra) supply. If you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, bring a small snack with you in case the trip is longer than expected due to weather.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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

A rider who becomes ill or notices another rider who may be ill should immediately inform the driver.

If a rider, due to their disability, is to be met when they are dropped off and the person meeting them is not there when the driver arrives, the rider will be transported back to the Sioux Area Metro office (or to another safe location). The rider's guardian or caregiver will be notified and required to come to pick up the rider or to make other transportation

arrangements. If we are unable to make contact with the guardian or caregiver, the proper authorities will be notified. **This will result in a no-show being assessed to the rider's record.**

