



MOUNTAIN LINE ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES RIDER'S GUIDE



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Introduction

The Mountain Line Rider's Guide outlines the operational policies and procedures approved by the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) Board of Directors and the Special Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) and which comply with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit service guidelines. The information contained within the Rider's Guide is crucial to the appropriate use and understanding of Mountain Line's ADA Paratransit origin-to-destination services. It is extremely important to understand the process for negotiating ride reservations and the policies controlling this valuable and costly service. ADA Paratransit is a "safety net" designed to provide persons with disabilities equal access, not special service. You will negotiate your trip times, ride with other passengers, make multiple stops, and could wait up to thirty (30) minutes for your ride.

Please feel free to contact Mountain Line office staff at 721-3333 or the Paratransit scheduler at 721-2848 if there are questions or concerns about any of the information outlined in this handbook. These policies and procedures are continually evaluated and may be amended, modified or terminated at any time at the sole discretion of MUTD.

Disclaimer

The information in this booklet is subject to change. Please consult Mountain Line Paratransit scheduling staff for the most current information.

Electronic copies of this document can be found online at www.mountainline.com.

What is ADA Paratransit?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into federal law in 1990. It prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, public services such as transit, public accommodations, private services, and telecommunications. The ADA requires all public transit operators to provide a special service to eligible disabled individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using lift- or ramp-equipped public transit. This special service, called "paratransit service," is required by the ADA to complement fixed-route public transit service. For this reason, it operates at similar times and in similar areas as public transportation (defined by the ADA as a minimum of three-quarters of a mile on either side of existing public non-commute fixed-route transit). The ADA also requires transit operators to establish specific eligibility criteria for users of paratransit service and that there be no trip priorities given (e.g. medical versus recreation).

Paratransit in the Missoula Urban Transportation District

Mountain Line Paratransit is responsible for provision of paratransit service within the service area which complements local fixed-route transit service.

Eligibility

Process

To be considered eligible for paratransit service, you must fill out a Mountain Line Paratransit application. The application consists of an Eligibility Questionnaire and a Professional Verification, which your health care professional must complete. This application will focus on what prevents you from using Mountain Line's fixed-route service. For questions about this process, or to request an application and release, contact Mountain Line Paratransit at (406) 721-2848.

Applications are also available online at www.mountainline.com. Eligibility determinations can take up to 21 days from the time the application is received (though in most cases it is determined much sooner).

Applicants are required to have the condition that prevents them from independently using public fixed-route transportation verified by a licensed professional at the time of applying. Within the 21-day period, Mountain Line Paratransit may follow up with your physician or appropriate third-party professional to validate disabilities and functional limitations.

Incomplete applications can delay the process, so be sure to fill out your application completely to avoid any delay.

Once you are found eligible you will receive a letter informing you of this determination and outlining any conditions of eligibility. You are then certified eligible to ride paratransit anywhere in the United States.



Eligibility Categories

In order to become eligible, you must qualify under **one or more** of the following ADA eligibility criteria:

- You are unable to independently board, ride, or exit an accessible Mountain Line fixed-route bus because of your disability.
- You are able to independently board, ride, and exit an accessible bus, but a lift cannot be deployed at your stop. (Please note: All Mountain Line buses are lift or ramp equipped.)
- You are unable to travel to or from a bus stop because of your disability.

Full vs. Conditional Eligibility

Passengers may be considered “unconditionally” or “conditionally” eligible.

Unconditionally eligible riders are those riders whose inability to ride the bus is not based upon conditions that change. Conversely, conditionally eligible passengers include passengers who are eligible for paratransit only when certain conditions exist (e.g., seasonal weather, darkness, geographical / architectural barriers, and distance). Conditionally eligible passengers are required to use fixed-route service whenever conditions permit. Both certifications are for a period of two years.

Temporary Eligibility

Riders may also be determined to have “temporary” eligibility based upon a condition that is expected to be short-term, but prevents them from riding fixed-route service.

Recertification

Recertification of eligibility is required every two years (less with a temporary disability).

Visitors

You do not need to be a resident of the Missoula Urban Transportation District (MUTD) to use Mountain Line Paratransit. ADA-eligible visitors from outside the District may use Mountain Line Paratransit service for any combination of 21 days of service during any 365-day period beginning with the visitor's first use of the service.

To qualify as a visitor, you must:

- Be a card-carrying ADA passenger, with confirmed eligibility in a different transportation district, or,
- Provide proof of residency **and** either self-certify that you have a disability that prevents you from using fixed-route service **or** provide proof of disability.

Conversely, once you are ADA-certified to use paratransit by Mountain Line Paratransit, you are also eligible to receive paratransit services in other cities and states. We suggest you contact the transit agency in the city to which you plan to travel prior to your trip. They will give you information about arrangements, fares, operating times, and schedules.

To avoid misunderstandings and unreasonable expectations, it is essential that you understand the limitations of Mountain Line's ADA Paratransit origin-to-destination service.

Eligibility for the Service vs. Service Limitations

Mountain Line Paratransit provides trips to those found to be eligible. However, as with any service, there are limitations. Eligibility for the service does not always mean that the service will be able to serve you in every situation. The following are a few service limitations you may encounter.

- The ADA requires paratransit to be available within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of an active fixed-route. If your pick-up or drop-off location is outside this area, or if the bus route that paratransit is required to complement is not running, your ride will not be scheduled.
- The geographical location of some pick-up and drop-off locations can cause limitations. If it is determined that a location you would like to travel to or from is not safe to maneuver in one of our paratransit vehicles, we will not be able to serve that location (e.g. dangerous double parking, required backing of the vehicle, low hanging branches, no safe area to load the client, etc.). In this case, arrangements may be made for an alternative pick-up address that is safer.
- Another limitation on the system lies in the safety and security policy. Every effort will be made to offer you the level of assistance that you need. However, drivers may not be able to leave the line of sight of their vehicle or travel more than 50 feet from their vehicle when other passengers are present. Furthermore, our policy limits assistance to or from the outermost threshold of a building. This is often a lobby at a hospital or the beginning of an exterior staircase at an apartment complex. We are unable to assist you past these points. We recommend you travel with a Personal Care Attendant should you require further assistance.



Appropriate Service

Though paratransit provides a wonderful service to those in need, it does not work for everyone in every situation. Due to the nature of shared ride services, paratransit passengers may be required to accept a time that is up to an hour earlier than requested for pick-up and arrive early at their destination. Flexibility is key for you as a paratransit rider. As it is a shared ride service, you will often have to make several stops in route to your destination. Individuals requiring a direct trip to or from their destination should consider other transportation options.

Paratransit is not emergency medical transportation. Call 911 if you are having a medical emergency. We are unable to transport individuals needing to ride on a gurney or who are physically unfit to complete their trip safely on paratransit.

Please understand that paratransit drivers are not caregivers. Drivers are there to safely transport you from your origin to your destination. Behaviors that keep drivers from being able to perform this duty may be grounds for removal from the service (e.g. removing one's seatbelt and moving about the vehicle while it is in motion, uncontrollable screaming, etc.). If you need assistance, we highly recommended that you bring a Personal Care Attendant.

Please be aware that some disabilities require more personalized levels of service than Mountain Line Paratransit is able to provide.

Keeping Eligibility Information Up To Date

It is very important that you keep your eligibility information up to date to limit confusion, and so that Mountain Line Paratransit has current emergency contact information on hand. Call Mountain Line at (406) 721-2848 if there is a change in the following:

- Your address or telephone number (including cell phones).
- Your emergency contact's name or telephone number.
- The type of mobility device you are using.
- Your physical or mental condition.
- Your need for a Personal Care Attendant.

Denied Eligibility

If you submitted an application for ADA paratransit eligibility, and a determination was made that you do not qualify for paratransit or are conditionally eligible for the service (such as eligible only during winter weather), a letter will be mailed explaining the reason(s) for the conditions or denial of service and advising of the procedure to follow if an appeal is desired. (See “Appeals” page 31)

Fares

Mountain Line Paratransit is a “Zero-Fare” service. You will not need to pay a fare for your trips.

Companion / Personal Care Attendants

You may bring one additional rider along with you on your Paratransit ride as long as they are traveling to and from the same locations. This additional passenger does not need to be eligible for the service and are considered a “companion.”

You may also bring a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to assist you during your ride.

Every rider is allowed one companion and one PCA under ADA regulations. Be sure to alert the scheduler if you will be traveling with a PCA, companion, or service animal at the time of booking.

Scheduling a Trip

Ride Scheduling

You must schedule your paratransit rides in advance. Mountain Line will accept trip reservations until 4:30 p.m. the **business day** prior to the trip and no more than fourteen (14) days ahead. We will also accept reservation requests for Monday service until noon the Saturday prior. Mountain Line may not be able to accommodate reservations made after the cutoff time the day prior to the requested date. You can schedule your trip by calling:

Mountain Line Paratransit
(406) 721-2848
Until 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday
Until 12:00 p.m. Saturday



If your call goes to voice mail, please leave the following information and the scheduler will call you back with your available trip times. Be sure to advise Mountain Line of your total travel needs, so that schedulers may schedule appropriate travel time for your trip. Let the scheduler know of any special transportation needs you have (e.g. escort to or from threshold, help with a package, etc.).

When scheduling a paratransit trip, please be prepared to give the scheduler the following information:

1. Your name
2. The day and date you would like transportation
3. The time you would like transportation
4. Your pick-up address
5. Your destination's address and any scheduled appointment you might have at that location
6. Your return time and return address
7. Whether a personal care assistant or companion will accompany you and whether that person will have any special needs (e.g. mobility devices, children, service animals, pets in a carrier, etc.)
8. Whether you will be using a cane, walker, or other mobility device
9. The telephone number we can reach you at

Your scheduler will offer you the best reservation time possible. However, the exact pick-up time you want may not be available. We understand that this can be frustrating but ask you to remember that paratransit is a shared-ride service and flexibility is required.

Pick-Up Windows

At the time you call, you will be given a range of time for pick-up. This is referred to as your pick-up window. This thirty-minute period is when you can expect your pick-up to occur. You are expected to be ready to board the vehicle when the driver arrives at any point within this window.

Cancelling / Changing Rides

Paratransit is a vital community resource, and there is limited public funding to support it. Cancellations are a major contributor to service costs and system inefficiency. Rides that cancel too late do not allow scheduling another trip in their place and result in wasted expense and unused capacity. Failure to cancel with enough advance notice (2 hours before the scheduled time) so that rides can be reassigned impacts the system and can lead to suspension of service (see “No Show Policy” page 28).

You can help by making sure you only schedule rides you plan to take. For your convenience a 24-hour voice mail can be reached at (406) 721-2848.

Please cancel trip reservations as soon as possible. A cancellation made less than 2 hours before the scheduled pick-up will be recorded as a no-show. When cancelling a trip, passengers are responsible for providing the following information:

1. Name of passenger
2. Time and date of scheduled pick-up
3. Exact destination address



4. Whether or not another trip scheduled for that day is also being changed

Please remember that the earlier you cancel a trip reservation, the greater the chance another passenger will be able to use the time.

Changing a Trip

When making a change to a scheduled pick-up, call the reservation line at (406) 721-2848 to make the change at least one day prior to the scheduled pick-up. Mountain Line will make a good faith effort to accommodate requests for same-day changes but cannot guarantee that all changes can be accepted. When you change a destination or time, it may change your pick-up or drop-off time. Passengers are responsible for providing the following information:

1. Time and date of scheduled pick-up
2. New destination address, if applicable
3. New telephone number, if applicable
4. Status of any other scheduled trips for that day
5. New time of scheduled pick up, if applicable

Subscription Service (Standing Orders)

If you need to go to the same place on a regular basis (work, school, etc.) you can request subscription service. Once subscription service has been set up, Mountain Line will continue to pick you up without the need for you to make an individual reservation for each trip.

It is important to remember when you have a subscription trip to call and cancel if you will not be able to take your ride. Failing to do so wastes time that could be used to provide this valuable service to others. Missing



your ride will result in a no-show. If you no-show more than ten percent (10%) of the trips that you schedule within the month, you will be subject to suspension from the service under Mountain Line's no-show policy, and you will not be eligible to use subscription service for a period of two (2) months. Reinstatement of subscription service is at the discretion of Mountain Line and will require a review of your standing with regards to our no-show policy.

It is important to note that the ADA states that no more than ½ of all rides taking place at one time can be reserved for subscription service. If there is no immediate space for your subscription, you may be put on a waiting list. While you are on the waiting list, you can make individual reservations for each day's trips in the normal fashion.

Call the customer services center to request a **Subscription Service Request Form** at (406) 721-2848.

Trip Purpose Priority

Paratransit is an equal right and it is against the law to give priority to one trip over another. Trips are scheduled to allow for the maximum number of individuals to ride within the parameters set forth by the ADA without prioritizing according to purpose or destination.

Trips may be reserved from one (1) day to fourteen (14) days in advance. Early booking helps our scheduling department, as it provides more time to put together a quality schedule. Early booking also increases the odds of getting a time closer to your preference.

In Case of Emergency

Paratransit is not emergency medical transportation. If you are at home or out in the community and have a medical emergency, call 911.

If there is a medical or health emergency on board the paratransit vehicle, the driver will pull over, call dispatch (who will in turn call 911 and your emergency contact), and wait for a medical professional to arrive.

Paratransit Office Hours

Regular Office Hours

The Mountain Line Paratransit office is available for customer service from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Paratransit Office Closed

The Mountain Line Paratransit office is closed Sunday and federal holidays.

Riding Paratransit

Ride Share

Mountain Line Paratransit service is a shared-ride system. Other passengers may be on board during transit to your destination. Your scheduled pick-up times or route of travel may be altered so another passenger can be accommodated. The vehicle may stop and pick up other riders as it proceeds to your destination. Shared rides lower the cost of paratransit service by increasing system productivity. Mountain Line



schedulers may ask you to accept trip reservation times that are different from your original requested pick-up time. Your reservation time will be negotiated by up to an hour earlier or later than you requested. We ask that you be flexible.

Vehicle Arrival

When your driver arrives for your pick up during your scheduled window, they can wait no more than **five minutes** for you to board the vehicle. If you are not ready to leave within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival, the driver will be required to move on to their next pick-up and you will be marked a "no-show." If you are not curbside when the bus arrives, the driver will call the phone number on file to announce their arrival. If you are not ready and you miss your trip, we may not be able to send you another bus; therefore, it is very important that you are ready to board the vehicle when your pick-up window begins. This is to ensure all passengers are able to reach their appointments on time.

Trip Length

As a shared-ride system, travel time can vary depending on the number of rides being accommodated. Rides are scheduled to ensure your time on board is comparable to what a trip would take if made on a regular fixed-route bus (including travel to and from the bus stop from your origin and destination, as well as any transfers needed to complete a similar trip). Usually, much less time is required to complete the trip. Sometimes extenuating circumstances do occur, creating exceptions over which Mountain Line has no control (e.g., traffic conditions, road construction, weather, vehicle breakdown, etc.). Occasionally when this happens, some trips may exceed this standard. Passengers are advised to discuss their travel times with Mountain Line if they have any concerns.



Riding On Assigned Vehicle with the Assigned Vehicle Operator

Due to the complexity of the system and the limited availability of resources, you cannot request a pick up in a certain vehicle or by a certain driver. You are expected to ride in the vehicle dispatched for your trip with the vehicle operator assigned by Mountain Line. If you have concerns or complaints about the condition of a vehicle or the vehicle operator's performance, report it promptly to a Paratransit supervisor at (406) 721-2848.

Origin to Destination

Mountain line Paratransit is an "origin to destination" service. This means your driver will pick you up and drop you off curbside. You may request that your driver escort you from the front door of the building where you are being picked up to the vehicle, and then to the front door of the building at your destination upon drop off. This includes boarding onto the vehicle and securing any mobility device you may be using.

The front door of the primary building is considered the outermost door of a home or facility accessible by the driver. For example, if you are being picked up at an assisted living facility or a hospital, the driver will meet you at the overall entrance of that facility. The base of exterior stairs to a building is considered the front door of the primary building for the purposes of this policy. Drivers are not permitted to assist clients up flights of stairs to their destination (even if these stairs are external to the building and within the line of sight of the vehicle), nor are they allowed to assist clients in elevators.

Drivers are not allowed to cross into interior areas within living accommodations or enter into facilities to search for you. If you require



assistance in these areas, it is recommended that you bring a Personal Care Attendant for your trip.

Furthermore, Mountain Line drivers may not be allowed to leave the line of sight of their vehicle. If escorting you to the front door of the building of either your pick up or drop off requires the driver to:

- Lose line of sight to their vehicle
- Travel more than 50 feet from their vehicle
- Prevents them from easily and quickly returning to the vehicle in case of an emergency

Your driver may not be permitted to escort you all the way to the door. The driver's responsibility for origin-to-destination service ends at the point where their vehicle is no longer easily accessible in case of an emergency.

Drivers will assist you with packages that fit into Mountain Line's package policy (see "Packages" page 35). If you are trying to bring items on board the bus that exceed this policy, you will not be permitted to ride. This is for your own safety as well as the safety of all people on board the vehicle.

Passengers with special needs requiring greater assistance are encouraged to bring a Personal Care Assistant and/or discuss their needs with a Mountain Line supervisor.

Children

Children over the age of eight may ride Mountain Line Paratransit independently (as long as their condition allows). Eligible children may be



required to travel with a Personal Care Attendant if the child is seriously disruptive or presents a safety hazard to themselves or others.

Be sure to alert your scheduler at the time of booking if you are traveling with children. All rules applying to adult riders also apply to children. Children, eight years of age and under are required by law to use a child safety seat, a booster seat, or other safety restraint system (unless over a height of 4' 9"). An adult is responsible for providing such safety equipment and for securing it and the child in the paratransit vehicle. For this reason, all children age eight and under are required to travel with an adult. Mountain Line is not responsible for the safety of the child safety seat or booster, or for its proper securement.

Late Trips

What if I Am Late for My Scheduled Ride?

If you find yourself running late, call Mountain Line as soon as possible. We will try to schedule a later same-day trip to accommodate you. Mountain Line drivers are only allotted five minutes to make their pick-ups. If you are not ready to leave within five minutes of the vehicle's arrival, the driver may have to leave without you in order to be on time for their next passenger.

Return Trips

Mountain Line does not guarantee return trips to passengers who miss their return trips due to no-show, or who violate the Mountain Line Code of Conduct or Paratransit Rider's Guide.

What if Mountain line is Late Picking Me Up?

Many factors affect the on-time performance of Mountain Line vehicles. These include traffic and weather conditions. If Mountain Line finds it will be unable to meet your scheduled pick-up window by 15 minutes or more, Mountain line staff will endeavor to call and notify you. For this reason, when scheduling your ride, it is important to provide a phone number (if one is available) where you can be reached.

Early Pick-ups

Sometimes your vehicle will arrive before the beginning of the window because of a cancellation or especially light traffic. If your vehicle arrives before the pick-up window, you may wait to get on the vehicle until the start of your confirmed pick-up window or you may get into the vehicle and leave right away.

Ensuring a Safe Ride for All

Passenger Safety

Passengers must wear seat belts (for ambulatory passengers) or safety lap belts secured to the floor of the van (for customers using wheelchairs) at all times. Each Mountain Line vehicle is fitted with seat belts for every passenger seat and securements for each wheelchair position.

If, for some reason, a seat or safety lap belt is not available due to failure of that equipment and all other equipment on board is already in use, passengers can decline their scheduled trip and Mountain Line will dispatch a properly equipped vehicle as soon as possible.

If you use a wheeled mobility device or scooter, the driver will ask you to transfer to a regular seat. This is done for your protection, as these

devices are typically not constructed to withstand the rigors of being used as a seat in a passenger vehicle (especially in the case of an accident). If you are unable or unwilling to comply with this request, you may decline, and the driver will secure you in your mobility device and continue with your ride. This policy does not apply to wheelchairs, but you may request to transfer from a wheelchair to a seat if you wish.

Passengers are required to follow all safety instructions given by the driver and/or law enforcement.

Safety is of primary importance to Mountain Line. If you believe you have been injured on a Mountain Line vehicle, please report your injury to your driver or to a Mountain Line supervisor as soon as possible (preferably immediately or within 24 hours)

Using the Lift

Ambulatory passengers who have difficulty navigating stairs may request to board the vehicle on the wheelchair lift or ramp.

Life Support Equipment

You may bring your respirator, portable oxygen, or other life support equipment on the vehicle as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials. Your equipment must be small enough to fit into the paratransit vehicle and be managed by you or your Personal Care Attendant.

Driver Uniforms and Identification

Mountain Line Paratransit drivers wear uniforms bearing the “Mountain Line” logo on the shirt, jacket, and/or cap. Drivers also wear badges with their picture displayed prominently on the front.

Drivers will greet each passenger, give their name and confirm the passenger's name and destination for each scheduled pick-up.

Vehicles

All vehicles, ramps and lifts purchased for paratransit service will meet or exceed the ADA Accessibility standards as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

All Mountain Line vehicles are kept in a safe and well-maintained condition.

Mobility Device Securement

If you ride in a wheelchair or scooter, your mobility device will be secured to our vehicle via a four-point tie-down system or a similar device. We will refuse to transport you if you will not allow your device to be properly secured prior to transport.

Mobility Device Condition

For your safety, please be sure that your wheelchair or other mobility device is properly maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specification. We may refuse to transport any mobility device that is not properly maintained and could pose a hazard of any type to riders, the driver, or to our equipment.

Mobility Device Size

When purchasing a new wheelchair or scooter, riders should consider if it will fit on Mountain Line Paratransit vehicles.

Mountain Line recognizes that many paratransit riders have chairs that exceed standard dimensions for a variety of reasons. If you are using a



larger mobility device, there is a chance that the vehicle dispatched to pick you up may not be able to transport you. However, if the wheelchair is able to enter the bus via ramp or lift, it will be transported regardless of size or weight.

If your wheelchair or scooter is power-driven, the driver cannot assist you in its operation and you will be expected to maneuver it safely on and off the vehicle.

Rider Conditions

Many paratransit riders are able to ride independently without the aid of another individual. However, some of our riders have conditions that require more assistance. This is especially true of passengers with severe mobility issues or cognitive impairment. If this is the case for you, we recommend you bring someone along as a Personal Care Attendant. This individual can be anyone from a friend to a professional caregiver that will assist you during your trip.

Should your condition be such that it is determined you are unable to ride safely without a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), Mountain Line will require you to provide PCA for your own safety and for the safety of your fellow passengers.

Caregiver Responsibility

Some riders are cognitively impaired or have severe memory problems such that they cannot be safely left on their own at either their pick-up or the drop-off location. It is the responsibility of the rider's caregiver or family to clearly identify these riders to Mountain Line. The driver cannot act as an attendant for these riders. A PCA will need to travel with these passengers. Cognitively impaired riders will be allowed to travel without

an attendant only as long as they exhibit safe behavior while on board the vehicle and are able to be left alone at their destination. If Mountain Line encounters absences of an attendant or caregiver, service to the rider may be suspended and the situation reported to Adult Protective Services.

Distracting / Disruptive Behavior

To ensure that your ride experience is as enjoyable and safe as possible refrain from distracting the driver while they are operating the vehicle. Even engaging in conversation with the driver while they are operating the vehicle may be distracting; consequently, be understanding if your driver asks you to refrain from engaging them in conversation during your trip.

Disruptive behavior such as screaming, yelling, banging on any surface of the vehicle and loud cell phone conversations are not acceptable on board a Mountain Line vehicle. Dangerous behavior and physical or verbal abuse are also prohibited.

Dangerous behavior is defined as any threat or action that could cause direct or indirect physical harm to the driver, vehicle or other passenger(s).

Physical abuse is defined as any action that may cause direct or indirect physical harm to a passenger, driver, or Mountain Line staff.

The penalty for a proven incident of dangerous or unsafe behavior or physical abuse will be determined by Mountain Line. The penalty will range from a warning letter to *permanent* suspension from the Mountain Line Paratransit program.

Verbal abuse is defined as any oral presentation that is offensive to a passenger, driver, or Mountain Line staff. The penalty for a proven incident of verbal abuse will be determined by Mountain Line. The penalty will range from a warning letter to *temporary* suspension from the Mountain Line Paratransit program.

Disciplinary Process

Our disciplinary process progresses from warnings to suspension. Typically, a rider is first warned by a telephone call from Mountain Line. If the behavior or action continues, the rider will receive a written warning with an explanation of the violation. Finally, if the behavior continues unchanged, Mountain Line will notify the rider of a pending suspension. Any step in this process may be bypassed should the behavior warrant doing so. For instance, suspensions can be immediate when the behavior is illegal or potentially compromises the safety of our driver, other riders, or our equipment.

Bathroom Accidents

Many of us have had times in our lives where we became ill in public. At Mountain Line, we realize this kind of thing happens. Should it happen to you on board the vehicle, please discretely notify the driver of the situation so that they can make arrangements to get you home quickly and return the vehicle to a clean state.

However, consistent problems of this nature cannot be accepted. If this should happen to you, Mountain Line will suggest steps be taken to control the situation.

Mountain Line vehicles are not permitted to make stops along your scheduled route of travel to allow you to use a restroom. Please take proper precautions prior to departure to ensure you will be able to make your entire trip without incident.

No-Show Policy

Mountain Line understands that because it requires trips to be booked in advance, riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. Mountain Line also understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips, or failing to cancel trips in a timely manner, can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains Mountain Line's no-show policy.

No-show

A no-show occurs when a rider fails to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window and the driver waits at least five [5] minutes.

Pick-Up Window

The pick-up window is defined as the 30-minute period following the negotiated time given to you by the scheduler. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pick-up window. The driver will wait for a maximum of five [5] minutes within the pick-up window for the rider to appear.

Late Cancellation

A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made less than two [2] hours before the scheduled pickup time, or as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pick-up window. A late cancellation is equal to a no-show.

No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances Beyond a Rider's Control:

Mountain Line does not count a no-show for any missed trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error.
- Pick-ups scheduled at the wrong pick up location by the scheduler.
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pick-up window begins.
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pick-up window).
- Drivers arriving within the pick-up window, but departing without waiting the required [5] minutes.

Mountain Line does not count a no-show for situations beyond a rider's control that prevent the rider from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

- Medical emergency.
- Family emergency.
- Sudden illness or change in condition.
- Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice.

Riders should contact the Mountain Line scheduling office when experiencing circumstances beyond their control that will result in a missed trip.



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 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.

Suspension Policies for a Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-Shows and Late Cancellations:

Mountain Line reviews all recorded no-shows to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's account.

Each verified no-show consistent with the above definitions counts as one [1] penalty point. Riders will be subject to suspension after they meet all of the following conditions:

- Accumulate five [5] penalty points in one calendar month.
- Have booked at least 10 trips that month.
- Have “no-showed” or “late cancelled” at least 10 percent of those trips.

A rider 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. Mountain Line 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 above criteria.

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows and how to appeal suspensions.

Suspensions begin on Mondays. The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning letter but no suspension. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

- Second violation: 3-day suspension.
- Third violation: 10-day suspension.
- Fourth violation: 15-day suspension.
- Fifth and subsequent violations: 20-day suspension.

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations:

Riders wishing to dispute specific no-show must do so within five [5] business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders should contact the Mountain Line scheduling office at (406) 721-2848 during regular office hours to explain the circumstance and request the 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. Riders must submit written appeal requests within 10 business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from Mountain Line Paratransit on the date listed on the suspension notice.

All suspension appeals follow Mountain Line's appeal policy.

Appeals

If you are determined to be conditionally eligible or ineligible for paratransit service, or you are a client of Mountain Line Paratransit with

existing service who has been suspended, you have access to an appeals process.

All requests for an appeal must be received in writing by Mountain Line Paratransit within 10 days of issuance of the notification of penalty or service suspension, or within 60 days of determination of conditional eligibility or denial of eligibility.

Your written appeal needs to include:

1. Date
2. Name
3. Address
4. Contact number
5. The reason given to you for your suspension / denial of service
6. Why you are appealing that decision
7. Date of suspension / denial
8. Signature

Written appeals should be addressed to:

Mountain Line
Attn: Paratransit Eligibility
1221 Shakespeare, Missoula, MT 59802

If you are an existing client of Mountain Line Paratransit who has been suspended for violation of the “no-show” policy and you choose to appeal, your eligibility will continue until your appeal is heard by a review panel and a determination is reached to uphold or overturn the suspension.



A copy of the appeals process can be obtained by contacting Mountain Line.

Customer Comment Procedure

Your feedback is appreciated. Comments or complaints may be made directly to Mountain Line by:

Phone: (406)721-2848

Email: info@mountainline.com

Mail: Mountain Line Paratransit

1221 Shakespeare

Missoula, MT 59802

Other Policies

Animals on Board

Service Animals

A service animal is defined by the ADA as an animal that is individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind or who have low vision, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals and not pets.

The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Animals whose sole function is to

provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Be prepared to indicate if the animal is required because of a disability and what task the animal has been trained to perform.

When scheduling a trip with Mountain Line Paratransit, advise the scheduler that a service animal will be riding. Service animals are not required to have special ID cards or harnesses but must be under the control of their owner at all times while in the vehicle (it cannot wander around at will and it will be removed if showing signs of aggression, such as growling, snarling, or biting). Service animals must be housebroken.

In the interest of safety for you and your service animal, Mountain Line asks that if you need to board the vehicle using the lift that your animal board via the passenger door. This is to keep from having their tail, paws, head, or equipment from catching in the lift mechanism and to ensure ample room for you to ride up the lift.

Pet Policy

Pets can be transported in a carrier provided that the carrier fits on your lap or under your seat and the animal and carrier together are less than 20 lbs. Service animals are excluded from this policy (see “Service Animals” above). Pets must remain in the carrier for the entirety of the trip. Pets are to refrain from barking, showing signs of aggression, or going to the bathroom on board the vehicle.

Lost and Found

Passengers are responsible, and Mountain Line accepts no responsibility, for personal items left on a vehicle. Passengers may call Mountain Line to

find out about any personal items they may have left on the vehicle. If recovered, Mountain Line will hold personal items for 30 days prior to disposal.

Packages

Passengers are advised to limit their carry-on bags or packages to what can be carried onto the bus in one trip, with each package no heavier than twenty pounds. One small personal shopping cart is allowed. Packages or parcels may not obstruct aisles or prevent seats from being used.

Eating, Drinking and Smoking

Mountain Line Code of Conduct requires that passengers refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking while on the vehicle.

Exception: Passengers who have a medical condition which requires the intake of food or drink (i.e. diabetics) may eat or drink on board the vehicle if doing so is required to help prevent the onset of a serious medical condition.

Inhalation of medical cannabis on board the bus is prohibited by federal law.

Strong Scents

Passengers are requested not to wear strongly-scented personal care products while on board. This helps to ensure that vans are accessible for passengers with chemical sensitivity or environmental illness.

Appendix A: Other Services

All fixed-route buses accommodate seniors and passengers with disabilities.

Mountain Line's entire fleet is 100 percent accessible and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mountain Line vehicles are equipped with wheel chair accessible ramps / lifts and offer priority seating for seniors and persons with disabilities. Mountain Line operators are trained to provide necessary, but limited assistance to persons traveling in mobility devices. Major stops, intersections and destination information are announced to assist with passenger orientation and all buses are equipped with a "kneeler" system to lower the bus for easier entry and exit. Yellow safety lines and tactile warning strips are also provided in an effort to allow many seniors and persons with disabilities to use the regular fixed-route bus service.

The cost to provide the Missoula Community with origin-to-destination service is significantly higher than the fixed-route service. We encourage you to consider fixed route. Below are some advantages of fixed route over ADA Paratransit that attract many seniors and persons with disabilities.

- Reservations and negotiating trip times are not required.
- You can travel when you want to.
- Fixed-route buses provide access to all major shopping and medical facilities.
- All buses have ramps or lifts similar to the smaller Paratransit vehicles, which provide easy access for wheel chairs, walkers, etc.



- Each fixed-route bus has designated areas for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Each bus is equipped with kneeling systems, voice announcement, tactile signal strips, and non-slip flooring.
- Operators are trained to secure your mobility device and provide a comparable level of service to what you would receive on origin-to-destination Paratransit.

Other Transportation Providers

Montana Medicab
(406) 327-1510

Yellow Cab
(406) 543-6644

The Green Taxi
(406) 728-8294

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

- **Accessible** – a bus that is equipped with a lift or ramp to allow passengers with a disability (with or without a mobility device) to board and deboard with minimal effort. All Mountain Line buses are accessible and equipped with securement devices for wheel chairs.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – enacted in 1990 this law requires that all transit systems allow persons with disabilities equal access to fixed-route buses and requires that Paratransit service be



available only for persons with disabilities who have been determined eligible and who are unable to use fixed-route buses.

- **Appeal** – process which allows a Paratransit applicant to challenge their eligibility determination or a Paratransit passenger to challenge a suspension for violating Mountain Line policy.
- **Chronic Abuse** – a repeated, continuing pattern of abuse of Mountain Line’s Paratransit policies and procedures.
- **Client** – Mountain Line Paratransit passenger.
- **Cognitive Ability** – ability to process information and make rational decisions.
- **Companion** – person accompanying a Paratransit passenger.
- **Comparable Services** – ADA’s requirement that persons with disabilities receive the same, but not preferential or superior, access to bus service.
- **Conditional Eligibility** – eligibility that depends on defined circumstances of a disability and / or trip.
- **Denied** – declined, not approved, ineligible.
- **Disability** – Professionally diagnosed condition which limits ability of an individual.
- **Drop-Off Time** – time scheduled for Paratransit passenger to arrive at their destination. This time varies with circumstances. Passengers are encouraged to allow for drop-off time delays by allowing extra



time when requesting their trips.

- **Environment** – conditions that impact the ability of individuals to function, such as steps, steep hills, incomplete sidewalks, etc.
- **Fixed-Route Service** – buses that serve marked bus stop locations and operate on a specific time schedule, traveling a set route each day without variation.
- **Fraudulent** – intentionally false, misleading, or inaccurate. Subject to penalty.
- **Mobility Device** – a mechanical device used to assist a person with a disability to travel. Examples include walkers, wheel chairs and scooters.
- **No-Show** – term describing a missed trip. The “no-show” may be caused by the failure to cancel a scheduled trip two [2] or more hours before the trip, the person not being there to receive the ride, or the person not being ready when the vehicle arrives.
- **Paratransit Service** – origin-to-destination service provided to persons with disabilities who have been determined eligible under ADA standards and who are unable to use fixed-route buses.
- **Personal Care Attendants** – also referred to as PCAs, these individuals are in the employ of the passenger to provide assistance. Notice that a PCA’s assistance will be required should be provided to Mountain Line by the applicant when applying for Paratransit eligibility. PCAs should be used for assisting a disabled passenger



from the curb to a destination or for carrying packages, etc.

- **Phone Number on File** – the number the driver will call when they arrive at a location to pick you up. This will be the primary number on file. We will not call multiple numbers.
- **Pick-up Time** – estimated time a Paratransit bus will arrive to pick up a passenger for a scheduled trip. Pick-up times can vary depending upon other scheduled trips. Paratransit passengers are requested to be ready at the start of their 30-minute window.
- **Professional Verification** – applicants for Mountain Line Paratransit service are required to have a qualified professional complete a verification form describing why / how their disability prevents them from using regular fixed route buses.
- **Scheduled Trip Time** – trip times requested by Paratransit passengers are by advanced appointment only, and scheduled by computer. ADA regulations require service providers like Mountain Line to schedule trips within an hour of the requested time. Mountain Line drivers make every effort to maintain their schedules; however, a variety of things outside their control can result in them being early or late for appointments. Paratransit passengers are encouraged to consider the possibility of delays when scheduling their appointments. Passenger patience is appreciated.
- **Secured** – not mobile, fastened down, prevented from moving.
- **Shuttle Van** – provides transportation for seniors who are not eligible for ADA Paratransit Service. This is also a reservation service



that will be provided during prescheduled days and time periods within Mountain Line service area. This service can be used by individuals who receive seasonal eligibility. For example, it is possible to be eligible for ADA Paratransit in the winter and able to use regular bus service or Shuttle Van service in the summer.

- **Service Animal** – an animal that has been trained for a specific task to provide assistance to a person with a disability.
- **Shared Ride Service** – like the regular fixed-route bus system, Paratransit passengers share the bus with a variety of other passengers that are going to different destinations at different times. Passengers are boarded and de-boarded in an order determined most efficient by the Paratransit driver or scheduler. Paratransit riders may have to ride to other destinations before reaching theirs.
- **Suspension of Service** – a temporary or permanent interruption of Paratransit services caused by serious or chronic abuse of Mountain Line’s policies and procedures.
- **Temporary Eligibility** – ADA Paratransit eligibility issued for a specific period of time, such as for the duration of an illness or treatment, or during particular weather conditions.
- **Time Window** – A 30-minute period of time in which your vehicle may arrive. You must be ready for transport at the beginning of this window.
- **Trip** – one-way transport of an ADA-eligible person to a single



destination.

- **Unconditional Eligibility** – ADA eligibility that has no limitation placed on trip requests.
- **Visitor** – status of a passenger who:
 - Is a card-carrying ADA passenger, with confirmed eligibility in a different transportation district, or,
 - Provides proof of residency **and** either self-certifies that they have a disability that prevents them from using fixed-route service **or** provides proof of disability.
- **Voice Mail** – answering machine.
- **Wheel Chair** – mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors and outdoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments. May be operated manually or powered. Mountain Line may not be able to transport mobility devices that will not fit on a lift or ramp, or those that exceed the weight limit of the vehicle’s equipment. 49 CFR § 37.3.

Appendix C: Title VI

Mountain Line’s Title VI Policy Statement

Mountain Line grants all citizens equal access to its transportation services. Mountain Line is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (“Title VI”).

Members of the public can request additional information on Mountain Line’s nondiscrimination obligations or a copy of “Mountain Line Title VI Policy Statement” by contacting:

EEO Officer
 Mountain line
 1221 Shakespeare
 Missoula, MT 59802
 (406) 534-8386

Appendix D: Rider & Driver Responsibilities

Rider Responsibilities:

- Carefully read all Rider’s Guide materials.
- Follow all rules and regulations set forth in this Rider’s Guide.
- Make ride reservations at least one [1] day in advance.
- Avoid no-shows and late or repeated cancellation of reservations.
- Be at the designated pick-up location on time and provide entry for the vehicle if you live in a gated community or have special access requirements.
- Board the vehicle promptly, remain seated once on board, wear your seat belt, and keep arms, legs, and head inside the vehicle.
- If the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the scheduled pick-up window, call Mountain Line at (406) 721-2848.
- Call to cancel an unneeded ride as soon as possible to avoid a “no-show.”
- Wear seat belts at all times during transport.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in safe operating



condition according to manufacturer's specifications.

- Expect “shared-ride” service. Others may be picked up after you, and / or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene; please refrain from using scented products as they can bother other chemically-sensitive riders.
- Follow these common rules of courtesy:
 - No eating, drinking, or smoking on board the vehicle.
 - No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
 - No littering in the vehicle.
 - No sound-generating equipment (i.e. phones, MP3 Players, iPods, radios, etc.) may be played aloud on board the vehicle (use with headphones is acceptable).

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers must:

- Be courteous at all times.
- Call upon arrival.
- Get out of the vehicle, greet and assist you with boarding.
- Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of riders.
- Be in proper uniform.
- Visibly display a proper ID badge.
- Carry only the riders assigned to them, along with attendants and companions, who have reservations.
- Go only to the destinations listed on the manifest or as notified by their dispatcher.
- For safety reasons, maintain “line-of-sight” of vehicle.
- Keep to the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.



- Provide reasonable assistance to riders entering or leaving the vehicle.
- Driver cannot use personal cell phones or other personal electronic devices, or play loud music while driving.
- Operate the vehicle and lift in a safe manner and safely secure wheelchairs on the vehicle.
- Assist passengers to and from the main door of their origin and destination when requested and only if safe to do so and within line-of-sight of the vehicle.
- “Assistance” includes, but is not limited, to:
 - Offering ambulatory passengers a steadying arm or other appropriate assistance when walking or using stairs.
 - Helping persons in wheelchairs maneuver onto standard ramps to and from the main door of their origin and destination (if safe to do so and while remaining in the line-of-sight of their vehicle).
 - Carrying packages that comply with Mountain Line’s policy for items on board the vehicle.

Drivers Are Not Permitted to:

- Lift or carry passengers.
- Enter the residence of a rider.
- Perform any personal care assistance for any rider, such as assisting with dressing.
- Retrieve anything from a passenger’s pocket, purse or bags.
- Wait for a passenger to make a stop to conduct business, such as at an ATM / cash machine, pharmacy, or store.
- Assist a passenger beyond the exterior door of a public building or beyond the front door of a private residence.
- Accept tips or any other gratuities.

- Perform errands for riders such as picking up prescriptions or groceries.
- Take information from the rider about cancellations or changes in reservations.
- Secure child safety systems in the vehicle or children into such systems.

Appendix E: Code of Conduct

The code of conduct applies to all activities that occur in or on **any Mountain Line vehicle, transfer centers, bus stops, shelters, or other passenger facilities.**

For the comfort and safety of all passengers, the following conduct is expected when using Mountain Line services:

- Cooperate with requests from Mountain Line personnel.
- Be considerate and respect the privacy of others.
- Use headphones for music and keep cell phone conversations short and quiet.
- Wear clothes and shoes.
- Disembark after one round trip.
- Refrain from unnecessary conversation with the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
- Keep baby strollers, shopping carts and other items out of aisles.
- Carry – don't wear – roller skates, rollerblades and shoes with cleats onto the bus.
- Riders traveling with small children should exit through the front door. Please carry or hold the child's hand while exiting.



- Take all items with you when you leave. Packages left on the bus will be confiscated.

Refrain from behavior that intrudes on the welfare of others including, but not limited to:

- Interfering with the safe operation of any Mountain Line vehicle.
- Endangering, threatening, harassing or intimidating others.
- Roughhousing, screaming, shouting or spitting.
- Profanity or offensive language.
- Placing feet on seats or seat backs or lying down on seats.
- Refusing to relinquish posted seating to the elderly or disabled.
- Using tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, in unauthorized areas.
- Eating on the bus.
- Littering.
- Urinating or defecating except in restroom facilities.
- Drinking alcohol, drunk or disorderly conduct, or possession of an open container.
- Loitering without intent to utilize Mountain Line services.
- Indecent exposure.
- Throwing any object at transit property or at any person on transit property.
- Bringing onto transit property odors and substances that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system, whether such odors or substances are from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source.

ANYONE WHO FAILS TO COMPLY MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE BUS AND / OR FACILITY AND MAY BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW.

You may appeal any of these rules by requesting appeal information at 543-8386.

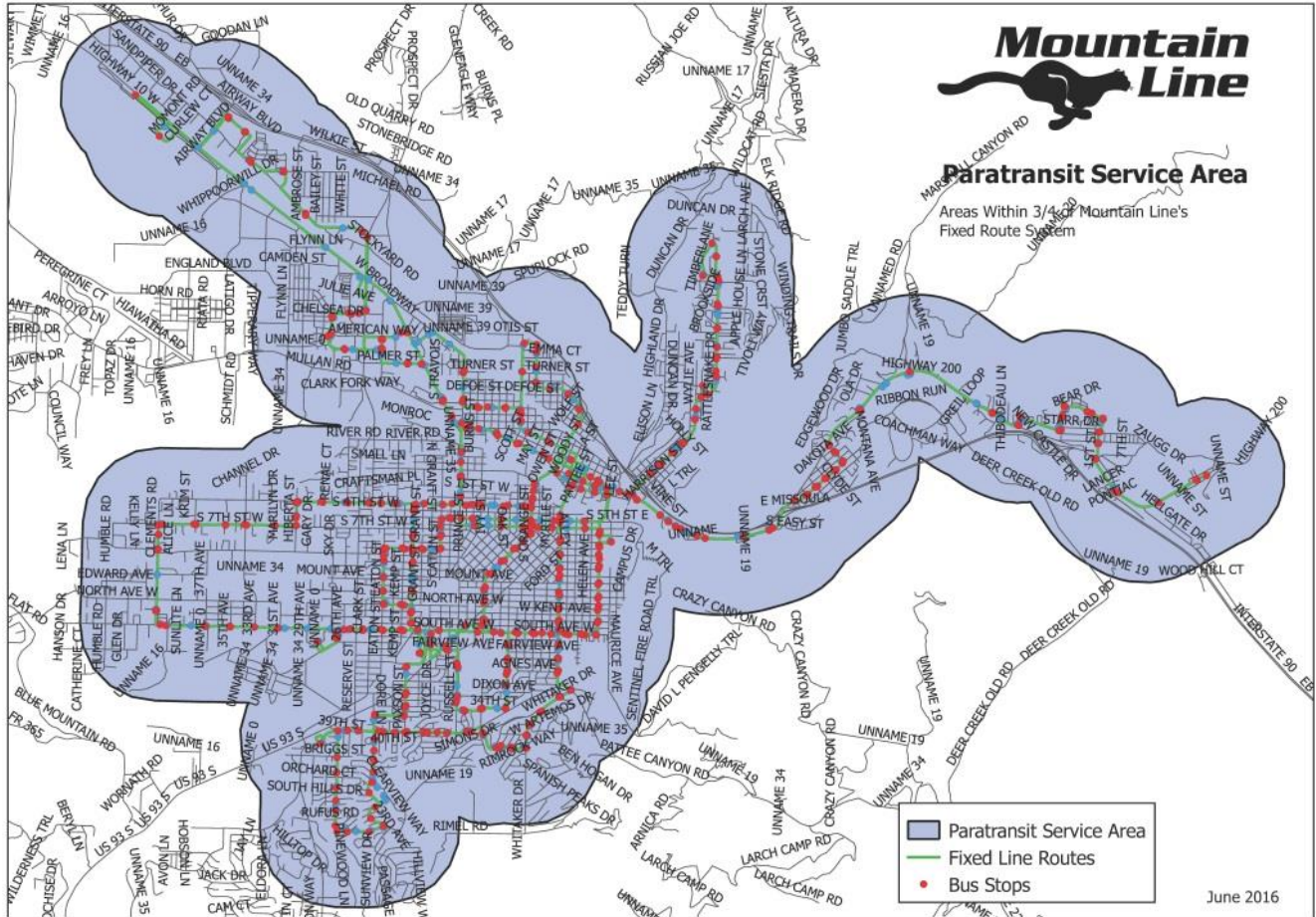
Appendix F: Tips for Riding Paratransit

- You may arrive at your destination up to an hour early and / or be required to wait for an hour at your destination. For this reason, many riders choose to bring books or some other form of entertainment to pass the time.
- Weather in Missoula can often vary. Remember to take this into consideration before you leave for your trip. Dressing appropriately and comfortably can make a big difference.
- If you suffer from an ailment that requires or may require medication remember to bring it with you. Those requiring oxygen should ensure your tank is adequately filled before you travel.
- When scheduling your rides, it is important to estimate your return time as accurately as possible. Giving yourself some extra time can mean the difference between meeting your driver and missing your trip.
- If you can, it is recommended you do not schedule your rides to arrive at or leave a location at the exact time when that location is scheduled to open or close. This is because you may be picked up or dropped off up to an hour before or after your requested appointment time. If the location is not open, you may be forced to wait outside.



- If your ride takes you to more than one location before returning home, remember to give yourself enough time at each location to complete your tasks. You should also consider giving yourself some extra time, as your ride times may change and this could affect the amount of time you have at any given location.
- If you have an issue with your ride, please be sure to bring it to the attention of a Mountain Line supervisor or your driver. We are constantly trying to improve the system and your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Appendix G: Paratransit Service Area



Thank you for riding Mountain line Paratransit.
Welcome aboard!



THANK YOU TO OUR ZERO-FARE PARTNERS

