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# LinkPlus

PARATRANSIT

# Riders Handbook

**Link Transit**  
*your way to go!*

Information effective  
January 1, 2025.



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## Welcome

Welcome to LinkPlus, Link Transit's advanced reservation shared ride service for individuals with a disability that prevents them from using some part of the regular fixed route service.

All our buses and vans have lifts or ramps to make boarding easier for people who have difficulty climbing steps or who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters or walkers. Link Plus complements our regular fixed-route service by operating in the same areas and during the same times as our regularly scheduled buses. Link Plus is provided in accordance with the guidelines and regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

This handbook provides information and guidelines for LinkPlus customers. We hope this information answers your questions and helps you when you use the LinkPlus service to meet your transportation needs. If you have questions, please contact Guest Services at 509-662-1155.

Link Transit assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, visit [www.linktransit.com](http://www.linktransit.com). All phone numbers are accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing through Relay 711.

Upon request, alternative formats of this document will be produced for people who have a disability.

## The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that requires community transit agencies to provide paratransit services comparable to its regular fixed-route local bus system for people who qualify to ride the service. ADA paratransit eligibility is based upon functional abilities rather than medical conditions or age. An individual will be “ADA paratransit eligible” if there is any part of the local bus system the person can’t use because of a disability or condition. Some people may qualify for paratransit service under very specific rules, which apply on a trip-by-trip basis.

### SPECIAL NOTE TO CAREGIVERS AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

This handbook is phrased as if the Paratransit customer is reading it. We know that many caregivers and others will assume the responsibility of reading and understanding this information as well as making reservations and other arrangements for their clients.

Please keep in mind, if the person you care for will ride the Paratransit van without an attendant, they must be able to follow basic customer responsibilities and abide by Link Transit’s Rules of Conduct (see page 26). Please take special notice of the Note boxes at the end of some sections as they contain important information that can affect your client’s Paratransit service.



## Guest Services

Questions, comments, concerns or complaints regarding your LinkPlus eligibility and service-related issues, should be communicated to our Guest Services department. Representatives can be reached at 509-662-1155 or by email at [guestservice@linktransit.com](mailto:guestservice@linktransit.com) and are available:

Monday through Friday - 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You may also send us a letter or stop by in-person at 300 S. Columbia St., 2nd Floor, Wenatchee, WA 98801

### Changes in your Personal Information

It is important to keep your personal information current. Please notify Guest Services if you:

- move to a new address
- change apartments
- change your telephone number
- have a new emergency contact
- get a new mobility device

**NOTE:** *It is important to keep your mailing address up to date since it can be different than your pick-up address.*

### LOST AND FOUND

All found items are turned into our Guest Services department located at Columbia Station. They are logged and kept for 30 days except for perishable foods or unsanitary items which will be disposed of by the end of the day. After 30 days, items will be disposed of or donated to local charities.

If you believe you have left an item on a Link Transit vehicle, please contact Link Guest Services. We will try our best to find it.

## Eligibility

There are three types of eligibility, which are based on your specific functional abilities:

**Unconditional:** Your disability always prevents you from accessing fixed routes either because you cannot travel to/from any bus stop, or you are unable to independently navigate the system once on-board.

**Conditional:** You can ride fixed routes for some trips, but your disability prevents you from using it for other trips due to specific barriers. Please see Conditional Eligibility below for more information.

**Temporary:** For people who have a temporary need for the service due to significant events such as a stroke, hip replacement, broken leg, etc.

Because the effects of a disability can change over time, certification for Paratransit eligibility is not permanent. Most eligibility is granted for a period of one (1) to three (3) years. A notification letter and recertification form are sent at least 60 days before your eligibility is due to expire. However, you may request a reassessment at any time should you feel that your disability has changed in such a way that you may require a different level of eligibility.

**NOTE:** *Your LinkPlus record indicates what type of mobility device you are eligible to use when traveling on paratransit. Should you change mobility devices, you will need to be reassessed to ensure that your eligibility status remains appropriate.*

Please contact Guest Services at 509-662-1155 to schedule an appointment for a reassessment.

### **CONDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY**

This level of eligibility is customized based upon the results of your in-person assessment. Your eligibility letter will have an explanation of what barriers prevent you from using the fixed routes buses and when paratransit services would be available to you.

### **PATH OF TRAVEL REVIEW**

Some conditional eligibility is based on the distance or condition of the path of travel to or from the nearest bus stop. If there is a location you travel to often, you can request a Path of Travel assessment to see if it is eligible for paratransit service by contacting Guest Services. They will arrange for a Link staff member to conduct an on-site assessment of the location. Once completed, you will receive a letter indicating if the trip is eligible for paratransit. If it is not eligible, you may want to consider the help of our Travel Trainer to learn how to use the fixed route bus for the trip. See below.



## Travel Training

Learn to Ride Link Transit with Confidence

Link Transit offers a FREE service called Travel Training to help you confidently use our regular fixed-route buses. This self-paced program is especially helpful for individuals with disabilities who want to travel more independently.

Here's why it's a great option:

- **Flexibility:** No need to schedule trips ahead of time - just hop on the bus and go!
- **Personalized Support:** A Travel Trainer will accompany you to some of your usual destinations, helping you understand how to read the bus schedule and plan your trips.
- **Build Confidence:** Gain self-reliance and independence as you learn to navigate the fixed-route system.

Interested? For more information, call 509-664-7673.



# Preparing For Your Trip

## SERVICE AREA AND HOURS

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, LinkPlus Para-transit service is provided within 3/4 of a mile from Link Transit Fixed Route buses serving communities in Chelan and Douglas counties on the same days and during the same hours.

If you are unsure if an address is within the current service area, please call LinkPlus Reservations at 509-662-3569.

## HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

Link Transit is closed for the following holidays:

New Years	Labor Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving
Independence Day	Christmas Day

## WHAT WILL THE TRIP COST?

All Link Transit services are currently Zero Fare.

## DRIVER ASSISTANCE

Drivers can help you with:

- Getting in and out of the vehicle. The driver will guide you into and out of your seat and provide a steady hand for you. If you are uncomfortable using the vehicle steps, you may ask to stand on the lift platform to get on and off.
- Providing a steady hand to walk between the vehicle and the outermost exterior door of the pick-up or destination location.
- Maneuver your manual wheelchair if you need assistance from outside your door to the van
- Fastening seat belts and securing wheelchairs, scooters and large walkers.

- Assisting you with manual devices if requested. The driver can push and guide you to/from the vehicle, on/off the lift platform of the vehicle, and inside the vehicle. The driver cannot push you up steep slopes.
- Carry light packages or bags, not to exceed 25 lbs combined, if it can be done safely in one trip.

There are some things drivers cannot do for you:

- Helping you get in and out of a wheelchair.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Helping you navigate steps or curbs without ramps in a wheelchair.
- Take a mobility devices up or down more than one (1) step.
- Helping you up or down steep slopes.
- Controlling your powered mobility device.
- Providing you more physical support than a steady hand to walk between the vehicle and the outermost exterior door of the pick-up or destination.
- Providing other medical or personal care services such as changing oxygen canisters.
- Putting on or removing jackets, hats, or other clothes.
- Locating or handling your keys to unlock the door.
- Crossing your front door threshold.
- Carry heavy packages or make more one (1) trip of groceries.
- Parking in a location that is unsafe or blocks traffic.

## **PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS**

ADA eligible riders may travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). A PCA is defined as an individual who is designated or employed specifically to provide care to the rider and is capable of assisting the rider while traveling on LinkPlus.

When scheduling a trip, please notify the reservationist if you will be traveling with a PCA.

The PCA must board and disembark with the eligible rider.

## **COMPANIONS**

When scheduling a trip, eligible LinkPlus riders may travel with at least one (1) companion as well as one (1) PCA (see page 9).

The rider may request an additional two (2) Companions for any specified trip who will be accommodated if space is available on the vehicle and results in no other ADA-eligible trips being denied.

Companions must board and disembark with the eligible rider.

## **TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

Children who are age 6 and older and are certified as ADA eligible may travel on LinkPlus without an attendant. However, LinkPlus strongly encourages parents or guardians of ADA eligible children to always travel with their children on LinkPlus trips.

In some cases, children younger than 6 may be certified as ADA eligible, but must be accompanied by an attendant or parent for each trip.

Children under the age of four (4) years, regardless of weight, or those weighing less than forty (40) pounds, regardless of age, must be properly secured in a car safety seat. It is the responsibility of the parent of legal guardian traveling with they child, not the provider, to both furnish and to properly secure the child in the car safety seat.

## SERVICE ANIMALS AND PETS

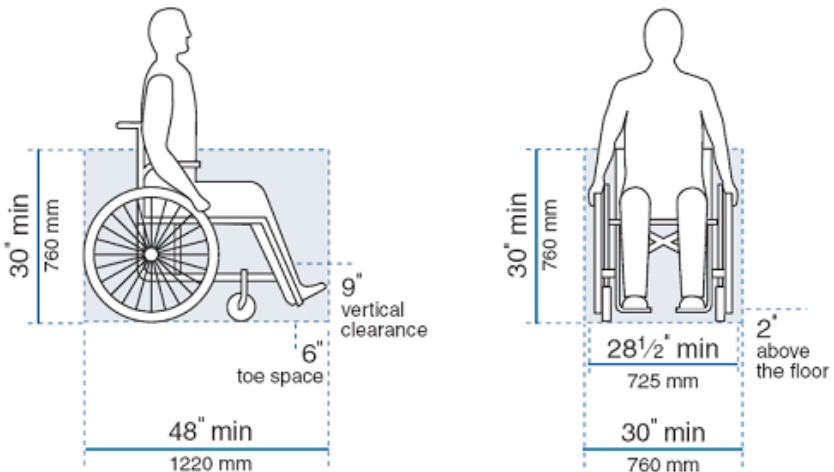
LinkPlus allows a service animal to accompany a rider on board the vehicle. “Service animal” means any animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks directly related to the handler’s disability.

Service animals are required to be leashed or harnessed except when performing work or tasks where such tethering would interfere with their ability to perform. Please inform the Reservationist when you plan to use your service animal.

Any other animal/pet that a rider wishes to take on board must be in a suitable, securely closed container that the rider or companion can comfortably carry and does not interfere with other passengers on board the vehicle.

## MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT

All Link Transit vehicles are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, and other 3-or more wheeled mobility aids that measure 30 inches wide, 48 inches long and 600 pounds in total weight; you and the mobility device.



Mobility devices that exceed these standards can be transported but on a space-available basis as long as it can be done safely and without compromising safety devices and features installed on vehicles and mobility aides or putting our guests or operators at risk of injury. This means that you would need to be flexible in your schedule for transportation.

**NOTE:** *Your LinkPlus record indicates what type of equipment you are eligible to use when traveling on paratransit. Should you change mobility devices, you will need to be reassessed to ensure that your eligibility status remains appropriate.*

Please contact Guest Services at 509-662-1155 to schedule an appointment for a reassessment.

### **SEAT BELT USE**

All passengers must always use a seatbelt at all times during transport. You will also be required to use a shoulder harness if the vehicle is so equipped. Drivers will assist with securing seatbelts if needed.

### **CARRY-ON ITEMS POLICY**

This policy ensures safety, cleanliness, and accessibility for all riders.

### **ALLOWED CARRY-ON ITEMS**

Riders may bring:

- Up to four (4) plastic grocery bags, or
- Two (2) paper grocery bags, or
- Two (2) reusable grocery bags (max size: 16" x 10" x 13"), or
- One folding cart (max size: 19" W x 38" H x 18" L, including wheels/handles), or
- One piece of luggage (max size: 24" x 17" x 10", max weight: 40 lbs).



Additionally, one small personal item (e.g., purse, briefcase, or laptop bag) is allowed.

Restrictions:

- Total carry-on weight must not exceed 25 lbs for driver assistance.
- Carry-ons must not occupy more than one extra seat.
- Items must be clean, leak-free, and under the rider's control at all times.
- Multiple trips to board with items are not allowed.

### SPECIAL ITEMS

Shopping carts must:

- Fit through the aisle.
- Be within the size limits (19" W x 38" H x 18" L) including wheels and handles.
- Have no sharp edges.
- Contain all items securely inside.
- No wagons or stroller-wagons allowed.
- Pets (excluding service animals) must be in approved carriers (no cardboard).
- Strollers must be collapsible. Children do not need to be removed prior to boarding but do need to be removed once onboard and the stroller may need to be collapsed.
- Medical equipment (e.g., mobility devices, oxygen tanks, canes) is allowed but must be managed by the rider or an attendant.



### PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Dangerous substances (fuel, explosives, corrosives, loaded weapons).
- Items with strong odors unless properly sealed.

### DRIVER ASSISTANCE AND TIPPING POLICY

- Drivers may assist with bags if within the weight limits.
- No tipping or gratuities are allowed for assistance, as it is part of the driver's job.





## Scheduling Your Trip

As a shared ride service, it is common to have other riders with you. The vehicle may stop letting other passengers on or off before reaching your destination. Your travel time will be like making the trip by regular fixed-route bus, not in a personal car or taxi.

As LinkPlus transportation provides hundreds of rides each day, it may not be possible to schedule your ride at the exact time you wish. However, Link Transit will never offer you a pick-up time more than an hour earlier or an hour later than you request.

### HOW DO I SCHEDULE A TRIP?

To schedule a trip for LinkPlus transportation, call Reservations at 509-662-3569 any day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You must schedule rides a minimum of one (1) day in advance and may schedule up to five (5) calendar days in advance of the day you wish to travel.

### Information We'll Need from You

We will ask you:

- Your name
- The address of your pick-up point, including apartment number
- The address of your destination
- A phone number where we can reach you
- Whether you'll travel with a mobility aid or life support equipment – includes cane, walker, manual or electric wheelchair, scooter or portable oxygen, etc.
- Who is traveling with you. (Personal Care Attendant-PCA, Companion, Children, Service Animal, see page 12)
- Whether you'll travel with a grocery cart (see page 15)

Trip Details:

- Date of trip
- Desired arrival time OR pick-up time
- Return trip time

## Choose Your Trip Type

### Arrival-time Trip

- This is best if you need to be at a destination before a specific time (e.g., you have a 9 a.m. doctor's appointment).
- Arrival-time trips don't guarantee a specific pick-up time. We'll confirm your pick-up window during the booking process. Your pick-up time may be earlier than you expect.

### Pick-up time Trip

- This is best if you need to leave a location after a specific time (e.g., leaving work at 5 p.m.).
- Requested arrival and departure times must be at least 1 hour apart.

### Will Call Return

- This trip is an open-ended return, allowable only when travelling home from a medical appointment. This trip is intended for situations when you cannot predict your return time in advance. Waiting for a will-call may take longer than for a scheduled trip.

## WHEN WILL I BE PICKED UP?

The Reservationist will tell you when a vehicle will arrive to pick you up. The time will not be specific, but within a 30-minute designated window.

**NOTE:** *Please be ready to board the vehicle immediately upon its arrival, as the driver will leave after waiting 5 minutes and you will be considered a No Show.*

**EXAMPLE:** If your pick-up is scheduled between 10 and 10:30 a.m., the vehicle may arrive anytime during the designated pick-up window. If your ride arrives at 10:10 a.m., you must present yourself to the Driver by 10:15 a.m.

Trips cannot be scheduled so that the vehicle waits a short period of time for the rider at the drop-off location so the rider can conduct business or other matters.

## WHERE DO I WAIT FOR THE VEHICLE?

Vehicles will wait for you at a public access curb location as close as possible to the main entry of your house, building, or other agreed upon designated pickup location that is safe.

Upon request, the driver will provide assistance to and from the vehicle door to the outside door of the destination as long as they can maintain line of sight and control of their vehicle (this means that the drivers cannot go long distances from their vehicles).

Drivers cannot enter a building for you beyond a main lobby.

They cannot take a wheelchair up or down more than one step.

If assistance is needed beyond the pickup or drop-off location, please be prepared to have a Companion or Personal Care Attendant (PCA) available to assist you (see page 12)

**NOTE:** *Link Transit retains the right to refuse service to any guest if access to the origin or destination is considered unsafe (excessive steps, steep ramps, uneven terrain, snow covered walkways or driveways, etc.)*

*If you have a question as to whether the Driver will be able to come to your home or your destination door, please call LinkPlus at 509-662-3569 and ask for an Access Review.*

If you have a question as to whether the Driver will be able to come to your home or your destination door, please call LinkPlus at 509-662-3569 and ask for an Access Review.

## **NIGHT BEFORE CALLS**

You will receive an automated reminder call the night before your scheduled reservation. If you have scheduled a round-trip the call will specify that you have two trips scheduled. If you are only going one way, the call will indicate only one trip is scheduled. Reminder calls start at 6 p.m. the night before.

*Examples:*

*Hello, this is a reminder message from Link Transit. You have two trips scheduled for tomorrow Thursday January 9, your first trip to 1234 Main St. is scheduled for pickup between 3 - 3:30 p.m.*

*Your next trip to 4321 Washington St. is scheduled for 4:45 - 5:15 p.m. Thank for using Link Transit. If you have any questions or a change of plans, please call 509-662-3569.*

## **BUS ON THE WAY TEXT MESSAGES**

Ask the Reservationist if you are eligible to sign up for text messages that will notify you on the day of your trip(s), when your bus is on the way.



## Changing and Cancelling Trips

### CHANGE IN DESTINATION

Drivers may only go to the destination you originally scheduled. A change in destination could have a negative impact on other riders.

### CANCELING A TRIP

If you need to cancel your trip, please notify Reservations at least one (1) hour before your scheduled pick-up window by calling 509-662-3569.

If you need additional time for a medical appointment, please call Reservations as soon as possible before your scheduled pick-up window at 509-662-3569.

Missed boardings, late cancels or non-canceled trips affect other rider's schedules.

**NOTE:** *Failure to cancel your trip one (1) hour in advance or notifying Reservations you will not be ready to return as scheduled may result in a No-show. Excessive No-shows could result in a suspension of service.*

## NO-SHOW POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to help manage the impact of No-shows on Link Transit's Paratransit service, ensuring reliable transportation for the community. Riders who frequently miss scheduled trips affect other riders' schedules and may lose their LinkPlus riding privileges for a set period of time. Here are a few key points to remember:

A No-show occurs if you:

- Are not at the pickup location or cannot be found.
- Choose not to ride when the bus arrives.
- Do not board within five minutes of arrival.
- Fail to cancel at least one hour before pickup.

**NOTE:** *If you miss a ride but have other trips scheduled for the same day, they will not be canceled automatically. Be sure to cancel any trips you don't need to avoid multiple No-shows.*

## TRACKING AND DISPUTES

No-shows are recorded monthly and yearly.

Riders have 5 days from the date of their notification to contest a No-show. No-shows that are not contested will be considered valid.

At the start of a new year, all No-show records are reset.

## **NO-SHOW VIOLATIONS**

A violation occurs if you exceed the allowed number of No-Shows based on the total trips you schedule in a month:

- 0 - 18 trips: Maximum of 2 No-shows allowed; 3 or more is a violation.
- 19 - 30 trips: Maximum of 3 No-shows allowed; 4 or more is a violation.
- 31 - 44 trips: Maximum of 4 No-shows allowed; 5 or more is a violation.
- 45+ trips: Maximum of 5 No-shows allowed; 6 or more is a violation.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

- 1st Violation: 7-day suspension
- 2nd Violation: 14-day suspension
- 3rd Violation: 21-day suspension
- 4th Violation: 28-day suspension

You have the right to appeal any suspension before it starts.

A copy of this policy in its entirety is available upon request by calling Guest Services at 509-662-1155.

## Other Types of Service

### FIXED ROUTE

Link encourages riders to use fixed routes whenever possible. The advantages of fixed routes include:

- You don't have to call a day ahead of time for your trip
- You don't have a 30-minute pick up window
- They run on predictable schedules
- They serve most major destinations in Chelan and Douglas Counties

You can also combine service types, for example, by taking paratransit to one of our transit stations to connect with fixed routes. Traveling with a PCA could make it easier to ride fixed routes or consider taking advantage of our free Travel Training service (see page 9).

Riders who are eligible for paratransit can ride fixed routes without worrying about losing their eligibility.

### DART

Some communities offer Dail-a-Ride Transportation (DART) service. DART is a same-day, shared ride transportation option for anyone traveling within the designated service area. It is open to the public with no eligibility requirements.

All Link vehicles are accessible and equipped with ramps or lifts. All Link drivers are professionally trained to assist riders with disabilities.



## Using Paratransit Outside of Chelan/Douglas County

### VISITOR STATUS

As an individual who is ADA Paratransit eligible, you qualify to use other public transit agencies' paratransit services for any combination of 21 days within a 365-day period. Take a copy of your eligibility notification letter with you when you travel as proof of your eligibility.

As paratransit policies vary by agency, it is best to contact the transit agency in the community you will be visiting for more information about their services and fares.



## Rules of Conduct

Link Transit has a list of common-sense rules to ensure the safety and comfort of all passengers and drivers. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- No Eating. Drinks must be in an approved spill-proof container.
- No Smoking, including but not limited to tobacco, electronic cigarettes, marijuana, vaping, rolling or chewing tobacco.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Riders must maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene  
No wet or soiled clothes. Shirt, pants/shorts and shoes required
- No abusive, threatening or obscene language or actions toward drivers, passengers, or other Link Transit employees.
- No physical abuse of another rider or the driver.
- No operating or tampering with any equipment on board a Link Transit vehicle.
- Using any sound-producing device without the use of headphones. Examples include playing music, having phone conversations on speaker.
- Must follow bus operator directions as required
- No hazardous, explosive, flammable, or other dangerous materials.
- Pets, other than Service Animals, must be in approved pet carriers. See page 13.
- Boarding with an excess of personal belongings.  
See page 14.
- **NOTE:** Violating Transit Code of Conduct RCW 9.91.025, federal, state, or municipal laws.

*Violation of these rules could result in a suspension of services.*

## Reasonable Modification

Link is committed to providing transportation to people with disabilities within our service boundaries. On a case-by-case basis we will make reasonable modifications to our policies and practices to ensure access to our public transportation services.

We will not make modifications if they:

- cause a direct threat to the health or safety of others
- fundamentally alter our service or vehicles
- are not essential for allowing a rider to access service
- result in an undue financial or administrative burden

If a policy or practice is preventing you from accessing our services, contact our Modification Coordinator for more information.

Phone: 509-664-7670

Email: [RMC@linktransit.com](mailto:RMC@linktransit.com)

By Mail or In Person:

Columbia Station

300 S. Columbia St., 2nd Floor

Wenatchee, WA 98801



## **Important Phone Numbers**

### **LINKPLUS RESERVATIONS**

509-662-3569

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Sunday

### **GUEST SERVICES**

509-662-1155

6 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday - Friday

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday

