



ACCESS-A-RIDE

USER GUIDE



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What is Access-A-Ride?

Access-A-Ride is an accessible transportation service operated by the City of Lethbridge. It provides door-to-door transportation for anyone who cannot ride conventional buses due to physical, sensory or cognitive disability. The service area is limited to locations within Lethbridge.

Access-A-Ride is not a direct ride service. Trips are scheduled efficiently to accommodate multiple passengers at once. All Access-A-Ride vehicles can transport wheelchair and non-wheelchair users.

Eligibility and Registration

Eligibility

To use Access-A-Ride, an individual must belong to one of the following:

- Unconditional eligibility – For individuals who cannot use conventional buses at any time. No renewal is required.
- Conditional eligibility – For individuals when conventional buses are not a viable option (e.g., someone whose mobility is limited by snowy or icy conditions).
- Temporary eligibility – For short-term needs, typically 12 months or less (e.g., pending surgery and recovery).

Access-A-Ride cannot accommodate infants or children under six years old. This is in alignment with Alberta Traffic Safety Act regulations on car seats and securement.

Children ages six to 11 years old and weighing more than 18 kg (40 lbs.) may ride if they are:

- Properly secured with a seatbelt
- Accompanied by a Personal Care Attendant

Registration

You can register for Access-A-Ride online or in-person.

- Online: lifemarkworkhealth.ca/city-of-lethbridge-access-a-ride
- In-Person: Lifemark – 1410 Mayor Magrath Dr. S, #103

For the safety of operators and passengers, additional specifications may be required during registration. This includes Hand-to-Hand Service and Personal Care Attendants.

Hand-to-hand service

Hand-to-hand service ensures a passenger is personally transferred between responsible parties at pick-up and drop-off. This is typically required for passengers who have cognitive impairments (e.g., dementia, developmental disabilities) and cannot be left alone at home or their destination.

It is the responsibility of the passenger (or their designated representative) to ensure that a hand-to-hand receiver is arranged and present at both the pick-up location and destination at the scheduled times. Transit staff are not responsible for arranging or confirming the presence of a receiving party.

If a responsible party is not present, the driver will follow the agency's safety protocols. This may include contacting dispatch or returning the passenger to a designated safe location.

Children ages 12 to 17 years old are mandatory hand-to-hand transfers.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who must accompany a passenger during their trip due to the passenger's needs. All passengers may travel with one PCA at no additional cost.

A PCA may be required if the passenger:

- Needs constant medical monitoring or physical assistance beyond what the driver can provide (drivers can only provide light assist).

- Requires help with personal care during the trip (e.g., administering medication, toileting, oxygen).
- Supervision for elopement or wandering risk (drivers exit the bus with each passenger to escort to the doors)
- Has medical or behavioral conditions that require continuous care or present a safety risk to themselves, others or the driver (supervision always required).
- Is a child younger than 11 years old.

Access-A-Ride Trips

Planning a Trip

Access-A-Ride is a shared ride service. Trips may take up to 60 minutes due to weather, traffic and scheduling demands. As such, please remain flexible when booking a trip.

Passengers are reminded to consider travel time when planning time-sensitive appointments, such as medical visits.

Booking a Trip

Access-A-Ride trips can be booked up to nine days in advance. Trips are subject to availability. Passengers are encouraged to book their trips as early as possible.

You can book a trip online or by calling a booking agent.

Online

To book online, passengers must have an email address on file. You can add an email address to your file by calling a booking agent (see 'By phone' for more information). Once registered, the online system lets you:

- Book a trip, up to nine days in advance.

- View history and upcoming trips.
- Cancel a trip.

Go to aarbooking.lethbridge.ca to book a trip online.

By phone

To book a trip by phone, call a booking agent at 403-329-6464 (during business hours: Mon. – Fri., 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.).

When calling to book, please tell the agent:

- Your full name.
- Your Access-A-Ride ID number.
- The date and time of your trip.
- Your specific pick-up and drop-off addresses.
- If you are using a mobility aid (crutches, wheelchair, etc.).
- If you are travelling with a Personal Care Assistant.

Additional trips must be booked no less than 30 minutes after drop-off. Operators during boarding cannot change pick-up and drop-off destinations or times.

Pick-up Window

Access-A-Ride trips operate using a 20-minute pick-up window rather than an exact pick-up time. This window allows flexibility for efficient routing while ensuring predictable service for passengers.

When a trip is booked, the passenger is given a scheduled pick-up time. The vehicle may arrive up to 10 minutes before or after that time.

(e.g., If a passenger is scheduled for pick-up at 10 a.m., the vehicle may arrive anytime between 9:50 and 10:10 a.m.)

Passengers are expected to be ready to board for the entire 20-minute pick-up window. Operators will wait five minutes upon arrival before proceeding to their next scheduled stop. This will be recorded as a missed trip.

- Allow up to 60 minutes to reach your destination, as this is a shared-ride service with multiple stops.
- Requests for specific vehicles, seating locations and operators cannot be accommodated.
- Trip destinations cannot be changed by operators at the time of pick-up.

Cancelling a Trip

You can cancel a trip online or by calling a booking agent during business hours.

Cancellations made less than two hours before the scheduled pickup are recorded as late cancellations. Frequent late cancellations may affect booking privileges and could lead to service suspension.

Cancellations made at pick-up are recorded as a missed trip.

Cancelling as early as possible helps make space for other passengers and prevents unnecessary trips.

Missed Trips

A missed trip is recorded when:

- The operator arrives at the scheduled time and address, but the passenger is not present or ready.
- A trip is cancelled at the door upon the operator's arrival.
- A trip is cancelled less than 30 minutes before the scheduled time.

Consequences for missed trips

If a trip is marked as a missed trip, the return trip will be automatically canceled.

Passengers with three missed trips or late cancellations within a 30-day period may face a two-week service suspension. A second occurrence may result in a one-year suspension.

Rules and Responsibilities

Passengers

All passengers must:

- Book and cancel their own trips.
- Be ready at least 10 minutes before a scheduled pick-up.
- Pay their fare during boarding through an accepted payment method.
- Remain seated with seatbelts or securements fastened while the vehicle is in motion.
- Handle their own baggage and belongings. Items must not obstruct securement points. Operators will not assist with baggage.
- Always follow the driver's directions. Improper conduct may result in service refusal.
- Avoid wearing scented products (e.g., perfume, cologne, scented lotion), as other passengers may have sensitivities or allergies.

To ensure everyone's safety, passengers are strictly prohibited from:

- Smoking and vaping within five metres or inside of the vehicle.
- Carrying open alcohol. Alcohol must be in sealed, unopened bottles during transportation.
- Interfering or tampering with the vehicle or its equipment.

Fare payment and payment methods

Access-A-Ride passengers are required to pay a fare for each one-way trip. Fares must be paid during boarding, and passengers must ensure their fare payment method is presented to or readily available for the operator.

Accepted payments methods include:

- LT Farecard – Funds can be loaded onto the LT Farecard at an authorized vendor or at ltfare.ca.
- Cash – Exact cash is required. Operators cannot make change.
- Credit/debit card – All Access-A-Ride vehicles are equipped with secure tap-enabled fare systems.

Failure to provide valid fare may result in the trip being refused.

Passengers who are approved to travel with a PCA may have that person ride at no additional charge. The PCA must board and deboard the vehicle at the same time as the passenger they are accompanying.

Operators

Operators will:

- Operate power lifts and ramps as needed.
- Secure wheelchairs and scooters with floor restraint devices.
- Assist with lap/shoulder straps and seatbelts for passengers.
- Help safely board and deboard passengers.
- Aid passengers from the vehicle to the first accessible door at the destination, or vice versa. (An accessible door has no more than one step.)

Operators will not:

- Transport mobility devices up or down more than one step or curb height. Please ensure your device is at ground level for loading.
- Enter a client's residence or lock/unlock doors on their behalf.
- Make repairs or adjustments to mobility equipment.
- Provide service if snow or ice has not been cleared and poses a safety risk.
- Assist with carrying personal belongings or baggage.

Animals on Board

Service dogs

Access-A-Ride operators are legally required to transport certified service dogs accompanying passengers with visual, hearing or other disabilities.

Passengers must provide valid certification from a recognized service animal facility or trainer during registration.

Service dogs are trained to be non-disruptive and do not require a seat, as they sit at their owner's feet.

Pets

Access-A-Ride aims to accommodate pets while ensuring passenger comfort. Because it is a shared service, some restrictions apply:

- Only small dogs and cats are permitted.
- Passengers are only permitted to bring one pet each.
- Pets be in a fully enclosed, clean and portable crate appropriate to their size.
- Crates must have a solid bottom to contain any waste.
- Crates must be small enough to fit on the owner's lap.
- Passengers must always hold onto their pet's crate. If space allows, it may be placed on the floor beside them without blocking aisles or other passengers.
- Pets may be denied transport if they misbehave or pose a health or safety risk.

Service animals are exempt from these restrictions.

To minimize allergy concerns, pets must remain in their crates to reduce airborne dander. If a passenger with allergies notifies the driver, seating arrangements may be adjusted.

Mobility Devices, Equipment and Securement

Mobility Devices and Scooters

All mobility devices, including scooters, must not exceed:

- A maximum length of 127 cm (50 in.).
- A maximum width of 76 cm (30 in.).
- A maximum occupied weight of 250 kg (550 lbs.).

Mobility devices must also be able to safely manoeuvre within the available space on the vehicle. Factors such as turning radius, overall footprint, ground clearance, and the ability to navigate ramps and securement areas may affect whether a device can be safely accommodated. Mobility devices must be positioned within the designated securement area without obstructing aisles, doorways, or emergency exits.

Accommodation is subject to safe boarding, securement, and operational requirements as determined by Lethbridge Transit.

Broda chairs and bariatric chairs cannot be accommodated due to safety limitations.

To ensure a smooth trip, all devices must:

- Have a seatbelt, working brakes, handles and securement points for proper restraint. If securement is not possible, the trip will be denied.
- Be in good working condition and structurally sound. Powered devices that have lost power cannot be boarded.
- Be shut off during transport.

Scooter-specific requirements

- Proper securement points are required for Q-Strait to secure the scooter safely.

- If securement points are too low and unsafe, the passenger will be asked to sit in a bus seat for safe transport.
- Three-wheeled scooters cannot be safely secured when occupied, and the passenger must transfer to a bus seat for safe transport.
- If a passenger cannot transfer to a seat and/or the scooter cannot be properly secured, the trip will be denied for safety reasons.

Lethbridge Transit reserves the right to deny service if a device is deemed unsafe.

Medical seatbelt exemption

Passengers unable to wear a seatbelt or shoulder strap due to health reasons must have a written exemption from a licensed medical practitioner on file.

- The exemption must comply with Alberta's regulatory requirements for seatbelt use.
- All exemption letters must be renewed annually by a licensed practitioner.

Oxygen Tanks

Oxygen tanks must be securely attached to a wheelchair or walker to prevent movement during transport.

A wheelchair and an oxygen tank carrier cannot be secured simultaneously.

Oxygen tanks on walkers must also be properly secured to prevent falling.

Additional Services

HeadsUP Reminders

HeadsUP is a customized alert system for Access-A-Ride passengers. It sends trip notifications and real-time arrival updates via phone call, email or

text (standard text messaging rates may apply). You can choose which alerts you receive and how you receive them.

To sign up, call a booking agent during business hours at 403-329-6464.

Lethbridge Transit

All Lethbridge Transit buses are fully wheelchair accessible, featuring low floors, kneeling capability, and deployable ramps, along with designated spaces for wheelchair securement.

Contact Us

Access-A-Ride Booking Agent

Business hours

Mon. – Fri., 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
(Closed weekends and holidays)

Phone

403-329-6464

Online

aarbooking.lethbridge.ca (for online trip booking)

lethbridge.ca/transit (to view this document online)