

Autauga County Rural Transportation Provides
the Convenient, Reliable Way To Ride.

Riders Guide

Autauga County Rural Transportation

Revised October 2022



Demand Response Service

This is a shared use curb to curb service that operates in response to reservations. A vehicle is scheduled to pick up the passenger and transport to the desired destination. The service is first come, first serve. The vehicle does not wait. The passenger will call into the office once the appointment is finished.

Hours

Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m.—4:00 p. m.
(except holidays)

Office Hours 7:30 a.m-4:00 p.m.

Fares

\$4.00 one-way trip half fare for ADA, children under 16 and senior citizens

\$8.00 one-way trip to Elmore and Montgomery Counties half fare for ADA, children under 16 and senior citizens.

Fare Collection

Fares will be collected by the driver at the beginning of each trip. Fares are to be made in cash. No round trip fares are to be paid to the drivers. **Correct fare for each leg of the trip must be provided to the driver upon boarding the vehicle. Drivers do not make change. Medicaid vouchers are not accepted.**

Service is not offered on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr & Robert E. Lee's Birthday
President's Day
Confederate Memorial Day
Memorial Day

Jefferson Davis' Birthday
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas

Request for Reasonable Modifications

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and directives from the Federal Transit Administration, Autauga County Rural Transportation will make every effort, to the maximum extent feasible, to ensure that person with a disability has access to, and benefits from, its services. Autauga County Rural Transportation will make reasonable modifications to its policies, programs, and procedures applicable to its transportation services when necessary to avoid discrimination and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.

To request reasonable modifications based on disability please use the **Reasonable Modification Request Form** or contact Autauga County Rural Transportation for assistance.

**Autauga County Rural Transportation
Phone: 334-358-6730**

You may be asked to complete a request form. Autauga County Rural Transportation will review the request in accordance with its reasonable modification plan. Autauga County Rural Transportation strives to respond in writing to each request within fifteen (15) calendar days.

All the information involved with this request will be kept confidential.

Accommodation of Mobility Devices

Consistent with Department of Transportation regulations, Autauga County Rural Transportation will transport a mobility device with three or more wheels and its user so long as the lift can safely accommodate the size and weight of the mobility device and its user and there is space for the mobility device on the vehicle.

Title VI Notice to the Public

Autauga County Rural Transportation hereby gives public notice to its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related statutes. Title VI and statutes prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding Autauga County Rural Transportation's transportation service has a right to file a formal complaint with Autauga County Rural Transportation. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to the Director within thirty days following the date of the alleged occurrence.

For more information on Autauga County Rural Transportation's civil right program and procedures to file a complaint:

Contact Audra Smith, Assistant Administrator, at 334-358-6700 or email Audra.smith@autauga.com

Visit: Autauga County Rural Transportation at 218 North Court St., Prattville, AL 36067

Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits provided by Autauga County Rural Transportation. Autauga County Rural Transportation's personnel policies govern employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or tape recording of the complaint will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Autauga County Rural Transportation
Attention: Rose Thomas-Williams
218 North Court Street Room 104
Prattville, AL 36067
Phone: 334-358-6730
Email: Rose.thomas@autauga.com

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the complaint, Autauga County Rural Transportation will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the meeting, Autauga County Rural

Transportation will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print or Spanish. The response will explain the position of the agency and offer options for substantive resolution of complaint.

If the response by Autauga County Rural Transportation does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the written response. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after the meeting, Autauga County Rural Transportation will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints will be retained for at least three (3) years.

Scheduling a Ride

You will need to have the following ready when you call:

- first and last name
- date of trip
- address and phone number of pick-up location
- address and phone number of drop-off location
- appointment time
- return trip, if return trip
- notify if you will be using a wheelchair and/or traveling with a personal care attendant, companion, or service animal

Occasionally a dispatcher may ask you to change your requested date and/or time in order to accommodate your request.

Pick-Up and Drop-off

Every attempt is made to pick up as close to the schedule time as possible. The vehicle may arrive from 15-45 minutes before your scheduled pick-up. Please be ready at least an hour before the appointment time so that the driver can stay on schedule.

If the vehicle has not arrived by 15 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time, call Autauga County Rural Transportation to report the situation and receive further assistance.

No Show/Late Cancellation/Canceling a Ride

Riders will be considered a no-show/late cancellation if:

- a trip is not cancelled at least an hour before the scheduled pick-up time
- the rider does not board the vehicle within three minutes of the pick-up time
- if the driver arrives at the destination address and the rider is not available or does not take the trip.

Excessive cancellations and/or three no-shows in a month may result in a 30-day suspension of service.

You must call (334) 358-6730 at least **an hour before** your scheduled pick-up time to cancel a trip. You may leave a voicemail if after hours.

Flag Stops

Autauga County Rural Transportation does not offer flag stops.

Standing Orders

Passengers can request a standing order trip by calling the Dispatcher. Once it is set up, the dispatcher will automatically schedule the trips,

the passenger will no longer need to make reservations for those trips. Standing orders trips will be limited to 50% of the agency's total trips unless extra capacity is available and next day requests are not being denied. There is no additional cost for standing orders.

If a passenger is sick or out of town during a scheduled trip, the passenger should call the Dispatcher and suspend the standing order trip temporarily. Drivers cannot set up, cancel, or suspend a standing order trip. The passenger must call the Dispatcher to complete these actions.

Causes for Suspension of Service

Misusing the system can result in suspension of service. The following misuses could lead to suspension. This list is not comprehensive.

1. Excessive Cancellations, No-shows, and/or late cancellations

Excessive Cancellations, No-shows, and/or late cancellations delay the vehicle and deny opportunities for others to ride.

2. Disruptive or Abusive Behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior annoys and can endanger others. This behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Intimidation or threats of physical harm
- Verbal abuse
- Unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations
- Unauthorized use of vehicle equipment
- Smoking on vehicle
- Eating or drinking without medical necessity

- Refusing to remain seated with seatbelts firmly secured
- Defacing equipment

Refusing to comply with the requirements may result in permanent discontinuation of service.

Suspension Process

If a rider is reported or observed to be abusing the service in any way, including, but not limited to, those ways mentioned under Causes for Suspension of Service, Autauga County Rural Transportation will contact the rider to investigate.

If the rider's behavior or use of the service is determined to be in violation of Autauga County Rural Transportation operational and safety policies, the rider will receive a written notice of service suspension that explains the reason(s) for the suspension.

Suspensions will not be imposed for circumstances that are beyond a rider's control.

Examples of situations not within the rider's control are:

- a sudden personal weather emergency, or traffic delay
- sudden or worsening illness
- late arrival of the Autauga County Rural Transportation vehicle
- a driver who does not provide appropriate assistance
- disruptive behavior caused by a disability

If the investigation reveals a rider's disruptive behavior is due to a disability and beyond his/her control, service may not be suspended. However, Autauga County Rural Transportation may require

the rider to travel with a companion to help control his/her behavior and prevent harm to self or others.

If a companion cannot help control the behavior and a safety or health hazard continues to exist service may be discontinued.

Appealing a Suspension

In order to appeal a decision for suspension, Autauga County Rural Transportation must receive a written request to appeal. The operations manager will review the appeal and notify the rider of the outcome by telephone or mail, within seven working days after receipt of the written request for appeal. Appeals must be forwarded to:

Autauga Co. Rural Transportation Appeals
218 North Court Street Room 104
Prattville, AL 36067
Or send your appeal to the Director, Rose Thomas-Williams by email at Rose.thomas@autauga.com.

If the rider does not agree with the decision of the Director, the rider may request a review by the Autauga County Administrator.

Transportation will not be provided during the appeal process.

Complaint Procedures

During the normal course of providing service to the community it is possible that passengers and/or members of the public will desire to lodge a complaint about the quality of transit service offered or the manner in which transit service is

delivered. Every effort will be made to handle these issues quickly, courteously, and fairly.

All employees are reminded that everyone in the community has the right to express concerns about transit operations. One should also remember that the mere allegation of impropriety, however, does not establish proof that a violation has occurred. Every effort will be made to address and resolve customer complaints as quickly as possible, but certainly within fifteen (15) Business days.

Specifically, a complaint is an allegation by a member of the public that there has been a specific violation, misinterpretation, or inappropriate act by the member of Autauga County Rural Transportation. Vague or general charges of unfairness that are not substantiated by facts will not be processed through the dispute resolution system.

All complaints will be referred to Rose Thomas-Williams, Director for investigation and resolution. Complaints specifically alleging inappropriate behavior by management personnel of Autauga County Rural Transportation will be referred to Scott Kramer, Administrator. Escalated complaints will be referred to the Autauga County Commission. The following steps are established to provide a framework for handling these issues.

Dispute Resolution System

Step One – The complaint is received by the Director. Sufficient information is collected to allow an investigation. Upon receiving the complaint, Autauga County

Rural Transportation will contact the issuer for further details.

Step Two – The details will be investigated and presented to the Director for development of additional facts, to identify (where possible) the employee in question and determine what actually occurred.

Step Three – If the complaint has merit, the Director of Autauga County Rural Transportation will counsel the appropriate employee and take the appropriate progressive disciplinary steps.

Step Four – Where applicable the Director of Autauga County Rural Transportation will respond to the individual filing the complaint within fifteen (15) days. Depending on the desires of the individual and the Nature of the complaint, this response may be either a telephone call (sufficiently documented) or a written response.

Step Five – For any egregious complaint the Director of Autauga County Rural Transportation will advise the Administrator for Autauga County. A joint decision may be made to accelerate the disciplinary process or take other extraordinary actions to resolve the complaint.

Step Six – If the member of the public is not satisfied with actions taken by Autauga County Rural Transportation personnel or if they demand further action, these unresolved complaints will be referred to the Local Transportation Bureau, ALDOT in Montgomery.

Mr. Bradley B. Lindsey, P. E.
State Local Transportation Engineer
Local Transportation Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36110
Phone: (334) 242-6768
Email: LindseyB@dot.state.al.us

Step Seven – If the member of the public is not satisfied with actions taken by the state, they may contact the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights Officer in Washington, D.C. We freely and promptly provide names, telephone numbers and addresses.

Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights
Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Step Eight – The Executive Director of Autauga County Rural Transportation shall maintain a log of Title VI complaints received. The log shall include the date the complaint was filed, a summary of the allegations, the status of the complaint, and actions taken in response to the complaint.

The entire issue of complaint resolution, whether it is one of our employees or a member of the public, is one of courtesy and common sense. We serve the public and they have a right to share their concerns with us. We will handle all complaints courteously and will not allow ourselves to argue about the merits of any complaint. In many instances, individuals merely want to be heard. We will give them that opportunity.

Conduct on Vehicles

The following is never allowed when riding on Autauga County Rural Transportation Vehicles:

- smoking by driver or passenger
- inappropriate displays of affection or sexual advances
- eating or drinking unless medically necessary
- riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- littering
- profanity
- playing radios or other devices without the use of headphones
- threats of physical harm to self or others
- verbal, nonverbal, or physical harassment
- unauthorized use or willful damage to vehicle or equipment
- refusing to abide by Alabama State Law regarding seatbelt usage.
- Criminal conduct defined in and/or prohibited by the Alabama Penal Code

NOTE: Repeated violation of these rules may result in permanent discontinuation of service.

Rider Responsibilities

Riders have the responsibility to:

- Treat other riders, drivers, and Autauga County Rural Transportation staff with courtesy and respect.
- Read all sections of the Handbook.
- Make reservations at least one day in advance before 10:00 a.m.
- Provide entry if the pick-up address is located inside of a gated community or other place with special access.

- Call to report if Autauga County Rural Transportation has not arrived within 15 minutes of scheduled appointments.
- Pay correct fare at the time of service. Drivers do not make change. If correct change is not provided the driver will make a stop for change and a fee the same as the cost of the trip will be charged.
- Wear seatbelts. Failure to do so may result in termination of transportation.
- Board the vehicle within three minutes of the vehicle's arrival. Sufficient time will be provided for the rider to board and exit the vehicle.
- Ensure mobility aids are in standard operating condition.
- Board the vehicles with the packages you can handle alone. Packages must not occupy a seat, be on the floor, or create a safety hazard.
- Provide updates of address changes, telephone numbers, emergency contact, change in physical condition or equipment used, etc.

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers have the responsibility to:

- Treat riders, Autauga County Rural Transportation staff, and the general public with courtesy and respect.
- Wear ID badge issued by Autauga County Rural Transportation at all times and present a neat, professional appearance.
- Ensure safe drop-offs of riders, which includes, at minimum, visually watching the rider until he/she has safely entered the door. In some cases, this may also include contacting dispatch to make sure that an attendant is available to meet a rider needing assistance from the curb to the door.

- Use the incident/accident form to report concerns that may cause an unsafe, unsanitary, or unpleasant trip for you or others.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of the vehicle.
- Maintain the schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- Assist riders when entering and exiting the vehicle.
- Report incidents and accidents immediately. The dispatcher will call 911 if necessary.
- Obey all traffic laws and posted speed limits.

Assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- offering riders a steady arm or other appropriate guidance when entering and exiting the vehicle
- helping riders in wheelchairs to maneuver on standard lifts, and ensuring that wheelchairs are in standard operation condition

Drivers are Not Permitted

Drivers are not permitted to:

- enter a rider’s residence
- perform any personal care for rider’s, including, but not limited to, assisting riders with getting dressed
- lift or carry riders
- assist riders or mobility devices up or down steps
- fuel the vehicle with riders onboard
- accept tips or gratuities
- use personal cell phones or engage in texting while vehicle is in motion
- change the drop off location at the request of a rider, parent/guardian, or agency representative. The rider, parent/guardian, or agency

representative must contact Autauga County Rural Transportation to make such changes.

** If a rider requires assistance from the curb to the door and does not have a family member or caregiver available to assist them, they can sign a waiver releasing Autauga County Rural Transportation of any liability. The driver can then assist them to the door. This waiver is only intended for those riders that need assistance from the curb to their door and not as a means of convenience. To receive a waiver, you can ask your driver, call Autauga County Rural Transportation office at 334-358-6730.

Parcels

Parcel (groceries) are allowed if the rider can reasonably carry and control the parcel. Three to five small bags or a small parcel weighing 10 pounds or less is allowed. The rider must be able to get the parcel (s) on and off the vehicle in one trip, stabilize it, and control it throughout the trip. For non-ambulatory riders or riders with disabilities, the parcel(s) should be such that the driver or an accompanying person can carry the parcel(s) on and off the vehicle in one trip, stabilize it and have the parcel(s) under control for the trip. Any Parcel(s) that either directly or indirectly threatens the safe transportation of riders will not be allowed (i.e., mops, brooms, small furniture, bicycles, cases of water or sodas, etc.). **Only a driver or the Companion or PCA can assist with parcels.**

Service Animals/Pets

Riders may travel with a service animal, but pets will not be transported. When calling to make a reservation, please advise if you will be accompanied by a service animal.

Personal Care Attendant/Companions

A personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who assists the rider with mobility. A PCA will be allowed to ride without charge when accompanying the eligible individual to or from the same origin and destination. A PCA and a fare-paying companion may both travel with you on the same trip. When calling to make a reservation, please advise if you will be riding with a PCA.

A rider may travel with one companion for the same fare as the rider. A companion is not a personal care attendant. A companion travels with the rider for company, not for assistance. When calling to make a reservation, please advise if you will be riding with a companion.

Seatbelt

It is the policy of Autauga County Rural transportation that all riders must wear a seatbelt during the duration of the trip when using the transportation service.

Children

Children under 13 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Children 14 and over may travel alone on a case-by-case basis. A car seat or booster seat must be used for any child under six years of age. Rear facing seats are recommended until the child is one year old or 20 pounds. Forward-facing seats should be used until the child is five years old or weighs 40 pounds. Alabama law requires children to ride in booster seats until reaching six years of age.

Autauga County Rural Transportation does not provide child safety seats and the drivers are not permitted to secure child safety seats. It is the responsibility of the rider to provide and secure the safety seat. All children must be secured in an appropriate device or seatbelt while the vehicle is

in motion. When calling to make a reservation, please advise if you will be riding with a child. All children will be charged a fare.

Medical Equipment

Riders may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other medical equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials. Equipment must be small enough to fit in the vehicle and be fully secured during transport.

Wheelchairs

Vehicles are equipped with lifts to meet specifications under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Autauga County Rural Transportation will make every effort to accommodate passengers in wheelchairs; however, Autauga County Rural Transportation cannot transport mobility devices that exceed the weight limit or physical capacity of the lift, or a wheelchair is in poor condition.

Please note that a rider's safety cannot be guaranteed if the riders choose to remain seated in three-wheeled scooters or rolling walkers with a seat during transport.

Inclement Weather

It is the policy of Autauga County Rural Transportation to keep the citizens of Autauga County and its employees safe during inclement weather conditions. The drivers will follow ACRT procedures for inclement weather. The Director will use information provided by Autauga County Emergency Management to determine if transportation services should be delayed or suspended.