EAGLE TRANSIT

Passenger Guide
Dial-A-Ride Services

Flathead County Public Transportation Provider

Operations Office
1333 Willow Glen Drive
Kalispell, MT

July 2016

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INTRODUCTION and CONTACT INFORMATION

Eagle Transit provides public transit services within Flathead County. We offer fixed route city buses and commuter buses for the general public. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, we also provide Paratransit Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service, which is an appointment-based, shared-ride specialized public transit service for people who have disabilities or other conditions that make it difficult for them typically to use our fixed route service. DAR operates up to ¾ of a mile from any fixed bus route.

Our buses are all ADA compliant and equipped with lifts.

This guide provides important information for DAR passengers. If you don't see an answer to your question or would like further clarification, please give the Dispatch Office a call. Office hours are 7:00 am–5:00 pm, Monday-Friday.

Dispatch Office:	406-758-5728
Administrative Office:	406-758-2426
Transportation Manager:	406-758-2427
Eagle Transit Physical Address:	1333 Willow Glen Dr., Kalispell
Mailing Address:	40 11th Street W., Kalispell, 59901 (c/o Flathead Co. Agency on Aging)

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Thank you for being a valued Eagle Transit customer. We strive to make your riding experience safe, pleasant and as convenient as possible. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we're doing. Of course we love compliments, but complaints are critical as they alert us to the need to fix problems and improve service.

You can register your comments or complaints by phone or through our website at https://flathead.mt.gov/eagle/contact_us.php

Eagle Transit does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or other protected class. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint, forms are available at the Eagle Transit office, in all buses and on the website: https://flathead.mt.gov/eagle/documents/title-vi-complaint-formandbrochure.pdf

APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS

Application

To apply for Paratransit Dial-A-Ride service, please complete and submit an application form. Applications are available at the Eagle Transit office, from Eagle Transit bus drivers or you may

download one from our website at www.flathead.mt.gov/eagle. Instructions for completing and submitting the application are included with the form.

Once you submit the completed application, please allow 15 calendar days for eligibility determination and identification card processing. Applications are reviewed and approved or denied by a 3-person Eligibility Committee. If you are determined to be eligible, we will mail you an i.d. card. If you are determined to be ineligible, we will send you a letter with an explanation of why you were denied the service and how to appeal the decision. If you have not received an i.d. card or letter within 15 days of submission, please contact the Eagle Transit Dispatch Office to check on the status of your application.

You may present your Eagle Transit Dial-A-Ride ID card to ride the fixed route city buses and commuter buses for free.

Your i.d. card may also qualify you for visitor eligibility on ADA Paratransit Services in other cities throughout the U.S.

Appeal Process

Denied applicants have 60 days to submit a written appeal to the Transportation Manager. Applicants may also request an in-person meeting with the Transportation Manager. Once an appeal is received, the Transportation Manager will make a decision within 30 days and will notify the applicant in writing.

TYPES OF DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICES

Eagle Transit offers paratransit customers three types of services:

1. Paratransit Dial-A-Ride service: This is a federally-required service for people with disabilities or other conditions that typically make it difficult for them to use fixed route bus service. The service area is ¾ of a mile from any fixed route.
    a. The service is always available the same days and times as the fixed route services, for the same fare. Eagle Transit offers fixed route city bus service in Kalispell, Whitefish and Columbia Falls.
    b. The service is appointment-based, which means passengers schedule rides in advance.
    c. It is an origin to destination service, which means passengers are picked up where they are and taken where they want to go, as long as they are in the ¾ mile service area.
    d. Rides are shared, which means there may be multiple passengers on the bus at the same time, and pick-up and drop-offs will occur based on the "flow" of the route rather than "first-on, first-off."

2. "Same Day" service: This is an optional, premium fare service in which Paratransit Dial-A-Ride customers may request service on the same day they wish to ride.
    a. We will make every effort to accommodate same day ride requests, but sometimes rides may be unavailable due to limited capacity.
    b. Same Day charges also apply to:
        - Rides requested after 3:00 pm for the next day

- Changing your pick-up location, destination, or pick-up time after 3:00 pm for the next day

3. Country Dial-A-Ride: This is an optional, premium fare service available countywide to Paratransit Dial-A-Ride customers who want to travel outside ¾ miles from a fixed city bus route.
    a. Appointments must be made five (5) days in advance
    b. Days of operation are limited. The service runs on Tuesday for those wishing to be picked up north of Highway 2 and Thursday for pick-ups south of Highway 2.
    c. The fare is based on number of miles traveled.

PICK-UPS and DROP-OFFS

Paratransit Dial-A-Ride passengers are picked up and dropped off curbside, or at the door if needed. The fare is the same for curb-to-curb or door-to-door service. Drivers will always assist passengers on and off the bus.

- *Curb-to-curb* service means the bus driver will pick you up at the curb of your home (or other place of origin) and drop you off at the curb of your destination.

- *Door-to-door* service means the bus driver will meet you at the ground floor door of your home (or other place of origin) and upon arrival at your destination will escort you to the ground floor door of your destination. Please let the Eagle Transit Dispatch Office know if you need door-to-door assistance. They'll discuss your situation with you to determine if drivers can safely meet you at your door. If necessary, an Eagle Transit staff person may make a visit to your home to assess the feasibility of providing you with door-to-door service. Please note the ability to safely provide door-to-door service may involve the absence or condition of stairs, ramps, doors, handrails, pathways, etc., as well snow and ice build-up during the winter months. It is the responsibility of passengers to make sure the pathway to their home is free of snow and ice. Bus drivers may determine conditions are unsafe for door-to-door assistance for a particular ride even if the service is generally available to you.

- Drivers will not enter private homes for any reason.

- When dropping off or picking up passengers from businesses, medical facilities or other public buildings, drivers will assist passengers to go through the second door of a foyer. Drivers will not go beyond this point.

- If you need further assistance through the doors of your origin or destination you will be responsible for arranging for someone to assist you.

FARES

All fares are one-way. Passengers must pay the appropriate fare each time they get on the bus. Fares may be paid with cash (exact change only) or check, or by having a pass or punch card which are

available from any driver or at the Eagle Transit office. If a passenger does not have a pass, punch card or cash/check, service will not be provided. Drivers cannot make change or accept tips.

Paratransit Dial-A-Ride Regular Fare

- $1.00 per one way trip

Passes and Punch Cards

- Unlimited monthly passes are $25
- Punch cards are available in $10 increments

Premium Dial-A-Ride Services

- "Same Day" ride request is $5.00 each way.
    - Please note, new rides or changes to previously scheduled rides requested after 3:00 pm for the next day will also be charged the "Same Day" fare.
- Country Dial-A-Ride is available countywide for $1.00 per mile traveled (from the Eagle Transit bus barn) up to a maximum charge of $20 per one-way trip.

City and Commuter Buses:

- People who present a Dial-A-Ride i.d card can ride fixed route city buses and commuter buses at no charge.
- Other passengers pay $1.00 per one-way trip. If you are a Dial-A-Ride customer but do not have your i.d. card with you, you will have to pay the $1.00 fare.

Note: Some passengers are transported under contract with various agencies and do not pay individual fares.

SCHEDULING RIDES

<u>Making an appointment for a ride</u>

To schedule a ride, please call the Dispatch Office. You may schedule a ride as far in advance as you wish. The latest you can schedule a ride and pay the regular fare is 3:00 pm the day before you want to ride. You may also leave a message over the weekend requesting a Monday ride as long as it is recorded by 3:00 pm on Sunday.

Rides requested after 3:00 pm for the next day will be charged the "Same Day" fare.

Country Dial-A-Ride is offered on limited days and must be scheduled 5 days in advance.

When you call to schedule your ride, to help us serve you better, please let the dispatcher know if you:

- Need door-to-door assistance
- Use a wheelchair, walker, or other mobility aide
- Plan to have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or a service animal with you
- Plan to have another individual(s) ride with you

Scheduling your pick-up and return times

Dispatchers will make every effort to schedule your rides at the time you request. However, for logistical reasons, it may be necessary to negotiate the time with you up to one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after your desired time.

When you call to schedule your ride, let the dispatchers know what time you need to arrive at your destination so they can determine the appropriate pick-up time. If you also need a return ride, let them know what time you would like to be picked up for the return.

Schedules are made after 3:00 pm, so you will receive an automated call later in the day confirming your pick-up times.

On Call Returns

We offer "on call" returns for passengers who are at medical appointments or who are at the Social Security office or the local Office of Public Assistance. Call the Dispatch Office when you are ready to return and a vehicle will be sent as soon as possible. We also offer pharmacy rides following medical appointments for the regular $1 fare.

VEHICLE ARRIVAL TIMES

We will arrive as close to your confirmed pick-up time as possible. However, because DAR is a shared ride service and because road, traffic and weather conditions can be unpredictable, the vehicle may arrive up to fifteen (15) minutes before or fifteen (15) minutes after your scheduled pick up time.

Example: If you are scheduled for a 9:30 am pick-up, the vehicle will arrive between 9:15 am and 9:45 am.

Please be ready and waiting where you can see the vehicle arrive. **The driver will only wait three (3) minutes after arrival** at your curb (or door, if door-to-door service), then the driver will leave and the ride will be considered a "no show." If you miss your ride, we will not be able to send the vehicle back or send a second vehicle for you.

If the Eagle Transit bus arrives earlier than 15 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time, the 3-minute wait time will not begin until the 15 minute mark. For example, your pick-up time is 9:30 and the bus arrives at 9:10. The driver will wait until 9:15 plus an additional 3 minutes.

CANCELLING RIDES and NO-SHOWS

If you are unable to make your scheduled ride, please call the Dispatch Office as soon as possible to cancel. Please note, drivers cannot make cancellations or schedule changes for you.

A trip may be cancelled up until one (1) hour before the scheduled pick up. Cancellations after that will be considered a "no show."

Be sure to cancel your scheduled return trip at the same time, if applicable. Your return trip will not be cancelled automatically, and if you don't cancel it will also be considered a "no show."

What is a "no-show?"

- You fail to cancel your trip at least one (1) hour before your scheduled pick-up time.
- You fail to meet the vehicle at your designated pick-up location.
- You are not ready to go within the pick-up time period of fifteen (15) minutes before to fifteen (15) minutes after your confirmed time. *Remember, the driver will only wait for 3 minutes after the vehicle arrives.*

Excess "no-shows" and cancellations

An excess of "no shows" or cancellations within a 30-day period will result in the loss of Dial-A-Ride service for thirty (30) days. When determining how many "no shows" or cancellations are too many, Eagle Transit will consider multiple factors, including the proportion of "no shows" to total rides and extenuating circumstances.

If you have been suspended from the program, you have the right to request an appeal of the decision. Appeals must be filed in writing within sixty (60) days of the date of the letter of suspension and should be addressed to the Transportation Manager.

ASSISTING PASSENGERS USING MOBILITY AIDES

Steps

Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers using mobility aides up or down steps. When steps exist to get into or out of the door of an origin or destination, passengers are responsible for arranging for assistance from someone else.

Ramps

Drivers will assist passengers using mobility aides to use ADA complaint ramps when available. However, if a ramp does not appear to be ADA compliant, the driver may refuse to assist a passenger to use it until Eagle Transit management examines the ramp to determine if it meets ADA regulations. If you need assistance to use ramps and you know there is a ramp at your origin or destination that you think may not be up to code, please let the Dispatch Office know as soon as possible before scheduling your ride so they can arrange to have someone look at it. Alternatively, you may meet the driver at the curb, or arrange assistance up and down the ramp from someone other than the Eagle Transit driver.

Note: In general, ADA compliance requires ramps not exceed twelve (12) inches of length for every inch of increase in height. There are also some requirements about the type of surface, landings, handrails, etc. A summary of ramp standards is available upon request.

Maximum Size of wheelchair

A wheelchair is a mobility aide belonging to any class of three (3) or four (4) wheeled devices, usable indoors, design for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. A "common wheelchair" is such a device which does not exceed thirty (30) inches in width and forty-eight (48) inches in length measured two (2) inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than six-hundred (600) pounds when occupied. This is the maximum size of wheelchair Eagle Transit can transport.

Power wheelchairs or scooters

Passengers must be able to safely operate their own power wheelchair or scooter. Drivers are not allowed to operate or control anyone's power mobility device.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

If you need the assistance of another person in order to complete your trip or its purpose, you may take one (1) personal care attendant (PCA) with you at no additional charge. At the time you schedule your ride, let the dispatcher know you will be travelling with an attendant. Please note, your PCA must get on and get off at the same location you do to ride for free.

OXYGEN TANKS

If you use supplemental oxygen, the tank must be portable. You must be able to carry the tank into the vehicle by yourself or have it securely fastened to your mobility aide.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are always welcome. The passenger must have the service animal fully under control at all times so as not to disrupt other passengers, driver, or the schedule. Drivers will not assume any responsibility for service animals. When you schedule your ride, please let the dispatcher know if you will have a service animal with you.

Eagle Transit does not allow pets or comfort animals on vehicles.

SEATBELTS

Use of seatbelts is encouraged but not required for passengers in Eagle Transit vehicles. Passengers should stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop and the doors open.

All passengers using a wheelchair or scooter must allow the driver to secure the device to the vehicle using the 4-point restraint system installed for this purpose. Passengers may choose, but are not required, to use a shoulder and/or lap belt if provided.

PACKAGES and OTHER CARRY ON ITEMS

The number of packages or other items a passenger may have on board is limited to what the passenger and/or the driver can safely carry onto the vehicle in one trip. Drivers have discretion as to how much they can carry to assist passengers.

All items must be small enough to be placed in the storage area of the vehicle or out of the aisles. No big boxes, bulky items, or large bags that would be considered a 'household move' are permitted.

SMOKING

No smoking or use of e-cigarettes are allowed on the bus.

DISRUPTIVE PASSENGERS

Eagle Transit may suspend or refuse service to any individual whose behavior and/or actions are deemed violent, disruptive, and/or illegal or cause interruption to service. Drivers may ask disruptive passengers to get off the bus at the nearest safe location. If the person refuses to get off the bus, the driver will contact Dispatch to call law enforcement for assistance.

HOLIDAYS

Eagle Transit does not operate on the following holidays:
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
4th of July
Labor Day
Columbus Day
General Election Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day