How to Ride with CDTA

CDTA offers an easy and inexpensive way to get around the Capital Region. Whether you are a commuter, a student or a tourist visiting for the first time, you can get there with us. Find out what you need to know about riding CDTA right here.

Riders using screen readers, please read guidelines for JAWS settings.

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Safeguard New York - "If You See Something Say Something"

INTRODUCTION:

The Capital District Transportation Authority, CDTA for short, has been providing transit service to the people of our region since 1970. Our service area includes the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady. Our buses travel along 60 or so bus routes which go to just about every major employment center, shopping area and recreational site in the Capital Region. Our service is safe, efficient and reliable; our employees are professional and friendly; and, our equipment is modern, clean and comfortable.

WELCOME ABOARD:

Welcome aboard CDTA! We are happy that you have chosen to ride with us and we want to do everything we can to make you happy. This convenient "How To Ride Guide" will help you to use our system easily and confidently. Please refer to it often.

- Your time is important and we want to provide you with transit service that you can rely on. This guide contains a number of tips that will make your CDTA trip easy and pleasant. If you have questions or need help, call us or ask your bus operator. Our Customer Information Center (CIC) is staffed by information operators who can answer your questions and help you plan your trip. People who wish to schedule an appointment with a Travel Trainer to help plan their trip can call 453-8377 x 222 or the Customer Service Information Center at 482-8822. The customer should share with them where they wish to go (when). There is a CDTA Travel Trainer in every county we serve: Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer and Saratoga. Someone from the appropriate county will call back to schedule an appointment. (Below is a description of their services)

  Travel Trainers will help people to become a successful transit user by providing information and support in a one-on-one instructor assistance. Travel Trainers will personally escort customers on their initial bus trip (specific routes) through appointment.

Travel trainers will help customers:

plan their trip
read and understand route maps and schedules
get on and off bus properly
pay fare and purchase passes
transfer to other buses
ride specific routes
travel independently and confidently when riding the bus
Please give them a call at 482-8822.

Thank you for traveling with CDTA. We are pleased to have you aboard.

CALL CDTA'S CUSTOMER INFORMATION CENTER AT 482-8822

If you are a new rider or will be taking the bus to an unfamiliar place, you should get information about schedule times, locations and fares before you begin your CDTA trip. That's where our Customer Information Center comes in. The Customer Information Center is open from 6AM to 7PM Monday-Friday and from 8:30AM to 6PM on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays.

Our information operators will tell you which bus to catch, where to board it and which stop is closest to your destination. They can also give you information about fares, Swiper Cards, and sales outlets. If you would like, they will mail you schedules, brochures or a full-color transit guide which provides an overview of our service and the entire Capital District area.

Call the CIC at 482-8822 whenever you need help in using any of CDTA's services. When you call, have paper and pen handy to write information down. And be prepared to give the telephone operator the address or intersection you are at, the address or nearest intersection you want to go to, and the time that you would like to travel.

People with hearing impairments can reach the Information center through our telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD).

About Bus Schedules:

On the cover of each schedule you will see a route number and name. The number and name on the schedule correspond to the information on the large sign above the windshield on every CDTA bus. A time schedule and route map tell you when and where a bus travels. Bus schedules are divided into sections for weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. If a bus route does not travel on Saturday and/or Sunday, this will be noted on its schedule.

Schedules are written to tell you when the bus will pass through a major intersection along the route. Determine where you want to go and at what time. Follow the row of time points from the place you want to travel from, to the place you want to travel to. Determine which time is good for you, and you will be on your way. If there is a symbol near any of your time points, check the

notes section of the schedule. Some routes have alternate patterns or slight trip deviations to accommodate more customers. These symbols explain these trip deviations in detail.

How To Get A Bus Schedule:

CDTA bus schedules are available at hundreds of locations throughout the Capital Region. Most area libraries, museums, government offices and shopping centers have schedules available. Many bank branches, Price Chopper and Hannaford supermarkets carry them, too.

Your bus operator should have a supply of schedules for the route you are on. Or you can call our CIC at 482-8822. We will send a schedule to you and give you a list of locations where you can pick one up yourself.

WAITING FOR THE BUS:

Schedule times can be affected by traffic and weather conditions, so you should plan to arrive at your bus stop about 5 minutes before the scheduled arrival time of your bus.

About Bus Stops:

Stand at the bus stop or in the shelter. Do not stand in the roadway or at the edge of the curb. CDTA bus stop signs are white with blue and gold trim. Each bus stop sign contains the number of the bus route that passes by that location. In general, bus stops are spaced about 500 feet apart. In the interest of safety, CDTA bus operators are instructed to pick up and drop off customers only at official bus stop locations. As your bus approaches, raise your hand to signal the bus operator. This will let the bus operator know that you want to board.

Identifying Your Bus:

To be sure that you are boarding the right bus, check the route name and number which is displayed on the large sign above the windshield on every CDTA bus. This is called the overhead destination sign. The route number and name on the overhead destination sign should be the same as that shown on the front cover of the bus schedule. The space on the far right-hand side of the destination sign will tell you where the bus is going. A sign over the passenger-side window will tell you the direction that the bus is traveling on that route. If you are not sure that you are getting on the right bus, ask your bus operator for help.

BOARDING THE BUS:

Let departing customers exit before you board. We ask that customers try to exit through the rear door to speed the boarding process. If you thing you might have difficulty climbing the bus steps, ask the bus operator to lower the steps for you. All CDTA buses are equipped with a kneeling device which lowers the first step to curb level for your convenience. Some buses are equipped with lifts to accommodate customers who use wheelchairs.

Board the bus carefully. Always use the hand rails for support when you enter or exit. Be careful when walking up or down the steps during bad weather; and be extra careful if you are boarding with young children. The steps can get slippery during rain or snowstorms.

Please have your fare ready in the exact amount. If you need a Go Card, ask the bus operator for one before you pay your fare. After paying the fare, find a seat quickly and make yourself comfortable. The seats of the front of the bus are reserved for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Please relinquish these seats if they are needed. If all seats are occupied, move to the back of the bus to allow additional customers to board. You will find poles throughout the bus to hold onto if you are standing. Please hold small children securely when the bus is moving. Do not allow small children to walk around the bus unattended.

PAYING THE FARE:

The bus fare is collected when you board the bus. CDTA bus operators do not handle money, so they cannot make change. All fares are deposited into the fare box. Please have the exact fare ready when you board. This will speed up the payment process and make the trip faster for everybody.

About the Fare Structure:

The CDTA fare structure is a base system. The base fare is $1.50. Most trips are taken in the base syatem and require only the base fare. Longer trips that require using another bus will require depositing another base fare of $1.50. A unlimited use day pass called Day Card is available for $4.00. Children 6 years of age and under ride free when accompanied by a fare paying adult. The policy will be enforced at the fare box using a measure of 46 inches (average height of a 6 year old child).The limit is three children per fare paying adult. Fare information is included on all CDTA brochures; is listed on the front of each fare box on every CDTA bus; and, is included on all CDTA promotional material. You can get fare information for any trip in our system by calling our CIC at 482-8822. An information operator will help you.

Putting Money in the Fare Box:

All CDTA buses are equipped with electronic fare boxes that automatically count and process fares. The fare box "beeps" after the correct fare has been deposited. The fare boxes accept both coins and dollar bills. The coin slot and dollar bill receivers are clearly marked on the top of the fare box. Dollar bills must be unfolded and inserted flat into the bill receiver. The fare boxes do not make change. If you are not sure how to deposit the fare, ask your bus operator for help.

Other Ways to Pay Your Fare:

SWIPER:

If you ride the bus regularly, a Swiper Card is probably the right thing for you. Swiper is CDTA's popular, pay in advance monthly pass. With Swiper, customers pay once and ride as many times as they want. Swiper cards are discounted to give customers a great savings over

cash payment. In addition, Swiper card holders are eligible to use CDTA's Guaranteed Ride Home program. With GRH, CDTA will arrange a taxi ride home for you if you have to work late or have a mid-day emergency. Swiper is easy to use and even easier to get. Swiper is sold at dozens of locations throughout the Capital Region including, Hannaford supermarkets, selected Key Bank branches and by mail order.

CORPORATE PROGRAM:

Many area companies have joined CDTA's corporate program and offer their employees the convenience of purchasing Swiper cards right where they work. CDTA provides employers with group discounts on Swiper cards when they join the corporate program. This gives employees additional savings on their ride to work. The program is easy to administer and can be tailored to fit the individual needs of companies.

OTHER WAYS TO PAY YOUR FARE:

You can also pay your fare with CDTA 10 ride tickets or CDTA approved half-fare cards. Bus 10 trip passes are valued at $1.50 each ride and are available for $13.00 . Bus 10 trip passes are sold at selected Price Chopper and Hannaford supermarkets; area bank branches; and at CDTA offices or www.cdta.org.

Half fare programs are available for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Senior citizens (65 years and older) and people with disabilities can obtain a half fare card at county offices for the aging or they can use a valid Medicare card. People who are unemployed must obtain certification for a New York State Department of Labor Office. For more information about these programs, or to obtain a program brochure, call our CIC at 482-8822.

Students:

Some school districts issue passes to students so that they can ride CDTA buses to and from school. School passes can be used only for a direct trip between the student's home and school. Passes are valid from 7AM until 7PM on days that school is in session. If a student is involved in a special activity or sport which requires an additional or special trip after 7PM, they should obtain a written pass from their school.

Fare Disputes:

Sometimes, there is a disagreement about the required fare between the bus operator and the customer. If this should happen to you, please pay the fare requested by the bus operator so that you and your fellow customers can reach your destination without delay. When you call, we will ask you to provide the date, time, bus route number and circumstances surrounding the dispute. We will investigate your report, and provide an answer and appropriate refund, if justified, within two weeks from the time of your original call.

RIDING THE BUS:

We know that you will find CDTA service to be comfortable and reliable. You can help to make riding the bus more pleasant for all customers by following a few simple riding tips:

- New York State Law PROHIBITS SMOKING on-board CDTA buses.
- There is NO EATING or DRINKING on-board CDTA buses, and please do not litter.
- There is NO PLAYING RADIOS, tape players or other audio equipment while on-board CDTA buses. You may listen to these instruments with earphones or head phones provided the volume is turned down.
- ANIMALS are not allowed on-board CDTA buses unless they are in a carrier that can fit on your lap or at your feet in front of you. Seeing eye dogs are allowed on-board to provide assistance to customers with sight impairments.
- DO NOT vandalize or damage Buses or Shelters. Vandalism is a crime and will be punished with a fine or a jail sentence. Report vandalism to us immediately if you see it happening.
- GAMBLING IS NOT ALLOWED on any CDTA bus.
- FIREARMS ARE NOT ALLOWED on any CDTA bus.
- The seats at the front of every bus are reserved for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Please relinquish these seats if they are needed.
- If there are no seats available when you board, it is OK to stand. Stand behind the yellow line on the floor at the front of the bus. If possible, move to the rear of the bus to allow other customers to board. For your safety, hold on to the hand rails when standing on-board CDTA buses.
- Baby strollers and grocery carts are allowed on-board, provided they are collapsed and will fit on your lap or at your feet in front of you.
- Please keep your hands and arms inside the windows of the bus at all times.
- Shopping bags and small boxes are OK to bring on-board CDTA buses, provided they are small enough to fit on your lap or at your feet in front of you. Do not put bags or boxes in the aisles where they may block passage for other customers.
- We require that you wear shoes and a shirt on-board a CDTA bus.
- Emergency-exit instructions are displayed inside all CDTA buses for customer safety. In an emergency or unusual situation, please notify your bus operator immediately.

GETTING OFF THE BUS:

When the bus gets near your stop, pull the cord above the window or press the yellow strip between the windows. This will signal the bus operator to stop for you. You only need to pull the cord or press the strip once to notify the bus operator that you wish to get off. The bus operator will stop at the next designated bus stop location.

Please remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop. Once the bus has stopped, exit the bus through the front or rear door, whichever is closest to your seat. Whenever possible, use the rear door to exit. This will allow boarding at the front door to go quickly and smoothly.

Exit carefully, using the handrails for support. Do not rush towards the door; and please watch your step. Use extra caution if you are traveling with young children. Once you are off the bus, move away from the bus and onto the sidewalk. If you are crossing the street, wait until the bus

pulls away before crossing the street. Do not walk in front of the bus after getting off. Cross the street carefully and quickly.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE BUS ROUTES:

All CDTA buses are equipped for wheelchair use. For more information, call our Customer Information Center at 482-8822. An information operator will help you.

Using the Lift:

Please stay at least 5 feet away from the bus as it approaches. This will allow room for the lift to deploy. The bus operator will tell you when the lift is ready for boarding. We suggest that you board the bus facing in (towards the bus). This will allow you to easily maneuver your wheelchair inside the bus.

Move onto the lift as far forward as possible. A safety barrier will be raised in back of you to provide added protection. Once on the lift, lock your wheels. The operator will then raise the lift. Customers who use electronically powered wheelchairs should turn the power off while on the lift. Hold onto the hand rail while the lift is operating. Ambulatory individuals are not allowed on the lift for safety reasons.

Once you are on the bus and have paid your fare, move to the position reserved for customers who use wheelchairs. Back your wheelchair into the wheelchair lock. Your bus operator will assist you with this procedure if you request.

When you are ready to exit the bus, unlock your wheelchair and release the wheel-lock by pushing the lever down. Proceed to the front of the bus. The bus operator will activate the lift and tell you when it is safe to move onto the lift.

Facing forward, move onto the lift (towards the curb). The operator will raise the safety barrier and tell you when your wheelchair is in the proper position on the lift. Lock your wheels, and turn the power off if your chair is electric. Hold onto the hand rail while the lift is lowering. When the lift is at ground level and the safety barrier is down, unlock your wheels and move away from the bus.

SPECIAL TRANSIT AVAILABLE BY REQUEST (STAR)

CDTA operates para transit service for people who are disabled and unable to use regular route buses. This service, which is called Special Transit Available by Request or STAR, is operated as a complement to CDTA's regular route network. STAR's special service vehicles provide curb-to-curb transportation for people with disabilities on a 24-hour reservation basis. STAR operates on the same days, during the same times and in the same general geographic area as CDTA's fixed routes.

Customers must meet para transit eligibility requirements before using STAR. The one-way base fare on STAR is $2.50. For more information about STAR or eligibility requirements, call STAR at 482-2022.

PARK & RIDE:

CDTA Park & Ride lots are located throughout the transit district. Some Park & Ride lots are owned and operated by CDTA; while others are located in shopping centers or mall parking lots. You can park your car free at any Park & Ride lot and board a CDTA bus for a relaxing and safe trip. In many cases, service from Park & Ride lots is limited stop, which gets you to work even faster. We call this "express service". For more information about Park & Ride, call our Customer Information Center at 482-8822 or visit this link:
Park & Ride Info

RURAL BUSES:

In addition to fixed route service, CDTA operates limited service in the outlying or rural areas of our service district. Many of these rural buses operate one day per week, with shopping centers or downtown locations being the most popular destinations. For more information about rural buses - when they run and where they go, call our Customer Information Center at 482-8822.

SAFEWATCH:

Safewatch is a cooperative effort between CDTA and local law enforcement to make the Capital Region an even safer place to live. All CDTA vehicles are equipped with two-way radios. Our employees are trained to be alert for potential problems and to inform authorities about criminal activity, roadside incidents or accidents. Any individual who needs police assistance can flag down a CDTA vehicle for emergency help. The employee will use a radio to contact the police. Children in danger can board a CDTA bus and stay on the vehicle until authorities arrive.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

We want to know what you think about CDTA, our service, our employees and the equipment we use. Feedback from customers, both good and bad, is very important to us. If you have ideas or suggestions on things we can do to improve the transit system, we want to hear from you.

Commendations:

To commend your bus operator or any other CDTA employee for outstanding service, write your comments down and send them to us. Our address for this type of correspondence is listed below. We ask that you provide a brief description or reason for your commendation, along with the employee's name or ID number; the bus route or number; and, the date, time and location of the event. We will pass the commendation along to the employee and insure that he or she is properly recognized.

Complaints:

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, we want to know about it right away. Be ready to give us specific information, including the bus or route number; the direction the bus was traveling; and, the day, time and location where the event occurred. If it is about an employee, their name or ID number will help. We will investigate your complaint and report back to you in writing within 10 working days.

Service Request:

CDTA's Planning Department reviews our route structure and bus schedules several times a year. Customer suggestions are very helpful in this process; and we encourage your input. If you have a service suggestion or idea, please write it down and send it to us at the address listed below. It would help us if you mark the envelope "Service Request". We will review your request and report back to you in writing within 10 working days.

Lost and Found:

If you forget something on a CDTA bus, please call us. Everything found on buses is returned to our Lost and Found offices in Albany, Schenectady, and Troy. If you happen to find something while you are on a bus, please give it to the bus operator who will turn it in to Lost and Found. Items are normally kept for in lost and found for 30 days.

Schedule Racks:

We will arrange to have one delivered to you and will stock it with bus schedules on a regular basis. CDTA schedule racks are located at hundreds of locations throughout the transit district. Adding more schedule racks makes our system more convenient for all customers.

Transit Guide:

The CDTA Transit Guide provides a colorful overview of our transit network. The guide includes a regional map of the urbanized area of the Capital District and insert maps which illustrate the downtown areas of the region's four major cities. The guide displays all CDTA bus routes along with helpful information about our service. The map also includes aerial-view sketches of major buildings, area landmarks and points of interest.

For a free copy of the Transit Guide, please call our Customer Information Center at 482-8822.

Correspondence:

We ask that all correspondence be sent to:

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                    CDTA
Business Development Office
110 Watervliet Avenue
Albany, New York 12206
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