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**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
RIDER GUIDE**

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## North Central Area Transit (NCAT) Passenger Handbook

It is the policy of the North Central Area Transit system to provide transportation in a safe and timely manner for ALL transit riders. The following information is made available to all passengers regarding policies and operations of the transit system.

**The following guidelines** are designed to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the passengers, the drivers, and other transit employees. They are in place to promote safety, efficiency, effectiveness, and understanding of the parameters and limitations of the NCAT Transit System.

### What is the North Central Area Transit System or NCAT?

NCAT is a demand-response, curb-to-curb service under ADA Compliance with door-to-door service with reasonable accommodations. NCAT is a mass public transit service, but NCAT reserves the right and control to refuse a ride based on system-wide rules, policies, and/or procedures. Riding an NCAT vehicle is considered a privilege, and not a right. It is an entitlement granted by the NCAT System on a conditional basis and the privilege of riding on the NCAT System can be revoked under certain circumstances and/or conditions.

NCAT DOES NOT provide emergency transportation services as our personnel are not trained as medical paramedics. Riders who are experiencing a medical crisis need to call 911 for emergency services.

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### Passenger Comments & Complaint Procedures

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North Central Area Transit System (NCAT) is committed to being responsive to passenger perceptions about our service. We encourage your comments and suggestions. Please make all suggestions and/or complaints in writing to the following address:

North Central Area Transit  
City of Ottawa  
301 W. Madison Street  
Ottawa, Illinois 61350

## Scheduling a Ride

To schedule a ride, call the NCAT Reservation Center at **(877) 874-8813** at least **24 hours in advance of your requested ride**. A reservation dispatcher is available to schedule a ride Monday-Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you are calling after hours, please leave a detailed message and a reservation dispatcher will return your call as soon as possible.

When making a reservation, please have the following information ready:

- Your name, home address, date of birth, and phone number.
- Date of your trip, the time you would like to be picked up, and time of your return trip.
- The address where you want to be picked up.
- The address where you want to be dropped off.
- Billing information (if applicable).

Riders should note that NCAT makes every attempt to schedule as many rides at one time and the rider should be aware that they may not be the only rider aboard the bus at any given time which may increase the time riders will be on the bus. The Reservation Center reserves the right to alter a rider's pick-up and drop-off time to accommodate ALL riders in ALL locations and to keep NCAT vehicles and the system as efficient and effective as possible for the viability of the transit system.

## Pick-up and Return Rides

Riders should understand that due to the system scheduling multiple rides for a bus, they must have some flexibility in their pick-up and drop-off times as NCAT is a public transit system. It is NCAT System policy that riders need to be ready for their ride 15 MINUTES before their scheduled pick up time. Riders should receive a reminder phone call the day before indicating what the scheduled pick-up time will be for their ride. Riders who are prompt help us provide better and faster service. Pick-up and drop-off destination points must make space and location accommodations for the NCAT vehicle to park and remain within the vision of the driver. NCAT vehicles CANNOT pull into driveways or other small areas due to the size of the NCAT vehicles.

## Driver Wait Time & Stop Conditions

Upon arrival, the driver will honk the horn (if necessary) to notify the rider of their presence. NCAT Policy allows the driver to pick up a rider 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after arriving for the rider's scheduled pick-up time. Riders need to be aware that the driver will wait for five (5) minutes past the scheduled pick up time and then will depart for their next scheduled appointment. At this point, the rider is considered a "no-show" AND is responsible for the fare (See the "No-Show" Policy). Since NCAT vehicles are scheduled for other rides and routed for the entire day, the NCAT driver WILL NOT return for you.

Passengers are responsible for maintaining a safe walkway unencumbered by obstacles such as snow, ice, and/or other debris that will allow the driver to safely board the rider onto the vehicle. Drivers are NOT ALLOWED to cross the threshold of a passenger's residence or destination. Again, NCAT is a demand-response, curb-to-curb service under the ADA Compliance with door-to-door service with reasonable accommodations.

## Non-Scheduled Rides

Due to liability issues, drivers are NOT ALLOWED to make additional stops other than the one the rider has made with the Reservation Center. Riders-please **DO NOT ASK** the driver if they would make an additional stop along the way to your scheduled destination.

## Rider Age Requirement

A rider must be sixteen (16) years of age to ride an NCAT vehicle without adult supervision. Children under the age of twelve (12) can ride free with a paid adult. Children eight (8) and under must be secured in a safety seat that should be provided by the rider. Any request to modify this policy must be made in writing to the Transit Director. Requests should be sent to:

NCAT  
City of Ottawa  
301 West Madison Street  
Ottawa, Illinois 61350

## Mobility Device Guidelines

According to DOT and the American with Disabilities Act – Transportation Regulation, 49CFR 37.3 a “common wheelchair” is “such a device which **does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.**” Wheelchairs are defined, “to include both three-wheel and four-wheel mobility aids.” Three-wheeled “scooters” and other non-traditional designs that fit within these standards and guidelines can be transported. If a mobility device is NOT within these guidelines, NCAT will not be able to accommodate the request for transportation.

NCAT drivers are NOT RESPONSIBLE for assisting mobility device passengers up and/or down steps or stairs. Upon boarding a NCAT vehicle, the driver may ask a passenger, if possible, to transfer into a vehicle seat. The rider must be able to transfer themselves into that seat.

## Severe Weather Closing Policy

NCAT Transit Service will be discontinued and/or NCAT vehicles will be recalled to home base under the following conditions/circumstances:

- When weather conditions are deemed hazardous by the transit system administration.
- When the National Weather Service has issued a **Blizzard Warning** for the counties in which NCAT operates.
- When the Illinois State Police, LaSalle County Sheriff's Department, or other local law enforcement agency has declared an emergency road closing and orders all road travel to cease.
- When IDOT has pulled their snow plows off the roads because visibility is poor and plow operators feel it is too dangerous to travel.

If you have a scheduled ride and are not sure if NCAT has cancelled operations for the day, you can access this information on the City of Ottawa's website ([www.cityofottawa.org](http://www.cityofottawa.org)), City of Ottawa Facebook page, or call (815) 433-0161 X154 or X155 for voice information.

## Rider Conduct, General Policies, General Information, and Suspension Policy & Procedures

**Passenger Guidelines:** It is the goal of the NCAT Transit System to provide safe, reliable, flexible, and financially sustainable transportation service while satisfying the various mobility needs of the communities that NCAT serves. Passengers are asked to observe the following guidelines and failure to do so may result in limited and/or suspended transit service.

- Riders are NOT allowed to ride any NCAT vehicle for recreational reasons such as riding around town with no destination or visiting other riders.
- Personal hygiene which is consistently offensive to a majority of the passengers cannot be tolerated and a private discussion with these passengers will occur. Further action may occur such as limited and/or suspension of rides if the situation cannot be corrected.
- Proper clothing along with the wearing of shoes will be required to ride an NCAT vehicle.
- Occupying more than one seat with groceries, etc. is prohibited.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse toward the driver or other passengers on the NCAT vehicle **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED** and immediate action will be taken. (Examples: loud talking and music, hitting another passenger, swearing, inappropriate gestures, and other similar actions)
- A passenger damaging and/or defacing either the interior or exterior of an NCAT vehicle.
- Removing any transit system items from an NCAT vehicle or from another passenger. (Examples: fares donations, fire extinguisher, bus driver's equipment, and other similar items).
- Passengers must be capable of remaining seated with a seat belt secured around them while the vehicle is in motion. If the passenger refuses to wear a seat belt, they have one of two options before the vehicle departs – they will not be able to ride the NCAT vehicle or before their next ride, they must obtain a letter from their physician stating that due to health reasons they are unable to wear a seat belt. This letter will be kept on file in the Transit Manager's office.
- Safety seats are **REQUIRED** by the State of Illinois Law for children under the age of eight (8) years of age. The safety seat must be provided by the parent/guardian of the child(ren) and used while that child is riding an NCAT vehicle.
- Passengers cannot ask and/or demand of the driver to change their ride or schedule upon boarding the NCAT vehicle.

- **Carry On Items:** Due to liability issues, the driver CANNOT assist a passenger with their parcels, groceries, or other similar items. If the passenger has items that they would like to carry on an NCAT vehicle, the rider **MUST BE ABLE** to carry all items in **ONE TRIP**. An overload of carry-on items can become a safety hazard issue for all riders on the NCAT vehicle. **PLEASE REMEMBER:** Items brought aboard an NCAT vehicle are the sole responsibility of the rider and the **DRIVER IS NOT REQUIRED TO ASSIST**. Also, under no circumstances will a driver enter a passenger's residence.
- Passengers are NOT PERMITTED to bring food or drink aboard an NCAT vehicle other than bottled water. In addition, no rider may smoke, stand, or transport any hazardous materials such as gasoline, oil, or other similar fluids.
- Passengers CANNOT have in their possession open alcohol or illegal drugs while on and/or riding an NCAT vehicle. A rider assumed to be intoxicated will be denied a ride.
- Legally prescribed cannabis **MUST** be kept in its original packaging while on the vehicle. The passenger CANNOT display and/or smoke any of the product during their time on board the vehicle.
- Passengers are **NOT to have in their possession** while on an NCAT vehicle any form of a weapon, including but not limited to, a firearm, knife, or similar items.
- NCAT and/or any of their employees are **NOT responsible** for lost or stolen items.
- **Service Animals.** Service and Comfort Animals are allowed on NCAT vehicles **IF** they indicate that fact when making their ride reservation. Due to safety reasons, all other pets are **NOT ALLOWED**.
- **Medical Escorts.** One (1) medical escort may accompany a paid fare rider to a **MEDICAL APPOINTMENT ONLY** free of charge. Any additional escorts with the same rider will be charged the flat fare rate.
- **Medical Oxygen Tanks.** Due to potential safety issues, if a rider has an oxygen tank when being transported, it must be secured and cannot be in the aisle of the NCAT vehicle.
- **Nursing Homes and NCAT Policies & Procedures.** Nursing homes clients **MUST be assisted to and from the vehicle** by the nursing home staff. When there is a concern on behalf of the driver with the client/facility situation, transportation will be re-scheduled when nursing home personnel is available to assist.

## Cancelling a Scheduled Ride

If a rider decides that they no longer need their scheduled ride, the rider **MUST** understand and comply with the following cancellation procedures.

- The rider **MUST** cancel their scheduled ride **BEFORE 5:00 pm** the day **BEFORE** their scheduled ride with the Reservation Center by calling **(877) 874-8813**.
- Failure to call or leave a message with the Reservation Center after dispatch closing hours to cancel a ride **DOES NOT** constitute a cancellation. The rider **WILL BE CHARGED FOR THEIR SCHEDULED RIDE.**

## “NO-SHOW” Policy

When an NCAT driver arrives at a client’s residence and the client either is not present or comes out and forgoes their ride, this ride will be considered a “No-Show” ride. If the client continues to have “no-show” rides, the following will occur:

- A “No-Show” ride will result in the rider being charged for their ride and must be paid upon their next ride.
- If the rider has two (2) “No-Show” rides within a thirty (30) day period, their riding privileges may be suspended for thirty (30) days. The NCAT Transit Manger will make the suspension length determination.

## Suspension Policy

Any action by a passenger which may endanger the safety and welfare of other passenger(s), the driver, or the NCAT vehicle itself, will result in immediate disciplinary action and/or refusal of NCAT Transit Service to that individual.

### Suspension actions:

First Offense:	Written warning via a letter sent to home address.
Second Offense:	30-day suspension from NCAT rides.
Third Offense:	60-day suspension from NCAT rides.
Fourth Offense:	Indefinite suspension.

Appeal Process: Any rider that has been suspended from an NCAT vehicle may appeal their suspension in writing to:

NCAT Transit Manager  
City of Ottawa  
301 West Madison Street  
Ottawa, Illinois 61350

**IVCH & Horizon House Flat Fare Rates:**

LaSalle/Peru City Limits:	\$2.50
City to City (i.e. Utica to Utica)	\$2.50
Oglesby/IVCC	\$3.00
Spring Valley	\$3.00
Dalzell	\$3.00
Utica	\$4.00
Tonica	\$4.00
Ottawa/Marseilles	\$5.00
Mendota	\$5.00
Spring Valley to Ottawa	\$5.00

**Premium Rides**

Streator:	\$5.00	Tuesday & Thursday
Rutland:	\$5.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Lostant:	\$5.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Toluca	\$5.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Earlville	\$5.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month
Streator to Mendota:	\$10.00 & based on available space	
Streator to Spring Valley:	\$10.00 & based on available space	

**Peru Wal-Mart Ride Perimeters**

Rides to and from the Peru Wal-Mart have designated drop-off and pick-up times Monday-Friday:

1 <sup>st</sup> Drop-off:	10:00 am
2 <sup>nd</sup> Drop-off/1 <sup>st</sup> Pick-up:	12:00 pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> pick-up:	1:15 pm

Remember: As per NCAT policy, the rider must be able to carry all bags off the vehicle in one trip and without assistance from the driver.

Same Day Hospital/Dialysis/Medical Discharge and/or Ride Change (Except OSF Campus Facilities): \$5.00

**Note:** Wheelchairs provided by the hospital or facility will be recovered by that facility at a designed NCAT location.

City of Ottawa Flat Fare Rates:

City of Ottawa Mini Bus	\$2.00
Ottawa City Limits:	\$2.50
City to City (i.e. Streater to Streater)	\$2.50
Naplate	\$2.50
Marseilles	\$3.00
Grand Ridge	\$3.00
Utica/Oglesby/IVCC	\$4.00
LaSalle/Peru	\$5.00
Streater	\$5.00
Seneca	\$5.00
Spring Valley	\$5.00
Mendota	\$5.00
Wedron	\$5.00

Premium Rides

Sheridan:	\$5.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday, & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month
Rutland:	\$5.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Lostant:	\$5.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Toluca:	\$5.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday
Earlville:	\$5.00	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month
Streater to L/P:	\$5.00	Tuesday & Thursday
Grand Ridge to Seneca:	\$5.00	
Streater to Mendota/Spring Valley:	\$10.00	& based on available space
Sheridan to L/P/Mendota:	\$10.00	& based on available space

### Space & Availability Destinations

Spring Valley  
Dalzell  
Mark  
Hennepin  
Ladd

### Destinations Out of the NCAT Service Area

Newark  
Sandwich  
Somonauk  
Millington  
Yorkville  
Morris  
Princeton

\*Exceptions to NCAT destinations and days could be made due to unforeseen circumstances, space availability, time availability or other similar situation. Any decision will be made by the system providers.

### Fare Payment

Payment of fares to the drivers is CASH ONLY and the driver will NOT MAKE CHANGE. Any overpayment will be considered a donation to the NCAT System. In addition, NCAT and its drivers **WILL NOT ACCEPT CHECKS** as payment for fares.

### NCAT Holidays

Transportation is available Monday through Friday with the exception of the following observed Holidays. They include: New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.



## TO SCHEDULE A RIDE

Reservation Phone Number:  
(877)874-8813  
FAX: (815) 433-2270

TTY Users: 711

Reservation Hours:  
Monday-Friday  
7:00 am – 5:00 pm

NCAT Operating Hours:  
Monday- Friday  
6:00 am – 6:00 pm  
In-Town 1<sup>st</sup> Pick-up: 6:15 am  
Out-of-Town 1<sup>st</sup> Pick-up: 7:15 am  
Last Pick-up In-Town: 5:30 pm  
Last Pick-up Out-of-Town: 4:45 pm



**HORIZON HOUSE**



**Illinois Valley  
Community Hospital**

Community values. Extraordinary care.

