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**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
RIDER GUIDE**

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North Central Area Transit (NCAT) Passenger Handbook

NCAT is a public transit service, but NCAT reserves the right and control to refuse a ride based on system-wide policies and procedures. 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 NCAT 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 perimeters and limitations of the NCAT Transit System.

NCAT Rider/Client Services

NCAT is a demand-response, origin to destination service under the ADA Compliance Guidelines with reasonable accommodations and is available per customer request. With origin to destination service, the NCAT driver or escort assists the rider from the door of the pick-up to the NCAT vehicle and from the NCAT vehicle to the destination point. Under no circumstances should the driver be permitted to enter a client's residence or apartment building beyond the first outer door or ground floor lobby, and therefore cannot perform any personal services for the client. Door-to-door services is provided as long as conditions make it safe to do so for the NCAT driver and the client.

NCAT DOES NOT provide emergency transportation services as our personnel are not trained paramedics. NCAT does not transport riders on stretchers and those who are experiencing a medical crisis need to call 911 for emergency services.

Passenger Comments & Complaint Procedures

North Central Area Transit System (NCAT) is proud to be a part of the LaSalle County communities and is committed to being responsive to passenger perceptions about our services. We encourage your comments, compliments, and recommendations. Please send comments in writing to the following address:

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

Anyone with special needs, requests, or questions not addressed in this handbook, may call (833) 433-6228 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. We at NCAT will do everything we can to answer your questions.

****NCAT reserves the right to make changes to this handbook without notice.**



Reservations, Scheduling, & Cancellations of a Ride

Riders must call the NCAT Reservation Center at **833-433-6228** a minimum of one day in advance to schedule transportation. NCAT will not take reservations past 12:00 p.m. the day before service is requested. A rider may only schedule three (3) one way trips or two (2) round trip rides in one day unless there is a special circumstance at which time a supervisor will make a determination. A reservation operator is available to schedule a ride Monday-Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm and NCAT does not take same-day reservations (See ride exceptions).

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

- Your name, home address, date of birth, and phone number.
- The address where you will be picked up and dropped off, including any physicians name or location.
- Date of your trip, the time you would like to be picked up, and time of your return trip.
- If taking a Medicaid trip, please have your RTN number available.

***NCAT cannot guarantee a requested pick-up or drop-off times.

***Medicaid reimbursement billing is available for medical trips only. Ask the reservation operator for more information.

Space & Availability Destinations

Spring Valley
Dalzell
Ladd
Town of Wenona
Rutland

Destinations Not Within the NCAT Service Area

Granville DeKalb
Hennepin Sandwich
Mark Somonauk
Morris Yorkville
Newark Toluca
Princeton

NCAT Policies about Reservations Continued:

Please do not call the NCAT reservation center as the reservation dispatcher will not be responsible for confirming appointments with doctors, etc. Riders should be aware that NCAT makes every attempt to schedule as many rides on a single vehicle which will make it necessary to adjust the rider's pick-up and drop-off times. The Reservation Center and NCAT Scheduler 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 system as efficient and effective as possible. Due to scheduling adjustments, riders may need to be flexible in their pick-up and drop-off times and NCAT cannot guarantee a rider's requested pick-up or drop-off time.

A rider must be eighteen (18) years of age to ride an NCAT vehicle without adult supervision. Children under eighteen years of age may ride free with a paid adult. Due to the NCAT Grant restrictions and guidelines, NCAT cannot transport any student from their school to home, work, etc. Under the *Illinois Child Passenger Protection Act*, this act requires that all children under the age of 8 must be properly secured in an appropriate child safety restraint system. The appropriate restraint device **MUST** be provided by the parent and/or guardian of the child(ren) and is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian. NCAT WILL NOT provide a safety restraint device.

Canceling Your Scheduled Ride

If the client decides they no longer need their scheduled ride, the rider must understand the following:

- The rider **MUST cancel their ride before 5:00 pm the day BEFORE their scheduled ride by calling (833) 433-6228. Failure to do so will result in a cancellation fee ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of ride reservation that was cancelled.**
- Your assistance in promptly cancelling any ride is important in avoiding unnecessary trips for the NCAT System which cost time and money along with the ability to provide rides for other individuals interested in using the NCAT Transit System. The rider needs to understand that cancelling 50% or more of their rides will result in NCAT suspending, cancelling, and/or altering their riding privileges.

Driver Wait Time & Stop Procedures

It is NCAT System policy that riders need to be ready for their ride **15 MINUTES** before their scheduled pick-up time. If the rider has a valid and correct telephone number in their reservation page, they will receive a reminder phone call from the schedule system after 3:00 pm the day before their scheduled ride indicating what their scheduled pick-up time will be. Riders who are prompt for their pick-up assist NCAT in providing better and faster service. The pick-up and drop-off destination for passengers must have 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 along with restrictions in backing up due to the size of the NCAT vehicles.

Upon arrival at a client's residence, the driver will honk (if necessary) and will wait five (5) minutes past the scheduled pick-up time for the client before departing for their next scheduled ride. If a rider does not acknowledge the driver, the driver will leave and the rider will be considered a "No-Show" (See the "No-Show Policy"). ***Please note:*** NCAT Policy allows the driver to arrive for client pick-up 15 minutes before and up to 15 minutes after the client's scheduled pick-up time. **Any rider who is found to be delaying their pick-up specifically for the purpose of making the driver wait the full five (5) minutes before boarding may be suspended from transit service and/or the driver pulling away for their next scheduled appointment.** In addition, because the NCAT drivers have a rider schedule for the day, the NCAT vehicle **WILL NOT** return to pick-up a rider even if the rider realizes that they missed their pick-up time, overslept, or other similar issues.

Riders 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 on the vehicle.



General Policy Statement on No-Shows

NCAT understands that because we require trips to be scheduled in advance, riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel ride they no longer need. NCAT also understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to late fee charges from \$2.50-\$10.00 and/or suspension of transit service. The following information explains NCAT's no-show policy.

No-Show Definitions

No-show:

A no-show occurs when a rider fails to appear to board the NCAT vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pickup location within the pickup window as scheduled by the rider and the driver waits at least 5 minutes.

Pickup Window:

The pickup window is defined as from 15 minutes before the scheduled pickup time to 5 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pickup window. The driver will wait for a maximum of 5 minutes within the pickup window for the rider to present themselves.

Late Cancellation:

A late cancellation is defined as either: [1] a cancellation made on the same day as the scheduled rider or [2] as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window.

Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control:

NCAT does not count as no-shows or late cancellation situations beyond a rider's control that prevented the rider from notifying the NCAT Reservation Center that cannot be taken due to a medical or family emergency. Any abuse of these actions will result in the rider incurring any late fees associated with their missed scheduled rides.

Suspension Policy for Excessive No-shows, Late Cancellations, and/or Violations of Rider Code of Conduct

NCAT reviews all recorded no-shows and/or same day cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's master account.

Each verified no-show or late cancellation will be subject to transit service suspension after they meet the following conditions:

- The rider having “no-showed” or “late cancelled” when they reached 50% cancellation of scheduled rides
OR
- If the rider has had three (3) “no-shows” in a thirty (30) day period.

NCAT will notify the rider by a notification letter after they have accumulated a 50% rate of cancellations or three “no-shows” in a 30-day period informing them of the consequences of their actions along a data reservation document that shows the rider's cancellations and information on how to appeal suspensions.

Suspensions begin on Mondays and the violations result in the following suspensions:

- First violation of the calendar year (January 1st) triggers a warning letter, but no suspension of service
- Second violation: 10 business day suspension from making a reservation
- Third violation: 30-day calendar suspension from making a reservation
- Fourth violation: 60-day calendar suspension with possible due process hearing with the NCAT compliance officer and client.



Rider Conduct and NCAT Policies & Information

Rules to Remember on the Day of Your Ride

- Riders shall assist in keeping the transit vehicle clean by using sanitary practices. Any offensive odors to others or any type of unsanitary practices are to be avoided.
- Bring cash to pay for your ride. Drivers do not carry change and cannot accept tips.
- Be ready to go 15 minutes before your scheduled pickup time. The driver will not wait longer than 5 minutes after your scheduled pickup time before leaving to their next scheduled ride.
- Escorts ride free for medical reservations only. All other types of rides the escort will pay the ride fare.
- Remain seated with a seat belt on while the vehicle is in motion and for the duration of your ride.
- Only bring permitted items. Open drink containers, food, alcohol, and weapons are not allowed on the vehicle.
- Bags are limited to what the passenger can carry aboard the NCAT vehicle. Driver assistance is limited.
- Good manners are required. Passengers must not disturb others and proper etiquette is necessary.
- Call 24 hours in advance if you need to cancel your ride or your trip will be considered a “no-show” and you will be expected to pay for the ride.

NCAT Rider Policies & Procedures

Riders are required to follow basic rules while traveling on the NCAT Transit System for the comfort and safety of themselves, other bus riders, our employees, and to protect transit equipment. It is the goal of the NCAT Transit System to be safe, reliable, flexible, and financially sustainable, while serving the citizens of LaSalle County. The rider needs to be aware that NCAT reserves the right to refuse transit service to any rider violating the following policies and procedures:

- Fares are cash only or through the use of an NCAT Punch Card. NCAT does not accept personal checks for payment. Riders can purchase a punch card using a credit card by calling (815) 433-0161 x123.

NCAT Rider Polices & Procedures Continued...

- For liability reasons, passengers are REQUIRED to remain seated with a seatbelt secured around their waist while the vehicle is in motion. Upon request and permission, a driver may assist the rider in securing the seatbelt around the passenger. If the passenger refuses to wear a seatbelt, the rider will be asked to disembark from the NCAT vehicle. For future rides, the rider must obtain a written letter from a certified physician which states that they are unable to wear a seatbelt due to health issues. This letter and its liability with the physician will be kept in the rider's master page file.
- Escorts ride free, BUT for medical reservations only. Any additional escorts will be charged the flat rate to the destination. For all other types of rides, the escort will pay the flat rate ride fare.
- Riders are not permitted to ride an NCAT vehicle with no destination. All riders must have scheduled a ride drop-off location.
- For liability reasons, riders are not to ask the driver if they can stop along the way to the rider's scheduled destination or change pickup or drop-off locations.
- No rider shall smoke or possess any lighted, smoldering, or electronic pipe or cigarette or vaping device while on-board an NCAT vehicle.
- No rider shall play any radio, cassette, CD, DVD, iPhone, or other similar electronic sound amplification device unless it is played through an earphone or similar headset device so that it is totally inaudible to all other passengers and the driver.
- Riders shall be considerate of other riders at all times. Verbal or physical threats, shoving, foul language, teasing, or other improper or disruptive behavior towards another passenger or themselves will result in suspension of service for the rider.
- While it is not NCAT's objective to enforce personal hygiene standards on the public, but in order to maintain a clean and safe environment to all who use and work upon NCAT vehicles, passenger's body odor that is deemed to be so offensive that others would complain and/or vacate their space whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, or any other source cannot be ignored or tolerated and will be addressed to the offending individual.

NCAT Rider Polices & Procedures Continued...

- Passengers are NOT to have in their possession any form of a weapon while on an NCAT vehicle, including but not limited to, a firearm, knife, or similar items.
- No rider shall transport any hazardous substances such as acids, gasoline, oil, or other similar substances.
- No rider shall destroy, deface, or otherwise damage NCAT property.
- Possessing any open beverage container holding alcohol or possessing controlled substances, unless otherwise authorized by law, including legally prescribed cannabis which must be kept and unopened in its original packaging. If the driver suspects through visual identification or the smell of alcohol odor that a rider is intoxicated, NCAT reserves the right to deny the rider a ride.
- The proper use and wearing of clothing and the displaying of non-offensive language clothing along with the wearing of shoes aboard the NCAT vehicle is required.
- The rider occupying more than one seat is prohibited.
- Passengers shall limit their carry-on packages to what they can bring them on board in a reasonable amount of time and is the sole responsibility of the passenger. No one package shall weigh more than 20 pounds and any oversized packages will be refused for transport. Passengers need to be aware that bringing on excess amount of packages will delay the driver in picking up other passengers and returning you home. Other items such as bicycles, grocery carts, and other similar large items are not permitted on board due to safety issues.
- Medical Oxygen Tanks. Due to potential safety issues, if a rider has an oxygen tank, it must be secured to the chair or to a seat in the vehicle and should not be left in the aisle of the bus.



Refusing Transit Service – Violations of Policy & Procedures

NCAT Transit reserves the right to refuse and/or terminate transit service to any passenger who displays the following behaviors:

- Intoxication
- Disruptive behavior
- Belligerent/rude
- Poses a safety or health threat to themselves or other riders
- Unreasonable or offensive personal hygiene

NCAT Transit has zero tolerance towards violence. Any overt act of violence or threat of violence will result in termination of passenger rides. Any threatening acts of violence will be reported to the local law enforcement agencies.



Mobility Devices Guidelines – ADA Compliance Guidelines

According to the Department of Transportation 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 any steps and/or stairs. Upon boarding an NCAT vehicle, the driver may ask the passenger, if possible, to transfer to a vehicle seat. The rider must be able to transfer themselves into the seat.



Animal Transportation Policy

NCAT does allow for the transportation of animals, other than service animals, if the rider complies with the following requirements:

- When making the reservation, the rider is required to make the reservation center dispatcher aware of the fact that they will be bringing an animal aboard the NCAT vehicle.
- The animal must be stored in an approved, secure animal carrier and may not be removed from the carrier for the duration of the trip.
- The rider is solely responsible for the loading and unloading of the animal into the carrier and on and off the NCAT vehicle. The animal shall not be removed from the carrier while it is on the NCAT vehicle.
- The rider will be solely responsible for the cleaning up after the animal if an incident occurs.
- If a situation occurs, the rider must follow the driver's instruction regarding the animal's transportation.

Service animals that are identified as such will not be required to be in a carrier, but will be required to be on a leash, must remain on the floor, must be out of the aisle, and under control and responsibility of the owner.



NCAT Holidays

Transportation is available Monday through Friday 8:00-4:30 p.m. with the exception of the following observed holidays: New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.

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.

Ride Exceptions

If a medical facility (hospital, dialysis, doctor's office, etc.) requests a same-day medical discharge and/or ride, NCAT Transit system will do whatever possible to accommodate this request based on rider space, client residence, NCAT system hours, and availability of an NCAT vehicle. Any wheel chairs and or/ medical equipment provided by the medical facility will need to be recovered by the medical facility at an NCAT designed location. Same day discharges are a flat rate fee from \$2.50 - \$10.00 depending on location.

Severe Weather Policy

Weather Related Access to Private Residences

Passengers are responsible for snow removal to make their residences accessible to the NCAT drivers. Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers through un-shoveled snow or ice. If a passenger schedules transit service knowing that a path has not been cleared to their residence, upon their arrival the driver will consider the trip a “no-show” and the NCAT “no-show” policy will apply.

Discontinuing Transit Service Due to Weather Conditions

NCAT will make every effort to provide service whenever scheduled. In the event extreme weather conditions exist which makes travel unsafe, NCAT reserves the right to discontinue services until conditions are more favorable. We do not consider routine appointments (Wal-mart, hair appointments, etc.) necessary during severe weather. If transit service is discontinued, all rides, regardless of trip purposes will be cancelled.

Rider Winter Riding Guide:

- Be aware of the weather conditions and how it may affect your ride with NCAT.
- Some routes may be shortened and/or cancelled.
- If the streets have snow and ice on them, be aware that we will be allowing additional time for pickups and drop-offs and travel time may increase.
- Avoid delays of travel by being ready 15 minutes before your pickup and having your fare ready.
- Clean your footwear before boarding the vehicle so not to cause issues for others boarding.
- At all times, watch your step, wear your seatbelt, and wear appropriate winter clothing.
- In case of severe weather, all passengers will be taken home immediately.

Flat Fare Rates:

IVCH One-Way Fares:

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

City of Ottawa One-Way Fares:

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

***Premium Ride Rates page 17.**

Premium Rides

Premium Rides (one-way) including out-of-county rides

Spring Valley to:

*LaSalle/Peru Area: \$4.00 Monday – Friday

*Ottawa & Mendota: \$7.00 Monday – Friday

*Streator: \$7.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Streator to LaSalle-Peru: \$5.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Streator to Mendota: \$10.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Streator to Marseilles: \$5.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Streator to Lostant: \$5.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Rutland/Wenona: \$5.00 Wednesday

Earlville to Ottawa \$5.00 Tuesday & Thursday

Earlville to other locations: Call for availability of rides.

Sheridan to L/P/Mendota Area: \$10.00 Monday

Sheridan to Streator: \$10.00 Monday

Sheridan to Ottawa \$7.00 Monday

Seneca to:

*LaSalle/Peru Area: \$10.00 Tuesday & Thursday

*Streator: \$10.00 Tuesday & Thursday

*Other locations: Call for availability of rides.

BPART/NCAT Transfers to OSF-Peoria: \$5.00 one-way trip in addition to the BPART fare. BPART travels to OSF- Peoria on the First and Third Thursdays of the month. Client's appointments must be between 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Disclaimer: Any other locations that are not listed, fares will be based on the area in which the client is requesting.





TO SCHEDULE A RIDE

Reservation Phone Number:
(833) 433-6228
FAX: (815) 313-8169

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

NCAT Operating Hours:
Monday- Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm
First In-Town Pick-up: 8:00 am
First Out-of-Town Pick-up: 8:30 am
Last In-Town Pick-up: 4:15 pm
Last Out-of-Town Pick-up: 3:45 pm



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