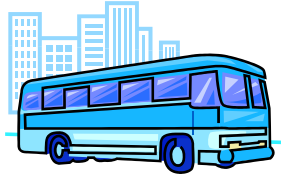


PHENIX CITY EXPRESS (PEX)



PARATRANSIT PASSENGER GUIDE JULY 2010

The PEX Paratransit Passenger Guide will provide helpful information to you regarding the PEX Paratransit Service. We encourage you to take advantage of the Phenix City Express's convenient paratransit service. The PEX paratransit service offers curb-to-curb service to individuals whose disabilities will not allow them to use the PEX Fixed Route.

PEX Paratransit has vehicles that are handicapped accessible and also allow service animals. The PEX Paratransit Service operates inside the city limits of Phenix City. Paratransit riders will be taken into Columbus for medical appointments only. If you have questions or need additional information about the PEX Paratransit, you may call 1-877-743-3739 (1-877-Ride PEX). Thank you for riding the PEX Paratransit Service.

SERVICE AREA AND HOURS

Service Area and Hours:

The PEX Paratransit service operates within the City Limits of Phenix City. The service will transport passengers to Columbus for medical appointments only. The system operates Monday through Friday, except on holidays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST.

Holidays When PEX Paratransit Will NOT Be Operating:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus' Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Additional holiday closing may be added and announced.

COST OF SERVICE

\$2.00 per passenger for a one-way trip inside the city limits of Phenix City a one-way trip to medical appointments in Columbus

PAYMENT POLICIES

- **YOU MUST PAY EACH TIME YOU ENTER THE BUS. If you do not have correct fare, you will not be taken to your destination. You will have to find alternative transportation.**
- **YOU MUST HAVE EXACT CHANGE!** Our drivers cannot make change. **PERSONAL CHECKS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.** Fare books of fifteen tickets may be purchased from the driver. **AGAIN, YOU MUST HAVE CORRECT CHANGE TO PURCHASE FARE BOOKS.**
- **Have correct fares ready and pay as you enter the vehicle.** You **MUST** pay before you take your seat. After paying, take your seat quickly and buckle your seat belt so the route may continue.
- Drivers cannot allow passengers to ride without paying. You cannot prepay or give money for future rides. No credits or refunds will be given.

HOW TO BECOME A PARATRANSIT RIDER

- 1) For PEX call 1-877-743-3739 (1-877-Ride PEX) to obtain a Paratransit certification form.
- 2) Have your physician complete the certification form. The certification must be complete including the

physician's license number and signature. This form will help us determine your specific transportation needs so make sure that the physician certifies your disability and what disability prevents you from using the regular bus.

3) Send your completed certification form to: Lee-Russell Council of Governments, 2207 Gateway Drive, Opelika, AL 36801.

4) Once we have received your certification form you will be notified regarding your eligibility.

5) On a pre-determined basis, you will be required to have your doctor recertify you to use the Paratransit service.

A form will be mailed to you for recertification.

6) Remember, if we do not have a completed form in our office, you will not be able to use the Paratransit service.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A RIDE

1. Call PEX at 334-749-9092 or 877-743-3739 Monday thru Friday between the hours of 8:30 AM and 5:30 PM ET to schedule a ride.
2. Please provide the following information when you call to schedule a trip:
 - a. Name
 - b. Telephone number
 - c. Physical address
 - d. Destination address
 - e. Appointment time (NOTE: Driver can arrive 15 minutes early so be ready to leave at this time.)
 - f. Return time (NOTE: Driver can arrive 15 minutes early so be ready to leave at this time.)
 - g. Type of aid used (wheelchair, walker, etc.)
 - h. If you will be traveling with an attendant or guest. See policies below for guests and attendants. Guests who are children are required to be in a proper child safety seat – see the rules below regarding this requirement.
 - i. If you will be traveling with a service animal
3. Please **CALL IF YOU MUST CANCEL** or you will be subject to our Cancellation Policy and No Show Policy below.
4. Passengers **NEED** to read the PEX Travel and Safety Rules below to ensure a safe and smooth traveling experience with PEX.

PEX TRAVEL RULES

- The PEX Paratransit service is not a taxi service. Rides are to be scheduled between two weeks and at least one business day in advance. We do not make same day reservations.
- Each time you get off the bus, the designated fare will be charged when you board the bus again.
- **REFUNDS OR CREDITS:** We do not provide refunds or credits on fares and fare card tickets.
- **BOARDING:** Passengers should be ready to board when the bus arrives. Because of unpredictable traffic and weather — you must allow for a 30 minute variation in pick-up time. For example, if your scheduled pick-up time is 9:00 AM, you will be picked up anytime between 8:45 AM and 9:15 AM. Please make your appointments to take this fact into consideration.
- **DRIVER WAIT TIME:** Passengers should be ready to board when the bus arrives. **The driver will wait FIVE (5) minutes for the passenger to board. If the passenger does not board within this time frame, THE DRIVER WILL LEAVE FOR THE NEXT DESTINATION** and the passenger will be considered a “no-show”. Drivers will not return to pick up passengers who were not ready within five minute time frame.

- **ATTENDANTS:** Paratransit passengers can have one (1) attendant ride with them at no charge if they need assistance getting on and off the bus. If a passenger needs more than one attendant, they must be approved by PEX prior to scheduling a trip and must pay for the ride. Drivers are NOT available for door-to-door services, but provide curb-to-curb services ONLY.
- **GUESTS:** Paratransit passengers can have one (1) guest ride with them to their designated stop and if room permits. The guest must pay the same fare as the rider and must be picked up with certified passenger. The guest cannot be picked up at an alternate location. If the guest is a child, then it must adhere to the child safety seats policies below. No exceptions will be made.
- **UNSCHEDULED TRIPS: NO UNSCHEDULED STOPS WILL BE MADE!!** You must schedule ALL stops that you wish to make within the allowed scheduling time frame. Additional stops cannot be added and/or scheduled stops cannot be changed on the day of your scheduled ride.
- **CANCELLATION POLICY:** Passengers are required to notify PEX at least two hours prior to the scheduled trip if the trip needs to be cancelled. Any individual who cancels more than **three times in one week will be suspended for 5 days.** If the driver has already arrived before the trip is cancelled, the passenger will be counted as a no-show and the No-Show Policy will apply as well. See below for details of this policy.
- **DESTINATION CHANGE POLICY:** Individuals making reservations to ride cannot change their destination the day of the ride. Any changes must be made prior to **3:00 PM Eastern Time** the day before the scheduled ride.
- **NO-SHOW POLICY:** If a passenger does not call to cancel appointments, this is considered a “no-show”. If a passenger is a no-show **THREE (3)** times within a **three month period,** the passenger will be suspended from using the Paratransit service for a period of **TEN (10) working days before you are eligible to ride PEX again.** When a passenger does not board on time, it makes the other passengers late to their scheduled appointments or prevents others from scheduling a trip.
- **CARRY ON PACKAGES:** Carry-on packages are welcome. However, the passenger needs to limit the number of packages to **FIVE (5) bags.** These bags should not be larger than 18” x 15” in size. If the passenger only has one bag, then it can be larger. However, two or more large bags, or one large bag and three small bags **will not be allowed on the bus.** If you have a greater number of bags than as explained above, the driver will not allow you to ride the bus and you will have to find other transportation.
- **SEAT BELTS:** All passengers will be required to properly wear and use seat belts at all times in all vehicles. If a passenger refuses to comply with this rule, you will be refused service and will have to find another way to your destination.
- **CHILD SAFETY SEATS:** All children including handicapped or medically fragile children accompanying adult passenger(s) as a guest will be placed in appropriate child safety seats/restraint device. **Passengers are responsible for providing child safety seats that meet applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.** If a passenger refuses to comply with this rule, you will be refused service and will have to find another way to your destination. The following State of Alabama regulations apply to all children traveling on PEX:
 - 1) Infant only seats and convertible seats used in the rear facing position are required until the child is at least one year of age or 20 pounds.

(2) Convertible seats in the forward position or forward facing seats are required until the child is at least five years of age or 40 pounds.

(3) Booster seats are required until the child is six years of age.

- **WHEELCHAIR/MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT AND PASSENGER RESTRAINT**

SYSTEMS: All mobility devices will be properly secured to the vehicle using the installed securement systems. Wheelchair passengers will be required to wear a wheelchair seat belt and be properly restrained using the vehicle restraint system. If able, those using non-wheelchair mobility devices will be requested to move to a seat and use the vehicle seat belt system. If a passenger refuses to comply with this rule, you will be refused service and will have to find another way to your destination.

- The scheduled times and days of Paratransit services are subject to change.

SAFETY RULES

It is the PEX policy to provide safe, efficient, and quality transportation. In order to provide the highest quality of service, we must have safety rules to assure that all riders of PEX are given the opportunity to use the service to its maximum potential. The following policies must be followed by all passengers on all PEX buses:

1. Have fare ready before you board the vehicle, hand it to the driver, and be seated promptly.
2. **Buckle up; it's the law. The rule will be strictly enforced for all passengers, both those riding in seats and those in wheelchairs. Drivers will not proceed until all passengers are properly secured. If a passenger refuses, they will be denied transportation.**
3. No Smoking allowed on the bus.
4. No loud talking or offensive language because this infringes on the rights of all passengers.
5. **No food and drinks on the bus.** This includes fast food restaurant cups and containers.
6. No alcohol is allowed on the bus or can be consumed on the bus. Passenger cannot be intoxicated or reek of alcohol.
7. Proper clothing must be worn at all time. Shirts and shoes are required.
8. Radios may be listened to through earphones ONLY. Drivers are not allowed to play the radio when passengers are on the vehicles.
9. Limited talking to the driver. Drivers may discuss route information only. The driver must be 100% focused to insure a safe trip and good performance.
10. Stay seated while the bus is moving and do not change seats until the bus stops.
11. When de-boarding the bus, please wait until the bus has pulled away before crossing the street, as oncoming vehicles cannot see you.
12. Misconduct by passengers is not allowed. Misconduct is considered to be any act which creates an unsafe environment/hazard and the potential for injury or death to any passenger, driver, or the general public.
13. Abusive conduct by passengers is not allowed. Abusive conduct is considered to be any verbal or physical act that is generally offensive or invades the privacy or rights of others; physically touching another person in a rude, insolent, or angry manner.
14. No passenger shall engage in conduct which would typically be classified as sexual harassment or which would create a hostile environment toward transit employees or other passengers. Prohibited conduct shall include the use of vulgar, lewd, or sexually offensive language or gestures, as well as unwanted touching, assaults, batteries, advances, or requests for sexual favors.
15. Passengers must treat each other and the driver with respect. Every passenger and driver has equal rights to be safe, un-harassed, and assured of their own space on PEX buses.

CERTAIN ITEMS CANNOT BE CARRIED ON PUBLIC TRANSIT BUSES:

- Any firearm or other type of weapon(s).
- Pets or animals (except service animals) are not allowed on the vehicle.

- Other items not allowed on the bus: open containers of food or drink, containers of gasoline, kerosene, vehicle batteries, and other hazardous materials.
- Portable containers of oxygen, for medical reasons, are allowed.
- No furniture, gardening equipment, plastic pools, or other large items on the bus.
- PEX reserves the right to refuse other items on the bus if we feel it is a safety hazard to our drive and passenger.
- Call 749-9092 if you have a question about an item you wish to carry onto the public transit vehicle.

PASSENGERS WHO REFUSE TO FOLLOW THE NECESSARY TRAVEL AND SAFETY RULES CAN BE REFUSED SERVICE.

CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT OR ABUSIVE CONDUCT:

- First offense may result in suspension of service for that day.
- A second offense within a one year period shall result in suspension of service for 30 days.
- A third offense within a one year period shall result in suspension of service for 90 days.
- A passenger determined to have violated Item #15 concerning sexual harassment above shall have his/her privileges to PEX transit services permanently revoked. The Phenix City Express maintains a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment.

NOTE: Depending upon the seriousness and perceived danger of any misconduct or abusive conduct, even a first offense could result in permanent suspension of bus services to the offending passenger. LRCOG officials have the right to refuse service or remove anyone who violates PEX policies or jeopardizes the comfort or safety of other passengers.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

We are able to provide reliable, reasonably priced transportation for members of the community who have disabilities that restrict mobility. The lifts and wheelchair securement systems designed for our vehicles are easy to operate and make transporting passengers a very simple matter. **The lifts are designed to support a total of 600 pounds.** When scheduling a ride, you will need to inform us of your special needs, and we will gladly arrange a bus to accommodate you. Wheelchairs must be completely secured and seat belts must be worn by all passengers. The driver is able to assist with normal boarding and de-boarding. If further assistance is needed, be prepared to have someone accompany you. There is no charge for one assistant to ride.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

In order for PEX to better serve the community, we welcome input and questions from the public. Please call us to inquire about any of our services. We are here to serve the people of the community, so let us hear from you with comments, questions, or concerns! Call us at 334-749-9092 or 800-743-3739. Written correspondence can be sent to the following address: LEE-RUSSELL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, 2207 Gateway Drive, OPELIKA, AL 36801, lrcog@adss.state.al.us.