



LIFTS Rider Manual

Linn County Paratransit System



Call 319-892-5170 for the following:

- to schedule a ride for the next day or any time in the next month
- to cancel a ride
- after hours/office closed, leave a message or comment

Emergency Information: www.linncountyiowa.gov/LIFTS

Phone Numbers

Ride Request Line ----- 319-892-5170

24 Hour Cancellation ----- 319-892-5170

Ride Information 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. ----- 319-892-5170

For TDD (hearing impaired) ----- 1-800-735-2942 (Iowa Relay)

LIFTS Management ----- 319-892-5171

LIFTS E-mail ----- lifts@linncountyiowa.gov

LIFTS FAX ----- 319-892-5179

Linn County Board of Supervisors ----- 319-892-5000

LIFTS Advisory Council ----- 319-892-5000 (the Advisory Council phone calls are handled by the Board of Supervisors)

Welcome

Welcome to Linn County LIFTS, a collaborated program funded by Linn County, The City of Cedar Rapids and East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG).

LIFTS is a quality transportation system which is a shared ride service for:

- Riders in Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha and Marion who are certified by Cedar Rapids Transit as being eligible for ADA paratransit.
- The general public of Linn County for those over the age of seven unless accompanied by an adult.

The LIFTS program in Linn County and Cedar Rapids exceeds the minimum transportation requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. LIFTS is a door-to-door shared ride service. LIFTS seeks to be responsive to the individual transportation needs of eligible riders.

The LIFTS staff is our greatest asset. We have a core of committed, dedicated drivers who are ready to serve you. Please feel free to communicate what assistance you would or would not like.

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Feedback

The Linn County LIFTS Advisory Council and Linn County LIFTS wants to know how we can better serve you. You can help us improve the service by voicing your concerns or suggestions. Please contact LIFTS through the following methods:

1. Call LIFTS at 319-892-5170
2. Call LIFTS Advisory Council at 319-892-5000 to request to have a member contact you. View our member list on the website. www.linncountyiowa.gov/LIFTS
3. Fill out our comment/concern form online at www.linncountyiowa.gov/LIFTS

Service Schedule

In the metro area (Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha and Marion) service is provided:

- Monday – Friday: 6 a.m. to 6:40 p.m.
- Saturday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Holidays: LIFTS is closed New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Times may vary for the observed holiday dates, if they differ from the actual holiday. Please consult our website for the annual schedule.

Cost of LIFTS Rides

Within the Metro Area:

The basic cost of a one-way ride is \$3. Riders must pay when boarding the vehicle. The correct fare must be paid in cash, tokens or return ride cards. Drivers are **NOT** able to provide change. Riders who do not have the proper fare will not be transported.

If you need a personal care attendant(s), (a person or persons necessary for your health care), authorization must be approved by Cedar Rapids Transit. This will be asked on the eligibility application for LIFTS. This will allow the attendant(s) to ride for free – please notify the scheduler at the time the ride is requested. One (1) companion is eligible to ride with you for the regular fare.

Extra companions (person(s) traveling with you simply for convenience) are permitted **as availability allows**. Each companion will pay the \$3 per one-way trip.

Outside the Metro Area:

The cost of a ride outside the metro area is \$3 one way for senior citizens and disabled. The cost for general public is \$6 one way.

Service Animals:

The scheduler needs to know if a service animal will accompany you when scheduling the trip. Service animals are welcome on LIFTS buses.

How to Request a Ride

Call 319-892-5170 to request a ride.

The phone is staffed Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. except on the days holidays are observed.

Any calls made after hours may be left on voice mail and the call will be returned. Until the call is returned, the request will not be scheduled. We must make certain the information is correct before we will make the reservation.

Individuals should schedule rides at least one day prior to or up 30 days in advance of the day they need a ride. LIFTS will provide same-day service if space is available. In order to serve you and others better, you are asked to give the scheduler the following information:

- Rider's name
- Pick up address (must be a specific address)
- Drop off address (must be a specific address)
- Date of trip
- Desired time to be picked up and/or dropped off (please leave plenty of time for the appointment)
- Whether there will be an attendant or companion accompanying the rider
- Whether a mobility device will be used
- Whether a service animal will be used

In addition, the rider should have pen/pencil and paper handy to write down the scheduler's name, date(s) of trip(s) and trip times. It would be helpful for the rider to confirm this information.

LIFTS may not be able to provide you with a ride for the exact time requested, due to the number of trips requested. LIFTS will always attempt to schedule rides as efficiently and effectively as possible. LIFTS will make every effort to accommodate you. However, if a ride is available within one hour on either side of your requested time and you choose not to accept that ride, this will be considered a refused ride. **It is not a denied ride.** Negotiating times within that one-hour on either side of the request allows LIFTS to provide rides to more individuals who need transportation. The heaviest demand is from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. and from 2 to 4:45 p.m. If you are able to schedule your appointments other than these times, we will be more likely to meet your requested time.

When scheduling a ride, you should be aware that the ride is shared with others. It may take the comparable length of time as the same fixed-route trip, which would include:

1. Walk time to a bus stop from the point of origin
2. Wait time at the bus stop
3. Time on board the bus
4. If applicable, transfer wait time and transfer ride time
5. Walk time to the final destination

Upon request, if the rider may be late for an appointment LIFTS will call their destination.

The scheduler will give you a 30 minute pick-up window. This means you need to be ready to be picked 15 minutes before your scheduled pick up time until 15 minutes after the scheduled pick up time. The driver cannot wait if they are to serve others and stay on schedule. Every minute a driver waits delays the service for everyone else. Please be ready during the scheduled window.

If you have trips that occur on multiple days of the week, at the same time, to and/or from the same destination, you may wish to request a subscription ride. This allows the rider the convenience of having the trip automatically scheduled without having to call LIFTS for every ride. The number of subscription rides may be limited. If LIFTS is able to provide the subscription trip, it will be offered.

Riders whose pick-up or drop-off locations change will need to request a new subscription ride reservation because the trip details have changed. As with any new subscription requested, it will be accommodated if possible to do so. Persons may wish to check on the availability of a different subscription ride(s) before changing schedules.

How to Cancel a Ride

Call **319-892-5170** to cancel a ride.

It is important to cancel your ride early. By doing this, you make it possible for another rider to get a ride.

The phone is staffed with an employee Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is a voice mail system in place at all times to assist you in directing your call.

You may call anytime day or night to cancel a ride. **You must cancel at least two hours prior to the ride to avoid a missed ride** (see page 12 for the missed ride policy).

If you are calling after hours for a cancellation, please leave the name of the rider, telephone number, date(s) and time(s) of trips you want cancelled. It is also helpful to include the pick up and drop off addresses of all the trips you wish to cancel.

The drivers do not have access to make scheduling changes. Please do not ask them to make any changes for you. All schedule changes must be done through direct communication with the LIFTS scheduler. Please call **319-892-5170** for any changes.

Stranded Riders

If you have a ride scheduled with LIFTS and your driver does not arrive by the end of the pick up window, you may call 892-5170 to check and see when your driver may be expected to arrive. This is a shared ride service. Other riders or circumstances outside the driver's control can sometimes delay the driver.

Policies

The Linn County Board of Supervisors has, upon recommendation of the LIFTS Advisory Council, adopted a set of policies. Riders will be kept informed of all changes in operation or policy. We ask you as a rider to let us know of any changes you may need. Policies are mentioned briefly throughout this guide. We must abide by all safety standards and codes. All ramps, doorways, walkways, etc. must meet all guidelines for LIFTS to provide door-to-door service. The responsibility to meet safety regulations is up to the landowner. The landowner is to stay in accordance with all ordinances and codes.

Bad Weather Policy

Emergency information and schedule changes will be updated on the website, www.linncountyiowa.gov/liffts. Services are provided, weather permitting. Sometimes service is canceled due to weather conditions. The cancellation will be announced on the following local radio and television stations, and on their websites. We follow Cedar Rapids Transit for hours, delays, and cancellations due to weather.

- Television: KCRG channel 9
- Radio: WMT 600 AM or 96.5 FM

The general policy is that if the city fixed-route system stops running for a specific period of time, then LIFTS will also stop operating those same hours. Also affecting LIFTS service: if the access to the residence or facility (this includes driveway, sidewalk, and/or walkway, etc.) is ice or snow covered, LIFTS will not be able to complete the service due to safety concerns. Approval of these circumstances will go through the LIFTS office.

Carry-on Package Policy

This policy is meant to reasonably limit the time and weight of carry-on items. This helps prevent injury or unreasonable delay and provides a safe environment for all LIFTS passengers.

Any item that is too large to see around and/or too awkward for one person to carry through the vehicle doorway will not be transported. **LIFTS will transport only what the driver and the rider (along with their attendant or companion) can carry on one trip.** The driver will NOT carry any item weighing more than twenty-five pounds. Items transported on LIFTS vehicles will be the sole responsibility of the rider.

Riders will have to take the responsibility of having the packages that are not allowed on a LIFTS vehicle delivered to their destination by other means. For packages that are acceptable, the driver will take the packages to the front door entrance and set them directly inside the door.

Food and Drink Policy

Due to safety concerns and the time involved to clean up a spill, Linn County LIFTS does not allow open food or drink in the vehicles.

Missed Ride/No Show Policy

Linn County LIFTS provides origin to destination paratransit service to passengers while complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for paratransit service. To encourage responsible trip scheduling and use, the ADA allows public transit systems to establish and enforce a No-Show policy. The No-Show policies and procedures for Linn County LIFTS were developed in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines for ADA complementary paratransit service.

Policy:

It is the policy of Linn County LIFTS to record each passenger's no-shows and apply appropriate sanctions when passengers establish a pattern or practice of excessive no-shows. The policy is necessary in order to recognize the negative impact No-Shows have on the service provided to other passengers.

Definitions:

A No-Show is a trip that has not been canceled at least two (2) hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time. If a passenger fails to board the vehicle within five (5) minutes of the arrival of the vehicle, as long as the driver arrives within the pick-up window, the passenger will be charged with a No-Show.

A No-Show occurs when:

- There has been no call by the passenger (or passenger's representative) to cancel the trip AND
- The vehicle arrives at the scheduled location within the 30- minute window (15 minutes before or after the scheduled pick-up time) AND
- The operator cannot reasonably see the passenger approaching the vehicle after waiting five (5) minutes AND

- The dispatch office is notified. At this time, dispatch will verify that the operator is at the correct location.

A No-Show may also be charged when

- The driver arrives and the passenger cancels their ride or is not present for the ride.
- The passenger arrives to take the bus after the driver has left or is leaving.

No Shows excused

No-Shows for reasons that are beyond the passengers control will not be counted. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Illness
- Sudden turn for the worse in someone with a variable condition
- Accidents
- Family Emergency
- Personal Care Attendant who did not arrive on time to assist the rider
- Passenger's appointment ran long and did not provide the opportunity to cancel in a timely manner
- Passenger's mobility aid failed
- Late connecting transportation- later transfer, train, etc. caused passenger to miss the trip
- Appointment cancelled/delayed for reasons that are not the passengers fault
- Act of God – flood/earthquake
- Staffing error Staff did not note the cancellation request or the passenger just realized that staff scheduled the trip inconsistently with the passenger's request
- Another person cancelled the passenger's appointment
- Bus arrival past the scheduled pick up window
- Repeated failures to take scheduled trips, regardless of the reason, are subject for review.

Trips may be cancelled 24 hours a day/seven days a week by calling the regular LIFTS number 319-892-5170

No-Shows that are not excused

No-Shows are not excused when the trip is not cancelled at least two (2) hours prior to the scheduled pick up time and is missed for one of the following reasons, but not limited to:

- Passenger did not want to travel today
- Passenger changed their mind about using the appointment

- Passenger did not know that they had a ride scheduled and was supposed to call to cancel
- Passenger got another ride
- Passenger told someone else they were not planning to travel (driver, facility, etc.) or someone else who booked the ride for them.
- Passenger does not want to ride with a specific driver or passenger, or on a specific vehicle

Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-Shows

A pattern or practice involves intentional, repeated or regular actions that are not isolated, accidental or singular incidents.

Calculation Method to Determine No-Shows

At the end of each month, those passengers who have been recorded as having five (5) or more No-Shows may be reviewed to identify the passenger's trip and No-Show history as well as their frequency of travel. Each No-Show will be verified as being correct before any further action is taken or proposed.

Those passengers whose No-Show rate is more than five (5) and in excess of the average No-Show rate for the month may have sanctions or suspensions imposed if the No-Shows are determined to constitute a pattern. Excused occurrences are not part of the calculation.

The formula for determining the average No-Show rate is:

- $\text{Total trips per month} / \text{No-Shows} = \text{Average No-Show rate for the month}$

Sanction for Excessive No-Shows

LIFTS wants passengers to take the trips they request. However, repeated failures to take trips as scheduled, regardless of the reason, are subject to review.

First step:

If a passenger, upon review, is determined to have an excessive No-Show rate, they will be notified in writing (or other format by request) of this determination. They will then be offered the option to discuss this determination verbally, in writing, or other format, as they choose. At that time, the passenger will receive details of the No-Shows, a written copy (or alternate format) of the policy, and be able to comment concerning the determination. A plan to eliminate the No-Show violations in the future will be verbally (or alternate format) agreed upon. This plan will be confirmed in a written correspondence (or alternate format).

Second step:

If a passenger, failing to meet the conditions of the first step, continues to experience an excessive No-Show rate, further action may be taken. The passenger will be notified in writing (or alternate format) of the determination. This determination will inform the passenger that due to their No-Show rate, they are suspended from receiving service for a period of one (1) week. This suspension will occur no sooner than 30 days from the date of notification. This will give the passenger time to make alternative plans, or appeal the decision, if they wish. They will be informed that they have the right to appeal the decision.

Third step:

If a passenger continues to experience an excessive No-Show rate after step one (1) and step two (2), further action may be taken. The passenger will be notified in writing of a suspension which may have the duration of more than seven days and up to 30 days. They will be informed that they have the right to appeal the decision.

Appeal Process

(If a passenger is in the process of an appeal, service will be continued until the final determination of all appeals is made)

If a passenger is notified that their service is suspended, they will have 21 days to provide an appeal. The appeal should be in writing (or alternate format) and submitted to:

Linn County LIFTS
625 31st Ave SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

Stage 1 Appeal:

The LIFTS director will review the appeal, the information presented and investigate the decision. The appeal decision will be made within seven days and communicated to the passenger.

Stage 2 Appeal:

If the passenger is still not satisfied, they may appeal the LIFTS director decision to a No-Show Appeals Board. The Appeal Board will hear the appeal. The passenger and/or others representing the passenger may come before the Appeal

Board. They may present written or oral information. All relevant LIFTS records and personnel will be made available to the passenger and their representative(s). Alternative forms of these records will be available upon request.

Within 14 days, the Appeals Board will review the suspension and all information pertaining to it. They will make a decision which is appropriate in the case. The decision of the Appeal Board will be final, subject to further appeal at other governmental levels.

Appeal Board:

The Appeal Board will be made up of three (3) members

- An elected representative serving on the Advisory Board
- An elected representative (determined, if possible, by the passenger's city of residence) serving on the Advisory Board
- A LIFTS passenger and/or community disability advocate. The appeal will be heard in a mutually agreed upon location and accessible by the passenger.

Advance Cancellation Requirement

A rider must, at a minimum, cancel a scheduled trip two hours prior to the scheduled trip time. This requirement applies to all LIFTS services, including subscription and rural trips.

When a rider calls to cancel a scheduled trip the following information must be provided: rider's name, date and times of the scheduled trip, pick up and drop off addresses.

Trips may be cancelled by dialing 319-892-5170. If the call is made after 5 p.m., voice mail is available at all times. For TDD service, please call RELAY IOWA 1-800-735-2942.

Safety Policies

Pick Up and Drop Off

Linn County LIFTS drivers provide door-to-door escorted service. In certain circumstances, Linn County LIFTS drivers may have to provide curbside services, versus door-to-door. These circumstances will involve safety concerns. LIFTS drivers are not authorized to go beyond the threshold of any door. It is not the responsibility of Linn County LIFTS to provide a safe pathway to and from a LIFTS vehicle and a destination's door. Unsafe conditions may include but are not limited to unsafe ground surfaces, insufficiently confined pets, inadequate lighting, or other unsafe conditions.

Sometimes, the access, pathway or threshold is unsafe in the driver's opinion. If the driver is unable to contact the rider, then the Linn County LIFTS driver shall contact dispatch. Dispatch will attempt to contact the rider or other parties who may be of assistance in correcting this unsafe condition. Linn County LIFTS drivers are not authorized to attempt the pick up or delivery of a rider which would be unsafe for a rider or a driver.

LIFTS is not authorized to refuse to permit a passenger from disembarking at a designated stop unless a lift cannot be deployed or the lift will be damaged if deployed in the process (see Section 37.167 of the Federal Register, Title 22 part IV, Department of Transportation, 49CFR). However, Linn County LIFTS drivers are not authorized to attempt delivery of a rider to a doorway which would be unsafe for the rider or driver.

If unsafe conditions in access, the pathway to or the threshold of a rider's door are noted, they will need to be corrected. At the discretion of the LIFTS director, a rider's service may be altered to curb-to- curb service versus door-to-door service. Such a decision may be appealed through the appeal process as described in the LIFTS Riders Guide.

No Staff at Drop Off Location

There are times when riders have made arrangements to have a support person/staff meet them at a drop off location. Linn County LIFTS does not recommend this practice. We are comparable to a public transit system and do not accept responsibility for riders after being dropped off at their designated location.

But in some cases, the rider requires someone to meet them. We strongly suggest that the rider or care provider that arranges the ride let the scheduler know of this requirement.

This information will be noted, and should the rider be taken to the drop off location and no one is there to meet them, one or more of the following actions may take place:

- The rider may have to remain on the vehicle and the driver will continue with the route schedule until able to return to the drop-off location,
- The rider may be returned to the rider's original pick up location
- The rider may be returned to the rider's residence.

If the rider has a care provider or agency that the ride was scheduled by, the care provider or agency will be contacted. LIFTS will notify them of the inability to deliver that individual at the requested drop off location. In addition, LIFTS will discuss what action is possible or appropriate at that time. The immediate problem must be resolved and we need to prevent this type of incident in the future.

Child Protection

Children under the age of seven years must be accompanied by a responsible adult. If the child under the age of seven is the eligible rider, the responsible adult may ride free.

Seatbelts

Riders using mobility devices are required to use a lap belt when loading or unloading from the vehicle. All riders should use a seatbelt when one is available when riding in a LIFTS vehicle, unless they are exempt for medical reasons. The rider must understand that Linn County LIFTS is no longer responsible for their safety in case of an accident when not wearing a seatbelt, if one is available.

Stairs

Drivers are not allowed to move wheel chairs up or down any type of steps. There must be a suitable ramp/access available.

Mobility Devices

Wheelchairs and scooters should have working brakes and no leaking batteries. For safety reasons, riders with scooters may be requested to transfer to a seat in the vehicle.

The lift platform specifications are adequate to accommodate most mobility devices. Oversized or overweight mobility devices may not be accommodated on some of the LIFTS lifts.

LIFTS will not be responsible for personal items (i.e. shopping bags, walkers, canes, crutches, etc.) left unattended that may fall and injure someone.

LIFTS drivers are not to drive a motorized wheelchair or scooter. The rider is responsible for the operation of any motorized device, and must be able to control said device in a safe manner on and off the lift, within the bus and going to and from the place of pickup and drop off.

Medications and Other Medical Needs

Riders who require medication or oxygen at regular intervals should be advised that their travel time could be 60 minutes or longer on occasion. LIFTS drivers cannot administer medical assistance or assist in the administration of medication. Large oxygen bottles must be secured to be transported.

Rider Conduct

Remember your conduct affects the safety of others. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and comfort of the riders on Linn County LIFTS. This policy applies to all LIFTS services, including subscription and rural trips.

LIFTS is concerned about the safety and comfort of its riders and drivers. For this reason violent, illegal or seriously disruptive conduct is not allowed on the vehicle. This includes the behavior of service animals, as well as the riders.

Section 37.125 and 37.5 of the Federal Register, Title 22, Part IV, Department of Transportation, 49 CFR allows paratransit service to be refused or provided conditionally for a customer who engages in violent, illegal or seriously disruptive conduct or behavior. Service may not be refused to an individual with disabilities solely because the individual's disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior (sounds or actions) that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience the LIFTS driver or other riders.

Educational Process

The primary approach to dealing with riders' conduct is through education. LIFTS will work with a rider and care provider or agency, if any, involved with the rider. That rider will be educated on appropriate behavior aboard public transportation. All riders will be urged to be considerate of the other passengers and driver.

When a person has been engaged in inappropriate behavior, the driver will inform the LIFTS office at the time the behavior occurs. The behavior will be discussed with the rider and/or care provider. LIFTS staff and a program staff member should attempt to correct the episode immediately.

The LIFTS Director will then evaluate the issue and speak with the rider and care provider or agency, if any. During the discussion(s) action plan will be developed to prevent further episodes of inappropriate behavior. If the behavior is seriously violent and/or harmful to other passengers, immediate suspension may occur.

If, after the initial educational process has been utilized, a rider continues to display inappropriate behavior a written warning will be sent to the rider and care provider and agency. This will be sent by the LIFTS Director or LIFTS Supervisor. This warning letter will indicate that another episode of inappropriate behavior will result in a suspension of services. Included with the notice may be possible alternative measures, which might assist in preventing the continued behavior.

If a rider has another episode of inappropriate behavior he/she and the care provider or agency, if any, will be sent a notice of suspended services. The length of the suspension of services will be determined by the LIFTS Director. The Director will work with the rider and care provider or agency, if any, to determine suspension length and time.

If the rider then returns to utilize LIFTS service and continues to display inappropriate behavior, further action will be taken. The rider may again receive suspension of service and/or possibly termination of service.

The length of the second suspension will be determined by the LIFTS Director and care provider or agency, if any. This will ensure enough time to allow for the development of a plan. This plan should assist the rider with correcting the inappropriate behavior. Should the behavior continue, the LIFTS Director or staff member will contact the rider and care provider or agency, if any, to discuss termination of service.

If a rider's service is terminated, the rider and care provider or agency, if any, may request restoring service. Some assurance of corrective behavior and compliance will be necessary for consideration of resumed service.

TITLE VI

Linn County LIFTS does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, disability, religion, color, sex, or national origin. Services are open to the general public, including persons with disabilities, as required by the American's with Disability Act (ADA). For more information on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 call the US Commission on Civil Rights at 202-272-7700 or TTY 202-376-8116.

To request additional information on Linn County LIFTS non-discrimination obligations or to file a Title VI complaint, please submit your request or complaint to the LIFTS director in writing to:

DIRECTOR – Linn County LIFTS
625 31st Ave SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
52404

Or by email to:
tom.hardecopf@linncountyiowa.gov

Or by phone to:
319-892-5171

Summary

We are very happy to have you as a LIFTS customer. If there is anything we can do to improve our service to you, please do not hesitate to let us know. Thank you!