

# Rider's Handbook



*Enjoy a safe and comfortable trip on the city bus system in Columbia, Missouri*

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Welcome to the City of Columbia bus system.

In 2000, 9.4 trillion passengers used public transportation in the United States, an increase of 3.5 percent from the previous year – nearly a million new riders every day! Nearly 14 million people use public transportation daily, while an additional 25 million use it less often.

The majority of mass transit passengers are headed to work, with 54 percent commuting to jobs. Fifteen percent of riders take public transit to school, 9 percent use it to shop or visit some friend or relative and 5 percent ride to see the doctor.

Public transit stimulates economic development, tripling the capitals invested by each \$10 million dollars in sales. It also saves money. Using public transit can reduce an individual's annual transportation expenses for car ownership, operation and maintenance from between \$4,800 to \$9,700 per year to only \$200 to \$2,000, depending on the size of the vehicle and the miles traveled.

Considering these factors, it is obvious that public transit is important for the United States and the City of Columbia. Columbia Transit is dedicated to making passengers' trips as pleasant and safe as possible. This handbook gives useful tips for riding the bus and lays out the rules of the road.

## Waiting for the Bus

At present, designated bus stops on Columbia Transit routes are marked with the blue Bus Stop sign, but buses will also stop at any street corner at the end of the block when traffic permits. It is the intention of Columbia Transit to eventually stop only at areas and intersections marked with bus stop signs. Until that time, to catch a bus at an un-marked intersection, passengers should make an effort to alert the driver to the fact they are interested in catching the bus. A raised, open hand and eye-contact with the driver will assure that the driver will stop the bus. Unless passengers alert the driver to their desire to ride the bus, the driver may assume they have some other reason for standing at the corner.

Passengers should have their fare, transfer, *FASTPass*, ticket and any necessary I.D. ready.

When boarding the bus, be sure to have correct change for the fare box. Drivers do not carry change and the fare boxes don't give change. Riders using a *FASTPass* should have it out and ready to show to the driver. When using a half-fare *FASTPass*, be sure to have identification establishing eligibility for half-fare out and available to show the driver. Ask for transfers upon boarding the bus and pay the fare. Having correct change, *FASTPass* and identification out and ready helps the driver to keep the bus moving on schedule.

Move quickly to a seat.

The bus will move as soon as all passengers are safely boarded. Please be seated as quickly as possible and hold the hand or guard rails. Passengers should not stand in front of the yellow line while the bus is in motion. Once the bus is in motion, do not distract the driver. The driver has a lot of things to pay attention to outside the bus in order to keep all passengers safe.

Front bus seats are reserved for the elderly and handicapped. Please move to the back of the bus when possible, and leave those seats available for passengers in wheelchairs and the elderly.

## Packages and Strollers

Passengers must keep packages and strollers out of the aisles for safety as required by the U.S. and Missouri Departments of Transportation. If necessary, and if there are no passengers using wheelchairs aboard, riders may raise the seats in the front of the bus to accommodate strollers. However, should the bus become

crowded or a passenger using a wheelchair board the bus, the passenger must remove the stroller from the seating area, possibly even folding it up and holding the child.

Packages and boxes that fit on the lap or under the seat are allowed. Weapons, toxic chemicals, flammable materials, large packages, furniture, and lumber should not be brought on the bus.

Riders must carry skateboards, roller skates, and roller blades when entering, riding, and exiting the bus.

### **Smoking, Drinking, and Eating**

Please don't bring lit cigarettes, open food containers, or un-capped drink containers on the bus. Food particles and spilt liquids can be hazards as well as unpleasant matters on the bus. Please have any food in closed containers and any drinks in spill-proof (meaning if it falls or tips nothing leaks out) glasses or mugs. While on the bus, the food and drink containers should remain closed.

### **Students on the Public Bus**

Mass transit is one of the safest forms of transportation – by some estimates, buses are nearly 21 times safer than riding in an automobile – but it is not without risks, especially for school-age children. Students need to learn to recognize and avoid these risks so they can get to and from school safely. Motorists traveling on a street with city buses do not have to stop when city buses stop to pick up and drop off students, the way they do for school buses. Transit buses move away from the bus stop as soon as passengers have gotten on or off and do not supervise children crossing the street. Most bus stops are at intersections, many of which do not have a traffic light or crossing signal. For these reasons, students who travel to school on a public bus need to observe the following precautions:

- Stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop
- Be alert when getting off the bus
- Never cross the street in front of a public bus
- Wait for the bus to pull away for a clear view of the street. Cross at the cross walk or street corner, and wait for the light to turn green or for the WALK signal

In fact, these are good rules of thumb for every passenger on a transit bus and should be taken into consideration by all riders.

### **Exiting the Bus**

In order to allow the driver to make a smooth stop when approaching their destination, passengers should ring the bus bell one-half block before the stop by pulling the overhead cord or, in the case of passengers in wheelchairs, pressing the yellow strip on the raised seat bottom. Passengers should remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. Exit by the rear door, except for passengers with small children and strollers – they should exit through the front door to make

it easier for the driver to determine that the children have cleared the door before closing it.

## **Abusive Language or Actions**

Columbia Transit wants to assure that all passengers have a safe and pleasant ride. Toward that goal, offensive language or actions will not be tolerated on the bus. We all make mistakes occasionally, so drivers may be lenient on first offenses. However, drivers have been told that they may have offensive or abusive passengers removed from the bus and if necessary, those persons may be banned from the bus for an extended period. Each bus is equipped with video cameras and recorders that tape all activity on the bus which can be used in prosecution and observation of offensive behavior.

Passengers are also asked to report any episodes of abusive behavior or language not directly observed by the driver. In extreme cases of behavior or defacing of transit property, the video tape may be used as evidence in prosecution of offenders.

## **Accidents, Criminal Activity, and Other Emergencies**

Despite the greatest of efforts to avoid them, accidents can occur. It is important that passengers on the bus during an accident remain calm and understand that in such cases reports must be filed with the police. Riders should be ready to give their observations, if any, as well as their phone number and address to the officer in charge of the case, a transit supervisor or the driver. Even though the cameras on the bus will record the incident, it is important to have the observations of passengers in addition to the video record. Report any and all injuries suffered in the accident immediately.

In the rare event of criminal activity on the bus (assault, robbery, etc.), passengers should remain calm and let the driver and/or dispatcher handle the situation. Columbia Transit has special procedures it follows in many different situations that drivers and dispatchers have been trained to handle. Passengers may be asked for a description of any perpetrators, and should be prepared for questions from the authorities. Be a good witness.

Passengers are asked to report any suspicious activities they see. These activities may be as simple as something that seems slightly out of place or unusual for the time and place it occurs.

## Bicycles



Columbia Transit has bicycle racks on all buses. The racks are easily operated following instructions printed on the rack. Passengers/owners of bicycles must operate and load their bikes on the racks themselves, with assistance if necessary from the driver for first-time users. As bike owners load their bikes onto the racks, they will find them very easy to use. Just slip the spring over the tire -- only 30 to 45 seconds to load or unload. Again, the timely loading of passengers is important in keeping the buses on schedule. When bicycle owners remove their bikes from the rack they are asked to please return the rack to the upright position. There is room for two bikes on each bus; first-come, first-served to the first open position on the bike rack.

## Extreme Weather Conditions

During extreme weather conditions (heavy ice or snow), Columbia Transit buses will operate on the Weather Emergency Schedule. Departure times will be on the half hour from scheduled end-points (for example, on the west end, Columbia Mall) and on the hour from Wabash Station. Passengers curious as to whether Columbia Transit is on the Weather Emergency Schedule may listen to radio stations: KBIA, KCLR, KFRU, and KPLA for that information or follow us online on Twitter or Facebook. When possible, Columbia Transit will give at least one hour's notice before changing to or from the Weather Emergency Schedule; however, during rapid changes in road conditions, Columbia Transit reserves the right to change to the Weather Emergency Schedule at any time.

The buses will follow the regular routes unless a street becomes totally impassable. Plan on allowing more travel time for your trip to be completed. Columbia Transit WILL NOT cancel service unless major city streets are completely impassable due to very heavy snow or ice.

### **Weather Emergency Schedule Departure Times:**

**Departs Wabash Station:** 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m.

**Departs Route End Points:** 6:30 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m.

#### **Route End Points Are As Follows:**

- 101 South Loop-** Bethel Street and Diego Drive
- 101 North Loop-** Oakland Middle School
- 102 NE Loop-** Smiley Land and Range Line Road
- 102 East Loop-** Indian Hills
- 103 West Loop-** Columbia Mall
- 103 NE Loop-** Wace Road and Brown Station Road
- 104 SE Loop-** Columbia Regional Hospital
- 104 West Loop-** HyVee
- 106 Downtown Loop-** University Hospital

For more information regarding the Weather Emergency Schedule, please call 573-874-7282.

### **Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm**

When a tornado warning has been issued for the City of Columbia, the dispatcher will notify drivers to proceed to the nearest shelter area, such as the Mall or Wabash Station. In some cases, the driver may pull over and evacuate the bus at a building along the route and direct passengers to a safe haven during the storm. It is important that all passengers remain calm and follow the driver's instructions to remain safe.

At Wabash Station, the dispatcher will evacuate the waiting area. Again, passengers should remain calm and follow the lead of the dispatcher.

Now that you know the basics for riding Columbia Transit, pick up a bus schedule and map located at Wabash Station or on Columbia Transit buses. The bus schedule and map are also available on our website: [www.GoColumbiaMo.com](http://www.GoColumbiaMo.com) (search: GoBus). If you have any questions or comments, please call 573-874-7282.

Have a safe and pleasant trip!