



CobbLinc

Paratransit Services Rider's Guide

Effective September 2016

**CobbLinc
Paratransit Services
431 Commerce Park Drive
Marietta GA 30060**

**Reservations (770) 427-2222
Customer Service (770) 427-4444
Paratransit Manger (770) 429-7318**

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Welcome to CobbLinc Paratransit Services

The information contained in this CobbLinc Paratransit Service Rider's Guide has been developed to help new and existing customers become acquainted with the CobbLinc Paratransit Service system and to provide the necessary guidelines required to use it effectively.

This document is available in alternate formats (i.e., electronic, audio CD, or large print). If you have questions about any of the information contained in this guide and/or need to request the guide in alternate format, contact the Transit Operations Monitor at (770) 528-3690, TDD 711.

What is CobbLinc Paratransit Services?

CobbLinc Paratransit Services is part of the comprehensive public transportation system of Cobb County. It is neither a personal taxi nor a social service agency. It is a **shared-ride public transportation** service of Cobb County in compliance with the complementary paratransit service provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. CobbLinc Paratransit operates as a **curb-to-curb service**. The definition of curb-to-curb service is the customer will be picked up at the closest curb to the pick-up location and will be taken to the closest curb of the drop-off location.

Transportation is provided within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor on either side of the existing fixed local routes in Cobb County and limited areas of Fulton County.

This service can be used for work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc. CobbLinc Paratransit Services provide transportation that is **comparable to the fixed route system** in service area, service times, and travel times.

Customers must be aware, this is a shared-ride service, the duration of a trip may be as long as a comparable fixed route (big bus) trip plus one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour for travel and wait time.

The CobbLinc Reservationist will coordinate transfers to MARTA Mobility when a trip requires this level of scheduling.

All vehicles providing this service are lift-equipped to safely transport both wheelchair and ambulatory riders.

Who is Eligible?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights statute. It clearly emphasizes nondiscriminatory access to fixed route service, with ***ADA Complementary Paratransit acting as a "safety net"*** for people who do not have the functional ability to use the fixed route system. Under the ADA, *Complementary Paratransit* service is **not** intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation for individuals with disabilities, and **simply having a disability or multiple disabilities does not, in and of itself, entitle a person to ride.** Rather, the DOT ADA regulations provide for three categories of *ADA Complementary Paratransit* eligibility.

Category 1 is for persons with disabilities who cannot use fixed route without the assistance of another person.

Category 2 is for persons with disabilities who could use the fixed route if the vehicles were accessible.

Category 3 is described at DOT ADA regulation 37.123(e) (3):

Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition, which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.

The determining factor in deciding whether the passenger qualifies for *ADA Complementary Paratransit* is whether the passenger can functionally ride or access the bus. It is not a medical determination; it is a functional ability analysis. A disability that makes travel more difficult, but not impossible, does not qualify an individual for eligibility.

Eligibility is good for four (4) years, unless temporary eligibility is given. Temporary eligibility is based on a temporary functional need. The eligibility date will be noted in the eligibility letter.

Using The Fixed Route System

You and your Personal Care Attendant (PCA) can ride for free taking advantage of the flexibility and independence provided by our fixed route system. To plan your public transit trip call 770-427-4444 and a customer service agent will help you identify the best route to reach your destination.

➤ **Trip Planning Training**

CobbLinc is committed to training and enabling disabled customers to use the fixed route system as a way of increasing their independence and ability to travel to all areas served by public transportation. Any individual and/or group interested in participating in a free training seminar can arrange it by calling the CobbLinc Mobility Outreach Coordinator at 770-528-4381.

What Areas Are Served?

CobbLinc Paratransit is a curb-to curb service (curb of pick-up location to curb of destination) centered along the local fixed bus routes in Cobb County and limited areas in Fulton County, extending three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of a mile on either side of each of the routes. Points of origin and destination outside the three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) mile corridor are not eligible for CobbLinc Paratransit service. **Eligible passengers are not required to live inside the service area; however, passengers must board and exit the paratransit vehicle inside of the service area at a safe transfer location.**

When Does This Service Operate?

Paratransit service is provided Monday through Saturday. It is comparable to the local fixed (big) bus service hours and routes. (e.g. If a fixed local route ends service at 9:00 PM, then paratransit service would also end at 9:00 PM) . Maps of the local routes with service times are available and can be requested by calling (770) 427-4444 or TDD at 711.

Service is not available on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

How Do I Apply For Service?

You may print the application from our website at www.GoCOBBLINC.org. Once the application is completed and signed, fax the application to 770-429-7865 or mail it to CobbLinc at the address listed below. The application can also be requested by calling (770) 429-7855, or TDD at 711, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday; an

application will be mailed to you. To request an application in alternate format, contact the CobbLinc Transit Operations Monitor at (770) 528-3690 or TDD at 711.

Complete Part A and return it to CobbLinc. In order to process Part A, all questions must be answered completely and the form must be signed by the applicant, representative or guardian. **If the form is missing information and/or is not signed it will be considered incomplete and it will be returned to the applicant.** The information about the licensed/certified Healthcare Professional, teacher, or social worker familiar with the applicant's history must be included on the application. Part B will be faxed by CobbLinc to the licensed/certified Healthcare Professional listed on the application. After the licensed/certified Healthcare Professional returns Part B with all the information that is required, the application will be considered complete. **Once the completed application (Parts A & B) is received and is in the possession of CobbLinc, eligibility will be determined within 21 days.** If this process is not completed within 21 days, in compliance with ADA Sec 37.125 (c), the applicant is presumed eligible and may use paratransit service until a decision is made. The applicant will be notified of the final decision in writing.

If an applicant needs help filling out the application, please contact the CobbLinc Paratransit Administrator at 770-429-7855 and special arrangements can be made to assist in completing the application.

Return the application in the enclosed postage paid self-addressed envelope to:

CobbLinc Paratransit Service
431 Commerce Park Drive
Marietta, GA 30060-2737

How Will I Know If I Can Use CobbLinc Paratransit Service?

The applicant will be notified by mail of their eligibility status. If the applicant is approved as eligible, he/she must go to the CobbLinc office at 431 Commerce Park Drive, Marietta, Georgia, to receive their identification card. **Eligible customers may ride the CobbLinc Paratransit service for free to receive their CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card. However, the return trip is not free.** The CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card is a special Breeze Card with a photo and must be presented to the bus operator upon boarding the bus. The CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card is accepted at other transit agencies within the United States. Consult with the local transit agency regarding applicable rules and regulations.

➤ **What If My Application Is Denied?**

If an applicant is denied eligibility, the applicant may appeal the decision either in writing or be heard in person. Please send decision of appeal, along with all additional information you would like the Appeal Panel to consider to:

Transit Operations Monitor
CobbLinc
463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 112
Marietta, GA 30060-2737

Appeals must be submitted within 60 calendar days from the date of the notification letter of the applicant's eligibility status. CobbLinc will notify you in writing of the location and time of the appeals hearing. **The applicant must provide his/her own transportation to the appeals hearing.** The applicant will receive written notification of the Appeals Board decision within 30 calendar days of the appeals hearing date.

➤ **How Long is My Certification Valid?**

All customers are required to be recertified every four (4) years. An application form will be mailed to the customer two (2) months prior to the expiration date, along with an enclosed letter informing the customer that their certification for paratransit service is up for renewal. Failure to return the application in a timely manner may result in a loss of service.

➤ **What If My Recertification Application is Denied?**

If the application for recertification is denied, the customer may continue to use the service for 60 calendar days from the date of the notification letter. If the customer does not file an appeal within those 60 calendar days, the customer's service will be discontinued on the 61st calendar day.

➤ **What If I Appeal?**

If the customer files an appeal within 60 calendar days, service will continue until the Paratransit Appeals Board determine the customer's eligibility. The customer will receive written notification of the Appeals Board decision within 30 calendar days of the appeals hearing. If the recertification application appeal is denied by the Appeals Board, service will be discontinued 10 business days from the date of the Appeals Board decision letter.

What If My Card is Lost or Stolen?

If a customer misplaces their CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card, or if it is lost or stolen, a replacement card can be obtained for a fee of \$5.00 at the CobbLinc offices located at 431 Commerce Park Drive, Marietta, Georgia 30060. Contact the CobbLinc Paratransit Certifications office at (770) 429-7855 for questions regarding the CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card. Trips cannot be taken without showing a valid CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card.

What If I have A Temporary Disability?

Persons with temporary disabilities may obtain a CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card valid for the expected time of the disability by using the same application eligibility process. If the disability continues longer than identified on the application, or becomes permanent, CobbLinc will require a new application to be submitted.

How Do I Make A Reservation?

Reservations may be made by calling (770) 427-2222 or TDD at 711, at the following times:

Sundays for Monday trips (next day only)

Monday through Friday (for Tuesday thru Saturday trips)

Reservations are available between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Same day reservations are not available. Reservations are accepted up to three (3) days in advance. There are no daily limits on the number of reservations the customer can request. Please remember, a reservationist is the only person that can make a trip reservation; **vehicle operators are not allowed to make reservations.**

If a trip requires a passenger to travel from Cobb County to the MARTA Mobility service area, CobbLinc Paratransit will coordinate this trip with MARTA Mobility. Please call before 3:00 pm if this is the first time you have arranged an interagency trip to MARTA Mobility, this allows CobbLinc to setup necessary account information with MARTA.

Note: If a holiday falls on a Monday, the reservations office will be closed on the Sunday prior to the holiday. Keep this in mind when reserving/planning trips near holidays.

Every effort will be made to accommodate the customer's requested pick-up time, however, **demand at certain times of the day may require that the passenger adjust**

their desired time by negotiating up to one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the desired pick-up or drop-off time. Reservation space is assigned on a first come, first serve basis.

Customers must be aware, this is a shared-ride service. The duration of a trip may be as long as a comparable fixed route trip plus one-half (1/2) hour for travel and wait time.

Whenever a customer makes a reservation for a trip, he/she should be prepared to give the reservationist the following information:

- First and last name.
- Exact address of the pick-up location and destination. Without an exact address, a trip cannot be scheduled.
- The name of the complex, subdivision, building number and apartment number if applicable.
- The designated ADA accessible entrance location to the facility if applicable.
- Requested appointment time (drop-off time) or pick-up time.
- Return time if a return trip is needed If the passenger will be traveling with a companion, Personal Care Assistant or child and if any of the above stated will be using a mobility device. Whether a service animal will be traveling with the passenger.
- Valid phone number (cannot confirm trip if phone number is not valid)

The reservationist is required to ask for complete information and will repeat the information back to the customer just to ensure the reservation was created correctly. **An operator or passenger cannot change the location of the pick-up or drop-off on the day of the trip.**

➤ **Reservation Trip Times Scheduled Too Close To Each Other**

If a customer chooses to schedule their trips too close together and is not ready to board the vehicle for the return trip within five (5) minutes of the scheduled pick-up time, a no-show will be given and the vehicle will not return to pick them up after it leaves the pick-up location.

To ensure timely pick-ups, drop-offs, and avoid the risk of a no-show, the minimum recommended time between trips is one (1) hour.

CobbLinc does not have a no show strand policy. If a no-show is issued, the bus will proceed to its next destination and will not return to pick you up.

➤ **Negotiating Pick-Up or Drop-Off Time**

Customers may be asked to adjust their requested pick-up or drop-off times due to demand at certain times of the day. See examples below.

- **The “latest arrival” time means that passenger has to be at their destination at a specific time (for example, Medical/Dental appointments, start time for work/school).**

The one-hour negotiating window should be used on the early side to ensure that the customer arrives on time.

Customer must arrive at doctor/work/school no later than 8:00 AM.

1. The reservation agent must evaluate travel time and 30 minute window when assigning the pick-up time. (example, travel time 1 hour plus ½ hour window, total 1 ½ hours)
2. The customer may be offered a time before 6:30 AM but not later. A pick-up time of 6:15 AM would be reasonable while a 6:45 AM may not be reasonable in ensuring he/she arrives on time at the destination.

- **The “earliest departure” time is the earliest time the passenger wants to be picked up (for example, getting off work or leaving school)**

The one-hour negotiating window should be used on the late side because the customer cannot leave before the stated time.

The customer ends work/school at 4:00 PM.

1. The reservation agent must take into account that the customer will not be ready until after 4:00 PM.
2. The customer may be offered a time after their 4:00 PM end time but not earlier. A pick-up time of 4:15 PM would be reasonable while a 3:45 PM would not be reasonable since they cannot leave work or school early.

- **When no travel restrictions apply (no exact arrival or departure time)**

The one-hour negotiating window can be used on either side of the requested time since the customer is not constrained by appointments and/or work/school schedule.

- **Reservation Confirmation**

Customers will be given their scheduled pick-up time at the end of the reservation process. **For interagency trips only**, a confirmation call will be made by CobbLinc to the customer between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM for a reservation the following day. *If the interagency trip customer has not received a confirmation call from CobbLinc by 8:00 PM, please call (770) 424-3265.* Reservation changes will only be accepted Sunday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM up to the day before the customer's scheduled trip.

- **Subscription Service (Standing Orders)**

Subscription service is restricted to medical, educational, and employment related trips and must be for a minimum of three (3) days per week with the same destination and time. If a customer chooses to change the subscription time, it will be handled as a new subscription request. If a corresponding time slot is immediately available, then the customer's new subscription will take effect on the date requested. If no corresponding time slot is available, customer may place their name on the subscription waiting list. Subscriptions will be assigned as space becomes available. Once a subscription is assigned, it will not be necessary to call back and reserve that trip individually.

As traffic patterns and demographics change, CobbLinc Paratransit reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to existing subscriptions. Should a customer's subscription need to be adjusted, these changes will be made on an individual basis with input from the customer and/or his/her guardian/caretaker. At no time will CobbLinc adjust or change a subscription without consulting with the customer. If an agreement cannot be reached between CobbLinc and the customer, it may result in the customer's subscription being dropped from the subscription list and placed back on the request list until an appropriate time slot can be found. These changes will allow CobbLinc to make the best use of its resources while providing the timeliest service possible to all of its customers.

The customer may temporarily change the destination or pick-up address on a subscription for a minimum of two weeks if the time slot is available. All changes to subscriptions must be made at least one day in advance. Same day address changes cannot be accommodated. If the customer chooses to change the subscription permanently, it will be handled as a new subscription request and placed on the waiting list if the time slot is not available.

A subscription customer that is suspended due to no-show violations will lose their current subscription status and may reapply after the suspension is completed.

Subscription service (standing orders) are not notified for trip confirmation.

Subscription trips are automatically cancelled on the following Holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, total subscription trips may not exceed 50% of space availability at any time during the day. Certain time periods may not have subscription time slots available.

How Do I Cancel A Reservation?

To cancel a reservation **prior** to the day of the trip, please contact reservations at (770) 427-2222 or TDD at 711, Sunday through Friday, 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Please note: **Do not call reservations for same day cancellations.** Any **same day** cancellation must be made by calling paratransit dispatch at (770) 424-3265 or TDD at 711 Monday through Friday, 4:00 AM until 11:50 PM and on Saturday from 5:00 AM until 11:47 PM. Be sure to give the passenger's name, address, date of travel, scheduled pick-up time and return trip information. To avoid increased penalties, always call to cancel the trip(s). Make sure you cancel all subsequent trips if not needed.

➤ Same Day Hold

CobbLinc recognizes that some delays are beyond the control of the customer, calling for a same-day hold is permitted **only** under the following circumstances:

1. Return trips from medical facilities, governmental offices or
2. If due to traffic, CobbLinc arrived at the passenger's initial destination point after the scheduled arrival time of a fixed or Xpress route and/or Paratransit trip.

Passengers must call prior to one hour before their scheduled pick-up time to place their trip on hold. Please note that a bus will be sent back when a bus is available. A same-day hold pick-up cannot interfere with another passenger's trips; therefore, a passenger may have to wait for an extended period of time to be picked up.

How Do I Ride The CobbLinc Paratransit Vehicle?

➤ **Pick-up Times**

The scheduled pick-up time will be based upon the preference set by the passenger. Passengers can either schedule their pick-up time based on the time they need to be dropped off for an appointment or the time they wish to be picked up. At times, the CobbLinc Paratransit vehicle may arrive early. You can board the vehicle early if you want; however, you are not required to board before the scheduled pick-up time.

- If you must be at the doctors, school, work, etc. at 9:00 AM, please make sure you use this time to determine an appropriate pick-up time that will get you to your destination on time.
- If you end work at 4:00 PM, use this time to determine an appropriate pick up time that enables you to meet the vehicle within five (5) minutes of its arrival at your work site.

➤ **Pick-up Window**

The pick-up window is determined by the scheduled pick-up time and is defined as 0-30 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time. **Customers must be ready to board the vehicle at any time during this 30-minute window.** If the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute period, please contact CobbLinc Dispatch at (770) 424-3265 or TDD at 711 for assistance.

➤ **Operator Wait Time**

It is important to be at the designated pick-up location at the scheduled pick-up time provided by the reservationist when the reservation was made. The vehicle **will wait up to five (5) minutes** past the scheduled pick-up time for a passenger to arrive at the curb or designated pick-up point. The operator cannot leave, nor charge you

with a no-show, until five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. If the vehicle arrives after the scheduled pick-up time, the operator is instructed to wait five (5) minutes before contacting dispatch for instructions.

The vehicle is not permitted to wait while the passenger conducts business at their destination. The passenger will need to make a reservation for their return trip. Pick-up time and operator wait time requirements will also apply to the return trip.

➤ **Boarding The Vehicle**

Passengers must have their CobbLinc Paratransit ID Card, fare ticket(s) or money (**exact change is required**) ready to present to the operator when boarding the CobbLinc vehicle. **Failure to provide a ticket, pass or exact fare currency at the time of boarding will result in the disruption of a passenger's service and a no-show will be added to the passenger's record.**

➤ **Operator Assistance**

CobbLinc Paratransit service is a curb-to-curb service. Operators will provide assistance on and off the vehicle only. However, to meet the requirements of ADA origin-to-destination service, on an individual, case-by-case basis, assistance beyond the curb will be provided based on disability, adverse weather and/or physical barrier as needed. When you make the reservation, you must let the reservationist know that you will need the extra assistance. Operators are not permitted to take passengers up or down steps, ramps or walks. The operator will provide assistance with the use of lifts, ramps, and securement devices. The operator will assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp or onto the lift of the bus. Operators do not assist with packages and/or personal items. (see page 24)

➤ **Gated Communities**

Those passengers that reside/travel to or from a gated community should remain in their apartment until the vehicle has arrived at the gate. **Customers must provide a code to open the gate.** The passenger will be notified that the vehicle has arrived at the gate. If the buzzer at the gate does not work, the operator will call dispatch and dispatch will notify the passenger to open the gate. If the vehicle is unable to enter the community due to problem with the gate or gate lock, a no-show will be issued.

➤ **Closed Business**

If a business is closed upon the arrival of the vehicle, the passenger can choose to stay on the vehicle and be dropped off at the return address at the convenience of CobbLinc (return trip fare must be paid), or the passenger can get off the bus and wait for the return trip vehicle to pick them up.

➤ **Pick-up Locations Procedures**

To provide safe, on-time service for all passengers, CobbLinc Paratransit has developed the following pick-up procedures:

- **Apartments**

Passengers who live in large, multiple-unit apartment complexes must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to their address. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside apartments.

- **Office Complexes**

Passengers traveling from a large office complex, medical facility, or other similar area must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility.

- **Nursing Homes**

Passengers traveling from a nursing home should meet the vehicle at the curb closest to the main lobby. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility.

- **Adult Day Care and Dialysis Centers**

Passengers should be waiting in a designated area when the vehicle arrives to pick them up at the centers. Operators will assist passengers in boarding the vehicle. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility. It is highly recommended that the center contact CobbLinc Dispatch at (770) 424-3265 if there is a problem with the scheduled pick-up time. CobbLinc does not handle emergency trips to the hospital.

- **Malls**

Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main entrance that is closest to the food court location. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the mall.

Town Center Mall, covered entrance located on lower level. The vehicle drives under the canopy and passengers will be picked up and dropped off at this location only.

Cumberland Mall, entrance marked “Food Court” with double ramp access. Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at this location only.

- **Churches**

Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the church.

- **Other Large Areas Not Specified**

Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside any facility.

- **Exception**

If the main reception desk or main lobby entrance does not meet ADA accessibility standards, it is the passenger’s responsibility to contact the facility administrator for determination of their designated accessible entrance and notify CobbLinc **prior** to the trip.

What If My Vehicle Is Late?

If the vehicle has not arrived within 30 minutes after the scheduled pickup time, call CobbLinc Dispatch at 770-424-3265 or TDD at 711 for late vehicle assistance.

What If I Fail To Show Up For A Scheduled Trip?

➤ CobbLinc's No-Show Policy

A *no-show* occurs when an individual schedules a trip and fails to use the service by missing their scheduled trip and negatively impacting service. CobbLinc defines *no-show* as a missed trip not cancelled by the customer or whenever a customer cancels a trip within 1-hour of the scheduled pick-up time. If an individual receives four (4) or more *no-shows* in a calendar month AND they equal more than 10% of the rider's total scheduled trips for the calendar month, that individual will be suspended.

If the cancellation is due to a CobbLinc error, the customer will not be issued no-shows for all affected trips for that day. If an extended traffic delay that is verified by CobbLinc's AVL system and Dispatch causes a change in the existing reservation times, the passenger will not be held accountable.

A no-show will be added to a passenger's record when the following situation(s) occur:

- Not being at the pick-up point within five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. (Do not leave the pick-up location until the 30-minute window has passed.) If the vehicle arrives after the scheduled pick-up time, operators are instructed to wait five (5) minutes and notify dispatch for further instructions.
- Cancelling a ride less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Choosing not to ride after the vehicle arrives for pick-up.
- Not taking the trip due to not having the proper fare to ride after the vehicle arrives for pick-up. Operators do not make change.

If a passenger fails to show up for a scheduled trip and a no-show is recorded, any other trips for that day **will remain** on the schedule. It is the responsibility of the passenger to cancel any other trips for the day if not needed. Under Federal law, CobbLinc may not assume that a passenger will not take the other scheduled trips for that day.

➤ No-Show Violations

Any passenger who receives a suspension will be notified of such in writing. The passenger has the opportunity to appeal any suspension. The appeal must be in

writing and received by CobbLinc within 10 business days of receipt of the Notification Letter. The appeal should be addressed to:

Transit Operations Monitor
CobbLinc
463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 112
Marietta, GA 30060-2737

The passenger will be notified in writing of an appeal hearing date and time. Appeals are held the third Monday of each month unless otherwise notified.

➤ **Violation Penalties**

The following violations will be issued:

- A letter will be sent to the customer when they reach two (2) *no-shows* in a calendar month to alert them of the potential for suspension if additional *no-shows* occur. A second letter will be sent when the total of *no-shows* reaches three (3) in a calendar month and the customer is at risk of having service suspended.

The suspension period will begin 15 calendar days from the date of the suspension notice letter and will be shown on the suspension notice letter.

1st suspension – loss of Paratransit privileges for seven (7) days.

2nd suspension – loss of Paratransit privileges for fourteen (14) days.

3rd suspension – loss of Paratransit privileges for thirty (30) days.

The appeal process is not for individual *no-show* incidents that pose no risk of having service suspended. The appeal process is available when the customer is at risk of having service suspended. Customers will receive a letter letting them know of the risk and the opportunity to appeal all the *no-show* violations that may lead to a suspension of service. If an appeal is made, service will continue until the appeal is decided. Written notification of the Appeals Board decision will be sent to the passenger within 30 calendar days of the appeals hearing. If the appeal is denied, the suspension will begin 10 business days from the date of receipt of the Appeals Board decision letter.

What If My Caretaker Is Not Available At the Drop-off Location?

If the passenger cannot be left unattended after exiting the vehicle and the caretaker is not at the drop-off location when the vehicle arrives, the passenger will remain on the vehicle and the vehicle will continue as scheduled. The operator will contact CobbLinc Dispatch for assistance. CobbLinc Dispatch will call the emergency contact number and provide the caretaker with the next safe drop-off location to meet the vehicle in-route. **If the contact number is not answered or if the number is disconnected, DFCS/911 will be called to take custody of the passenger.** The passenger's service will be suspended for 14 calendar days. If this situation happens a second time, the passenger's service will be suspended for 30 calendar days. If this situation happens a third time, the passenger's service will be suspended for 60 calendar days. If the situation happens a fourth time, the caretaker will have to show cause why the service should not be permanently removed.

May Someone Ride With Me?

If a passenger is unable to travel alone because of a functional disability and requires a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), the PCA will ride for free. The passenger must provide their own attendant; CobbLinc cannot provide attendants. If a passenger requires a PCA, this must be approved during the initial application process or when there is a change in the passenger's functional ability to use the service.

49 CFR Part 37 Subtitle A, Appendix D states that a PCA is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his or her personal need. To prevent potential abuse of this provision, the rule provides that a friend or family member does not count as a personal care attendant unless the eligible individual regularly makes use of a personal care attendant and the companion is actually acting in that capacity.

If the CobbLinc Paratransit passenger requires a PCA and is under the age of 12, the PCA must be an adult.

The PCA must be physically able to assist and meet the needs of the paratransit customer. For example, must be able to push a wheelchair, or provide other assistance as required by the certified rider.

The PCA riding with a CobbLinc Paratransit eligible customer must board and exit the vehicle at the same location as the eligible rider.

Please inform the reservationist when scheduling the passenger trip(s) if a personal care attendant will be traveling with the passenger.

Companions, personal care attendants, escorts, and children are not allowed on a vehicle without the eligible passenger aboard. Traveling companions, including children, that ride with the certified paratransit passenger do not need to be certified by CobbLinc and do not need an ID card. **One traveling companion may ride with a passenger. The traveling companion riding with a CobbLinc Paratransit eligible customer must board and exit the vehicle at the same location as the eligible rider. Appropriate fare must be paid for a traveling companion.** Additional companions may ride on a space available basis only and must pay the appropriate fare. Child companions, over 42 inches, riding with eligible passengers must pay the appropriate passenger fare. When scheduling trips, passengers must inform the reservationist if they are going to be accompanied by a companion and any mobility device(s) the companion will be using.

What Is The Fare?

Current fares per one-way trip are \$4.00 for adults and \$3.00 for youths. Companions pay the same fare as the certified passenger. The Personal Care Attendant (PCA) travels free but must be pre-certified by CobbLinc and listed in the customer's file.

➤ Free Fare Program

CobbLinc Paratransit customers may ride the local CobbLinc fixed-routes for free upon boarding the local bus; present your current CobbLinc Paratransit Breeze Card

➤ Fare Payment

Fares may be paid with a Paratransit Breeze Card, exact cash, monthly pass, single-ride ticket or 10-ride ticket upon boarding. Fares will be collected in the farebox at the front of the vehicle. Operators cannot make change.

➤ Transfers

- CobbLinc Paratransit to/from MARTA Mobility: MARTA Mobility Fare applies
- CobbLinc local route to CobbLinc Paratransit: \$4.00 fare charged
- CobbLinc Express route to CobbLinc Paratransit: free

- MARTA to CobbLinc Paratransit: up-charge applies
- MARTA system (Bus and Rail) to CobbLinc local routes: free when using a Breeze Card

➤ **Breeze Card and Passes**

Breeze Cards, tickets and monthly passes may be purchased at the main office located at 431 Commerce Park Drive, Marietta, Georgia. Tickets may be purchased with a personal check, money order, or cash. Debit cards and credit cards (American Express and Discover Card not accepted) can be used at the main office location. Credit card purchases may be made by telephone or online at www.cobbcounty.org (use the e-gov icon on the left side of the screen). Tickets are also available by mail. **There is a no refund policy on all purchases.** CobbLinc cannot replace tickets lost in the mail or stolen. Tickets should be kept in a safe place. Call CobbLinc at (770) 428-1218 or TDD at 711 to purchase tickets or request an order form. Operators do not handle the purchase of passes, tickets, or specialty fares.

What About Visitors With Disabilities?

Visitors to Cobb County, who are functionally disabled, will be given “presumptive eligibility” and can ride for up to 21 calendar days each year without being certified by CobbLinc. Visitors can provide proof of disability when boarding the vehicle by supplying a Paratransit Identification Card from another transit system. Visitors with disabilities who do not have proof of disability from another transit system may still use the system. Documentation may be required for those whose disability is not apparent.

CobbLinc’s Paratransit ID Card will be recognized throughout the country and passengers may use it to ride paratransit service wherever it is applicable and available. Check with the transit system for the exact rules and regulations for scheduling a trip.

If a trip requires a passenger to travel in the MARTA Mobility service area from Cobb County, CobbLinc Paratransit will coordinate this trip with MARTA Mobility.

How Do I Board The Vehicle With A Mobility Aid?

➤ **Lift Requirements**

The vehicle has a design load of 800 pounds. However, CobbLinc may deny transportation if carrying the wheelchair and its occupant would be inconsistent

with safety requirements. Any passenger may use the lift at any designated stop. Operators are instructed to deploy a lift, at the request of the passenger, to board or exit the vehicle.

A wheelchair, is defined by ADA regulations, as a mobility aid belonging to any class of three-or-more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

CobbLinc may refuse to board a passenger on the lift if the lift or vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair and its user, consistent with legitimate safety requirements.

For passenger safety and comfort while traveling on CobbLinc, the following procedures are required:

- For safety purposes, CobbLinc recommends that passengers using a wheelchair, back their wheelchair onto the lift. Forward boarding is allowed.
- Lock brakes, if applicable, while on the lift.
- Turn off electric power on the wheelchair. The operator will instruct the passenger when to reengage the power.
- Wait for the operator's assistance and follow instructions when entering or exiting the vehicle.
- CobbLinc cannot transport passengers with inoperative mobility devices.

All wheelchairs and scooters must be secured. Any passenger refusing to have their wheelchair or scooter secured will not be transported.

Passengers may also transport oxygen concentrators or supplemental oxygen apparatus at any time when needed.

May I Transport Packages?

Packages are allowed on the vehicle. The number of packages allowed is only what a passenger (or the passenger's PCA, companion, or child) can carry on or off the vehicle in one (1) trip. **Operators do not provide assistance loading or unloading packages, personal items, groceries, or luggage.**

- Excessive luggage and large boxes cannot be accommodated. The maximum combined weight of all packages cannot exceed twenty-five (25) pounds.
- Passengers will be required to secure their packages at their seats, as storage space on the vehicle is limited.

May I Transport Animals?

Only service animals are allowed on CobbLinc vehicles and facilities. A service animal is defined by ADA as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. Please describe to the operator/employee what physical **function or task** the service animal will be providing. For safety reasons, operators are not permitted to handle service animals. A passenger may board a vehicle at any time with a service animal with no prior arrangements.

What Are My Responsibilities When Riding A CobbLinc Paratransit Vehicle?

The following rules are provided to ensure the safety and comfort of all CobbLinc passengers:

- No eating, drinking or smoking in a CobbLinc vehicle. Avoid littering the vehicle.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol and/or intoxicating drugs in a CobbLinc vehicle.
- No operating or tampering with any equipment while in the vehicle. This rule includes operating the hydraulic lift and attempting to remove wheelchair tie downs.
- Wear seatbelts and check that wheelchair tie downs are secure.
- Use earphones when playing electronic devices, TVs, radios and tape players.
- Fold strollers.
- Be courteous to others and avoid distracting the driver.
- No screaming, cursing, profanity and/or abusive behavior in a CobbLinc vehicle.

What Are My Responsibilities As A CobbLinc Paratransit Customer?

- Be informed regarding program benefits and limitations.
- Schedule trip requests from one (1) to three (3) days in advance. In accordance with ADA, riders may be asked to negotiate a different time of pickup up to one (1) hour

before or one (1) hour after the requested time. Once the time has been negotiated, it cannot be changed without the passenger's consent.

- Be ready and remain at the pickup location up to 30 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Wait at the main entrance door in an area where you can see the vehicle, as drivers will not enter buildings or residences.
- Call in trip cancellations as soon as possible but no later than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time.
- Have times, addresses, zip codes and other needed information ready when making a reservation.
- Present correct fare and/or fare media when boarding the vehicle.
- Keep wheelchairs and other mobility devices in good working condition, including having an operable wheelchair brake.
- Expect share-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. **Travel time should be comparable to service provided by the CobbLinc fixed route service including transfers.**
- Request a pick-up time taking the 30-minute window time, distance and rush hour traffic into consideration.
- Allow sufficient time, at least 1-hour, between scheduled drop-off and return time.
- Advise the reservationist of your appointment time or work report time if you must arrive at a certain time. The reservationist can provide you with a pickup time that takes into consideration travel time and your appointment time.

What Are the Operator's Responsibilities?

Operators are expected to obey the same rules as passengers. The following rules also apply:

- Operators may assist passengers when boarding or exiting the vehicle.
- When requested, on an individual case-by-case basis, the driver will assist the rider from the main entrance door at the pickup location to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance door at the destination.
- Operators are not allowed to assist with packages.
- Operators will assist in pushing a manual wheelchair up the ramp or onto the lift of the bus.
- Operators are not allowed to accept tips or gratuities, or act in any manner that would suggest that tipping is appropriate. This includes special occasions such as birthdays and/or holidays.

- Operators are not allowed to have casual conversations with passengers or engage in any other distracting activity (i.e. using a cell phone or electronic audio and/or video device) while operating a vehicle.

What Can Customers Expect From CobbLinc Paratransit Service?

- Safe trips in air-conditioned accessible vehicles.
- Operators that are trained to meet rider's special transportation needs.
- Safe, clean, properly equipped, smoke-free vehicles.
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs.
- Pickups within 30 minutes of the scheduled pick up time. Passengers are not required to be ready for travel before the scheduled pickup time but can do so if desired.
- Professional and courteous treatment from all CobbLinc staff and other passengers.
- Refuse unsafe service and file complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Prompt investigation and effective resolution of complaints.
- Current and complete program information.
- Assistance getting in and out of the vehicle and to the main entrance of destination if required. Operators are not permitted to lift passengers and cannot enter buildings or residences.
- Prompt resolution of passenger's concerns.
- Timely certification and registration of eligible applicants.

How Can I Make Suggestions, Inquiries, Complaints or Commendations?

CobbLinc seeks to provide the citizens of Cobb County with safe, reliable and efficient transportation. We look forward to working with our passengers to provide the best service possible. If you have any suggestions, questions, complaints or commendations, please call Customer Service at (770) 427-4444, TDD at 711 or write CobbLinc at the following address:

Customer Service Department
CobbLinc
431 Commerce Park Drive
Marietta, GA 30060-2737

Please include the following information when calling or writing:

- Name, address, and telephone number.
- Date and time of experience.

- Vehicle number and/or operator's name.
- Employee's name, if concerning telephone reservation.
- Explanation of the occurrence or suggestions.

If your complaint is not satisfactorily addressed, please contact the Transit Division Manager, at (770) 528-1614.

What If I Realize I Have Lost Something On The Vehicle?

Any article left on a vehicle will be turned into the CobbLinc Lost and Found Department at the Customer Service office; articles will be held for 30 days. To claim a lost article, call Customer Service (770) 427-4444, or TDD at 711. Passengers must come to the CobbLinc customer service office located at 431 Commerce Park Drive, Marietta, Georgia to claim recovered lost items. Identification will be required.

What About ADA Compliance?

Any passenger who believes that CobbLinc is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may submit suggestions, comments, feedback, and any concerns to the Cobb County ADA Coordinator at:

Cobb County ADA Coordinator
Property Management Department
P.O. Box 649
Marietta, Georgia 30061
Voice: (770) 528-2656 or TDD: 770-528-1103

Or the Transit Operations Monitor at:

Transit Operations Monitor
CobbLinc
463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 112
Marietta, Georgia 30060-2737
Voice: (770) 528-3690 or TDD: 711

Your letter should include sufficient detail to permit proper research and response to your concern. Be sure to include your name, address, day time phone number, date of incident, time of day, location and description of the problem. If you require a response in an

accessible format – electronic, audio CD, or large print – please specify the preferred format.

A preliminary determination of whether or not an ADA violation exists and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to correct the problem, will be sent to the customer within 30 calendar days of receipt. CobbLinc customers are protected under the ADA and are free to file a complaint without fear of retaliation.

What About Citizen Groups?

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) meets on the third Monday of every other month to review the status of the elderly and disabled transportation service provided by CobbLinc and make recommendations for improvements. This meeting is generally held between 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM, at CobbLinc, 463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 114, Marietta, GA 30060.

The Transit Advisory Board (TAB) is another citizen group that meets once a month to review public transportation in general and recommend improvements to enhance transportation alternatives and services for everyone. This meeting is generally scheduled on the fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 PM, at CobbLinc, 463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 114, Marietta, GA 30060.

Anyone interested in attending can call (770) 528-1610 to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting.

CobbLinc Operations Telephone Numbers

Paratransit Certification/Enrollment

Office and Information (M-F, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM)	770-429-7855
TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)	711
COBBLINC Paratransit Manager (M-F, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)	770-429-7318
Late Vehicle Assistance	770-424-3265

Customer Service	770-427-4444
Reservations/Subscriptions	770-427-2222
Cancellations	
(Prior to day of trip)	770-427-2222
(On day of trip)	770-424-3265
<u>CobbLinc Telephone Numbers</u>	
Office and Information (M-F, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)	770-528-1610
Transit Division Manager	770-528-1614
Transit Operations Monitor (M-F, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)	770-528-3690

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CobbLinc
463 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 108
Marietta, GA 30060-2737

You can read or print this publication from our website at:

www.CobbLinc.com