

# How to Use the Bus

## *A Guide for First-Time Riders*





*This booklet is sponsored by the Arrowhead  
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*The RTCC's goal is to improve access, availability,  
and options for transportation services in  
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*Unless noted, all photos are provided by the Duluth  
Transit Authority*

## **Bus Planning Worksheet**

My Starting Point: \_\_\_\_\_

Where I'm Going: \_\_\_\_\_

My Bus Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Getting on the Bus**

My Bus Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

When My Bus Leaves: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Getting off the Bus**

My Bus Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

When My Bus Arrives: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Cost to Use the Bus**

How Much I'll Need: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Sometimes one bus can't take you exactly where you need to go. You can take one bus part of the way and then get on another bus for the rest of the way. This just takes a little bit more planning.*

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# Hello!

When you use the bus for the first time, it's okay to feel nervous or confused. Riding the bus takes practice for all first-time users.

This booklet takes you through five steps to help you use the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) bus for the first time:

**Step One: Get Ready**

**Step Two: Go to the Bus Stop**



**Step Three: Enter the Bus**

**Step Four: Riding the Bus**

**Step Five: Leaving the Bus**

# Step 1: Get Ready

To help plan for your first time using the bus here are four things you should do:

- 1. Learn the number of your bus route.** Each bus has a route number. You can learn the number of your bus route by looking at a bus map online at [duluthtransit.com](http://duluthtransit.com), on the smartphone app  transit, or by calling the DTA (218) 722-7283.
- 2. Find your bus stop.** Once you know your bus number, you can find where your bus will stop to pick you up and drop you off. Some bus stops have a shelter, and all bus stops have a sign. The sign will show which number bus will stop there.
- 3. Learn your bus schedule.** Each bus has a schedule that tells you when the bus will be at each bus stop. These schedules are posted at bus shelters, the Duluth Transportation Center (DTC), at [duluthtransit.com](http://duluthtransit.com), on the smartphone app  transit, or by calling the DTA at (218) 722-7283.
- 4. Find out the cost.** Each bus ride is one-way only, and you will need to bring exact change or purchase a fare card at the DTC, the DTA Operating Center, or at specific local businesses. The fare price may vary depending on time of day, into peak vs. off-peak hours.

## Step 2: Go to the Bus Stop

It's time to go to the bus stop. Here are a few things you should do:

1. **Arrive early.** Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. The bus may arrive a little earlier or a little later than scheduled.
2. **Be safe.** If you need to walk to or wait at the bus stop, you should always be aware of your surroundings. You should wait where it is safe.
3. **Be visible.** Wait near the bus stop sign in an area where the bus driver can see you.
4. **Bus tracking.** You can use text messaging, a phone call, or a mobile app to track your bus arrivals. Schedules will also be posted at most bus shelters.

Paper copies of the bus route maps can be found at the Duluth Transit Center.





## Step 3: Enter the Bus

You see the bus coming! Here are five things you should do:

1. **Enter at the front.** When the bus arrives, you should stand a few feet back from the curb so the door can open safely. Enter the bus through the front door. If you need a ramp, tell the bus driver right away.
2. **Ask the bus driver.** When you get on the bus, you may want to tell the bus driver that it is your first time using the bus. The driver will understand if you have questions or need help. You can start by asking them if the bus will take you where you want to go.
3. **Pay for your ride.** Next to the bus driver, you will find the box where you pay for the bus. You can ask the driver how much the bus ride will cost and then insert your money or pass into the box; dollar bills can be fed into the machine, and coins can be inserted into the top. You can ask the bus driver if you need help.
4. **Choose your seat.** The bus seat that is right for you is one that you feel safe and comfortable in. Look around the bus and ask yourself where you can enjoy the bus ride.
5. **Take your time.** It is okay to take your time to get on the bus safely and to find your seat. The

bus may start moving after you have paid.  
Standing passengers can hold onto handles or poles to keep steady.

Note: If you need more than one bus to get where you need to go, ask the bus driver for a “transfer card” when entering the bus. A transfer card is free and good for one hour. You will not need to pay more money when you switch onto your second bus.



Image showing inside of bus, seating and standing options.





Farebox that accepts cash, change, bus passes, and transfer passes.



Farebox that accepts payment via the DTA Mobile Phone App.

Please contact the Duluth Transit Authority at (218) 722-7283 for more information about their fare policy.

## Step 4: Riding the Bus

Now that you're on the bus, act as if you were in any public space. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

1. **Keep steady.** The bus is a moving vehicle, so try to minimize your movement throughout the bus while it moves. If you need to use the bus aisle, there are poles throughout the bus for you to hold to keep steady.
2. **Be considerate of others.** Just like you, other people using the bus want to enjoy their ride. Be polite to all people on the bus, respect personal space.
3. **Pay attention.** Always pay attention to where the bus is, and do not fall asleep on the bus. The bus stop where you get off may come sooner than you think!

A helpful tip is to know what bus stop comes **before** your own stop, that way you can know what to look for before your own stop comes up. Pulling the cord or pushing the button before your stop will give the bus driver enough time to stop on time.



## Step 5: Leaving the Bus

You can see your stop up ahead. Here are three things to do:

1. **Let the driver know when you need to stop.**  
The bus doesn't stop at every bus stop automatically. When you see your bus stop ahead, let the driver know you want to get off by using the device above the bus seats. Some buses have a rope you need to tug, and some buses have a strip you need to press.
2. **Thank your driver.** The driver will appreciate it!
3. **Exit the bus.** People who need a ramp will have to exit through the front door. If you do not need a ramp, exit through the back door.
4. **Be safe.** When you leave the bus, always be aware of your surroundings. If you need to cross the street, wait until the bus leaves. Never cross the street in front of a stopped bus.



## Bonus Step: Repeat!

It can be difficult to learn something new, especially something like riding the bus. But now that you have used the bus, you can use it again and again.

And please remember these important policies while using any public transportation:

- Smoking cigarettes, chewing tobacco and using e-cigarettes are not allowed on buses, in facilities or within 15 feet of any bus stop.
- Eating is not allowed on the bus, however you can drink a beverage with a closed container.
- Pets must be kept in approved animal carriers, except for licensed service animals.
- The DTA enforces a zero-tolerance profanity policy. Using profanity or derogatory statements can get you removed from the bus and riding privileges canceled.
- Loud music, talking loudly on the phone and other disruptive behavior is not allowed.
- Bicycles are not permitted inside the bus. If the bike rack is full, passengers with bicycles must take the next scheduled bus.

# Other Useful Tips for Riding the Bus:

- The DTA has something called “Express Routes”. These routes will skip some stops along their routes. Please find out ahead which routes are “Express” and which routes will stop at each stop. If you are unsure, please ask the bus driver before boarding and paying fare.
- Peak Fare hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Peak Fare cost is \$1.50  
All other times, such as the middle of the day and on weekends, are Off Peak Fares.  
Off Peak Fare cost is \$0.75.
- Most buses run both east and west from the transit center. If you are unsure which direction the bus is running, please ask the bus driver.



