



How to Ride Guide



Learn how to get where you want to go on COTA

- Which bus is best for you
- How to read a bus schedule
- How to find your bus stop
- How to pay your fare
- Where to purchase a COTA pass

Welcome to the convenient, economical and easy way to get around Central Ohio.

Riding a COTA bus for the first time, or taking a bus to a different destination, can be a little stressful. But it need not be. This handy guide will fill you in on how to get where you want to go. And if you still have questions, you can call 614-228-1776 and one of COTA's friendly customer service representatives will be happy to help you out.

Learn how to choose the right bus.

Figuring out which bus will get you to your destination is the first step to taking an enjoyable ride. This can be done one of three ways: by reading a bus schedule, calling 614-228-1776 or logging onto www.cota.com.

Route Numbers:

The bus route number tells you where the bus starts out and where it ends up. You can see the route number on the front of the bus along the top. Next to the number is the name of the destination. The destination lets you know which direction the bus will travel. For example, if a bus says, “#61 Kenny Road,” it is telling you that this is the northbound #61 bus heading toward Kenny Road. When you see #61 Downtown, the bus is a southbound bus heading from Kenny Road toward downtown.



Read this booklet carefully. If you have more questions, please call 614-228-1776 to speak to a COTA representative, or use e-mail to write to requests@cota.com.

Bus stops

Every COTA bus stop is marked by a pole with a bus stop sign on it. The sign tells you the route number and destination of each bus that stops at that location. Read the sign carefully to be sure you are at the correct stop.



Tips:

- *When waiting for a bus, stand close to the sign facing the street so the operator will see you. You can even give a wave as the operator approaches just to make sure he doesn't pass you by.*
- *Be sure you are waiting on the correct side of the street for the direction you wish to travel.*

Call 614-228-1776 to learn which bus will take you where you need to go, or use the Trip Planner request form on the COTA website, www.cota.com.

- *If you are concerned about missing your stop let the operator know as you board the bus and he will gladly announce the stop when he gets there.*
- *When you are nearing your stop, press the yellow strip or pull the cord located near each passenger window to let the operator know you are ready to exit the bus. When the bus stops, please use the rear door to exit.*



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Tips:

- *Always arrive at your bus stop at least 5 minutes before your bus is scheduled to leave.*
- *Look for either a yellow strip or a pull cord near your seat. Push the strip or pull the cord to notify the operator of your intention to exit at the next stop.*

Learn how to pay for your bus ride.

There are two ways to pay for your bus ride. You may deposit the correct amount of currency or change for each ride when you board the bus, or you may use a bus pass that you purchase ahead of time.



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Cash:

You must have the correct amount of money with you when you board the bus. The bus operator does not carry change, and the farebox on the bus where you deposit your money is not able to make change.



Passes:

For people who ride the bus on a regular basis, it is often more economical and convenient to purchase a bus pass in advance. To use a bus pass, simply slide the pass through the slot at the top of the farebox.



Transfers:

When you use two or more buses to complete your trip, you'll need to request a transfer from your bus driver.



Tips:

- *When you need to purchase a transfer, tell the bus operator before you pay your fare.*
- *Transfers are only to be used to continue your trip in one direction, and not to return to your starting point.*
- *Transfers are valid for only 2 1/2 hours from the time of issue.*

Learn how to purchase a pass.

The simplest pass is called a 1-day pass that you may purchase as you board the bus. Passes can also be purchased at participating Kroger and Giant Eagle Stores. (Contact COTA at 614-228-1776 for a complete list of stores). All other passes must be purchased in advance in person or by mail from:



COTA Connection
Customer Service Center
60 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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Mail requests must be received by the 20th of the month, accompanied by a check or money order for the proper amount, and written request that includes your name, address and a telephone number where you can be reached.

Special ID for Senior and Disabled Passengers:

COTA issues special identification cards for seniors and riders with special needs.

Senior ID Card:

Allows you to ride for \$.85 each way and allows you to purchase other passes at a discount. To receive the ID Card, you must bring proof that you are 65 years or older (driver's license, state ID or birth certificate) to the COTA Connection Customer Service Center at 60 East Broad Street in downtown Columbus.

Key Card:

Key Card for persons with disabilities. Eligible persons with disabilities can ride COTA's fixed-route service for only \$.85 each way. The Key Card is a photo identification card which has an expiration date, so it must be renewed regularly. To qualify for a Key Card, please

Prices subject to change.

provide one of the following, along with your Social Security Card:

- COTA certification form with a licensed medical professional's signature and Ohio license number
- Social Security/ Veteran Disability Award letter and picture ID

To receive your Key Card, you must do the following:

- Pick up a certification form at the COTA Connection, located downtown at 60 East Broad Street, or call 614-228-1776.
- Bring the completed certification form, Social Security/ Veteran Disability Award letter and picture ID to the COTA Connection, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

ADA Card:

Strict federal regulations govern the issuance of the card, which is necessary to be eligible to ride Project Mainstream, COTA's service for customers who are unable to use regular bus service due to disabilities. For eligibility information, call 614-275-5828 or email paratransit@cota.com.

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A Few More Tips for a Comfortable Ride

Have correct fare ready when boarding the bus. This will help the driver keep the bus on schedule.

Know your destination. If you are unsure about where you want to go, contact the COTA Connection at 614-228-1776.

Arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the time the bus is scheduled to arrive at your stop.

Refer to bus schedules for correct arrival/destination times. Schedules may change periodically. You may also call the COTA Connection at 614-228-1776 for up-to-date information.

Stand facing the bus stop when the bus approaches. Failure to face the bus stop may give the bus operator the impression that you do not want to board.

On buses with rear doors, please use them when exiting the bus.

For safety reasons, never cross in front of a bus. Always observe safety precautions when crossing the street.

Eating, drinking and smoking are prohibited on the bus by city ordinance. This helps to maintain a clean bus.

For the comfort of all passengers, please refrain from profanity while riding the bus.

Please fold all baby strollers up on boarding the bus in order to ensure the comfort and safety of your child and all passengers.

For your safety, please keep all limbs inside the bus windows.

Please ask for a day pass or transfer upon boarding the bus.

Our buses provide priority seating for persons with disabilities and for seniors. Please do not sit in the designated areas.

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Thank You for Traveling on COTA

We are proud to help you reach your destination in the most convenient, affordable and comfortable way possible. Each time you ride, please check the message center directly behind the bus operator for information that directly affects your service.

If you have questions or wish to comment in any way about COTA service, we invite you to call 614-228-1776 during regular business hours.

To plan your next COTA transit ride,
log on to www.cota.com and click on
Trip Planner.





For more information, call
614-228-1776, or visit our website at
www.cota.com

Accessible information available upon
request. Please call 614-308-4403.