



Rider's Guide



Paratransit Services
Transit Division
Department of Transportation
Broward County Board of County Commissioners



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TOPS! Paratransit *Rider's Guide*

TOPS! Service

TOPS! (**T**ransportation **OP**tion**S**) Paratransit *Rider's Guide* is designed to assist riders become acquainted with Broward County Transit's award-winning paratransit program. The *Rider's Guide* also provides necessary guidelines to use the service effectively and safely.

This Rider's Guide is not intended to create a contract and violation or deviation of any of the goals, objectives and practices contained in this guide will not give rise to a cause of action nor create any presumption a legal duty has been breached. In addition, TOPS! may change the goals, objectives and policies set forth in the Rider's Guide at any time without liability to anyone.

Phone Numbers

Call Center:	1-866-682-2258
(general questions, update rider information, eligibility, compliments, complaints, "Where's My Ride")	
Monday • Saturday, 4:40 a.m. – 12:40 a.m.	
Sunday • 6:45 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.	
Trip Reservations:	1-866-682-2258
Saturday • Sunday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	
Customer Service:.....	954-357-8400
Monday • Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	
Holidays, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	
Travel Training:.....	954-357-8405
TD Helpline:	1-800-983-2435
TD Helpline TTY:	1-800-648-6084
Monday • Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	

Hearing Impaired may contact any of the above telephone numbers, during the indicated times, through the Florida Relay Service.....**Dial 711 or 1-800-955-9771**

Mailing Address:
Paratransit Services
1 N. University Dr., Suite 3100-A
Plantation, FL 33324

Web Site: www.broward.org/bct

Service Information

Broward County TOPS! provides transportation to individuals in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) guidelines. Door to Door shared ride transportation is provided to individuals who have a functional disability, are transportation disadvantaged and/or are financially disadvantaged and cannot travel on the BCT fixed-route bus service independently.

Riders who are **14 years of age** may travel unaccompanied.

TOPS! requires a fare

TOPS! does not provide emergency or stretcher transportation

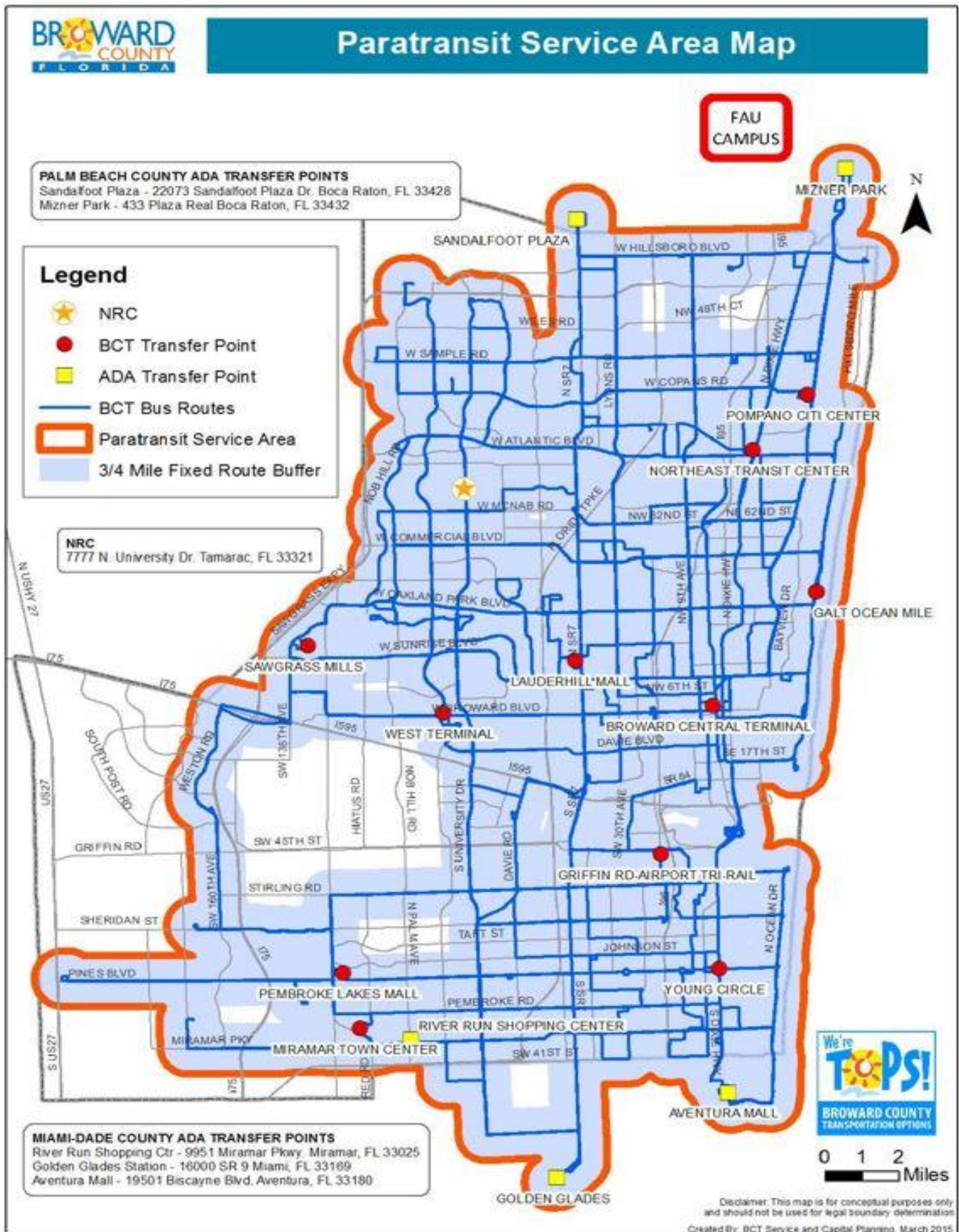
TOPS! does not provide Personal Care Attendants (PCA)

TOPS! does not provide wheelchairs or other mobility aids

Service Hours

TOPS! operates during the same days and hours as the BCT fixed-route bus service, early morning until late at night. Please contact Customer Service for specific hours and holiday schedules.

Service Area Map



Origin to Destination Service

Door-to-Door service is the standard transportation option for all passengers. Riders are escorted over the first threshold of the main entrance to the destination. Drivers are not contracted to escort riders beyond the ground floor lobby of any public building or threshold of a residence. Drivers are not to go upstairs, into houses, nursing homes or doctor's offices, etc. to locate riders. If the pick-up address is located inside a gated community or requires special access, it is the rider's responsibility to arrange entry for the vehicle. If a vehicle is unable to enter the pick-up area and the rider fails to meet the vehicle, the trip is considered "No-Show" (see "No-Show" section).

Reservations and Scheduling

Reservations by Telephone

To make a telephone reservation, contact the Call Center at 866-682-2258 during BCT operating hours. Reservations are accepted a maximum of three (3) days prior to travel date. Next day reservations **must be completed before 5 p.m.**

Same day service is not available. Contact the Call Center and inquire if they can accommodate your request on a "space-available" basis.

A minimum sixty (60) minute wait is required between your appointment time and your next pick-up time.

When reserving a ride, provide the following information:

- Client ID Number
- First and Last Name
- Telephone Number
- Requested appointment or pick-up time
- Complete pick-up address (apartment/suite number, gate/security code, building identification and zip code)
- Complete destination address (apartment/suite number, gate/security code, building identification, zip code and telephone number)
- Indicate if rider will be accompanied by a PCA or Companion (see Personal Care Attendant/Companion sections)

After you provide reservation information, the reservationist will enter your trip request into the scheduling system. You will be informed your reservation has been accepted. A Service Window is **not** assigned at this time (see "Service Window" section).

Reservations On-line

To make a reservations on line please visit us on the web at:

www.mytopstrips.org

You must set up an account prior to making a reservation. Look for "To Make a Reservation" and select "My TOPS! Trips." You are presented with your account *Dashboard*. From here, book a trip, view your past trip information or account details.

Select “Schedule a New Trip” and prompts guide you through the reservation process. The system tracks your trips so future reservations to the same locations will be faster and easier to schedule. You are **not** given a Service Window at this time (see “Service Window” section). Next day reservations **must be completed before 5 p.m.**

If you need assistance, contact the Call Center.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions (also known as “standing orders”) are trips provided **at least two times a week**, to and from the same locations, at the same time, on the same days of the week. Subscription trips are scheduled for a **minimum of four (4) consecutive weeks**. Examples of subscription trips: work, school, dialysis, therapy, etc. Once arranged, subscription trips are automatic and additional telephone calls are not necessary. To place a subscription order, you may contact the Call Center.

It is the rider’s responsibility to cancel specific subscription trips not needed

Subscription trips are cancelled on Federal holidays therefore if you need service on a Federal holiday you must make a reservation with the Call Center. Contact the Call Center for a list of observed holidays.

Subscription service is a privilege and may be discontinued for due cause.

Travel Time

TOPS! travel time is configured at no more than one and a half time it takes to arrive at your destination as when using the BCT fixed-route buses, including the time necessary to travel to the bus stop, wait for the bus, ride time, transfers and travel from the final stop to the ultimate destination. Travel times may increase due to inclement weather, traffic or diverting to pick up another customer who missed a return pick-up.

Service Window

The Service Window is the thirty (30) minute time-period when your ride will arrive. For example, if your Service Window is 9:00 to 9:30, your ride is expected to arrive by 9:00 and the latest is 9:30. The vehicle may arrive any time in between, please prepare so you are ready and waiting for the vehicle’s arrival.

You will receive your Service Window for each trip the night before travel, between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., through an automated system. If the Service Window provided is not convenient and you would like to negotiate a different time or you wish to cancel the trip, you must contact the Call Center. The system will call you via the most current phone number(s) on file; therefore keep your telephone number(s) current. If you have an answering machine or voice mail, the system will leave a message.

On the day of travel, your ride will arrive within the Service Window. When the vehicle is approximately ten (10) minutes away from your location, you will receive an automated Advanced Arrival Reminder Notification call.

Upon arrival the Driver will wait a maximum of five (5) minutes for you to board the

vehicle wait after arriving at the pick-up location in the Service Window. If you are not ready to board within five (5) minutes of the vehicle's arrival, you are considered "No-Show" (see "No-Show" section) and the vehicle will depart without you.

Riders are not required to board a vehicle prior to the start of the Service Window.

If the vehicle did not arrive during the scheduled Service Window, contact the Call Center for assistance.

Using TOPS! Service

Paratransit Fares

Fare is required **UPON** entering vehicle. Failure to pay may result in loss of transportation privileges

- One-way fare per trip is currently \$3.50 (Subject to change)
- One-way fare per trip for honorably discharged veterans to VA clinics is \$1.75 (Subject to change)
- Riders going to/from designated nutrition sites for **nutrition purposes only** may qualify for reduced fares
- Have exact fare, drivers **do not** make change

Mobility Devices

It is recommended all wheelchair and scooter devices are WC-19 compliant to ensure proper securement in the vehicle.

TOPS! vehicles are equipped with lifts accommodating wheelchairs or scooters less than 52 inches long and 33 inches wide. The combined weight of the rider and mobility aid **cannot** exceed 1,000 lbs.

Mobility devices exceeding these standards may not be transported

Drivers will assist individuals in manual wheelchairs over one (1) curb and/or step and may not carry an individual or mobility device. All drivers are trained to operate vehicle lifts. All wheelchairs and scooters are secured with four (4) point tie-downs.

Riders without mobility devices may board the vehicle using the lift upon request. **Only drivers may operate the lift.**

Companions

One (1) companion may accompany an ADA paratransit rider. Both must be picked-up and dropped-off at the same address, at the same time. TOPS! must know in advance that a companion is traveling with you. When making your reservation indicate a companion will accompany you. **Companions pay full fare.**

Personal Care Attendants

A PCA is a person designated or employed specifically by the rider, traveling as an aide to assist with life-functions, facilitate safe travel or meet the rider's personal needs. PCAs must be approved to be eligible to travel with a rider. If your PCA has not been approved, they may travel as a companion (see "Companions" section). Both

must be picked-up and dropped-off at the same address, at the same time. TOPS! must know in advance that a PCA is traveling with you. When making your reservation indicate a PCA will accompany you. Approved PCAs do not pay a fare.

Transporting Children

Children younger than four (4) years of age must be transported in an appropriate child safety seat. All clients and companions, including children, must pay the one-way fare. **TOPS! does not provide child safety seats.**

Children thirteen (13) years of age or younger must be accompanied by an adult.

Transporting Packages

Drivers are **not required** to assist with rider's packages or personal belongings. Other riders share vehicles: many of whom travel with large mobility devices such as power scooters. Space is not available for bulky or numerous items. Riders may not transport explosives, illegal substances, flammable liquids or materials hazardous to themselves, driver or other riders. Riders may transport self-carrying portable oxygen containers. Riders possessing or using illegal drugs will be denied paratransit transportation.

Transporting Service Animals

All service animals must be properly controlled. Service animals must ride on the floor or, if appropriate, in the lap of the rider and may **not** use vehicle seats. Riders are responsible for behavior and hygiene of service animals. Service may be refused or discontinued if a service animal is disruptive. All other animals may travel only in a properly secured cage or travel container. There is no additional charge for animals.

Other Considerations

For comfort and safety, the following policies apply:

- 1) Seat belts must be worn at all times
- 2) No eating or drinking unless required for dietary/medical purposes and documentation is on file with TOPS!
- 3) No smoking (including electronic smoking devices)
- 4) No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- 5) No littering
- 6) No physical and/or verbal abuse of others
- 7) Specific providers and drivers cannot be requested
- 8) Requests for specific vehicle type cannot be accommodated
- 9) No sound-generating equipment is to be played aloud. Riders must use earphones or headphones
- 10) Disruptive, physically or verbally abusive riders will be subject to **service suspension**
- 11) Riders may not allow their paratransit privileges to be utilized by others
- 12) Riders cannot change schedules or locations while being transported
- 13) Drivers are limited and/or restricted in parking, waiting and levels of assistance, while loading and unloading at the airport/seaport. We suggest alternative

arrangements be considered for airport/seaport locations.

Drivers Requirements

- Drivers offer assistance to all riders and assist riders when entering and debarking the vehicle. This includes offering aid when walking, assistance in bringing rider's wheelchair or other mobility device to/from the main door and, if requested, assisting with unlocking or opening a main entrance door of a building or residence.
- Drivers shall exit the vehicle to assist in boarding or debarking at each pick-up and drop-off location over a maximum of one (1) curb and/or one (1) step if the rider is in a wheelchair (several steps if passenger is ambulatory).
- Drivers must follow assigned service schedule

Drivers are **not** allowed to:

- “honk the horn” to notify riders of their arrival
- lift or carry riders except in emergency evacuations
- enter residence
- accept tips or gratuities
- play loud music
- maneuver wheelchairs up/down stairs consisting of two (2) or more steps
- perform any personal care assistance for riders, including assistance to dress, give medications, operate medical equipment, etc.
- smoke in vehicles (includes electronic smoking devices)
- chew tobacco
- use telephone while driving
- text while driving
- eat while driving

Cancelations

Cancelation - Telephone

To cancel a reservation contact the Call Center

Indicate if one-way or round-trip service is to be cancelled. Reservations cancelled less than two (2) hours before the start of the service window are considered “Late Cancels.”

Cancelation – On-line

From the TOPS! Website, go to “To Make a Reservation” and select “Book A Trip.” You are presented with your account *Dashboard*. You are able to cancel any scheduled trip that is a minimum of two (2) hours before the start of the Service Window. If you need to cancel a reservation less than two (2) hours before the start of the Service Window, you must contact the Call Center.

“No-Show”

An accumulation of “No-Show” incidents may result in **suspension of service or other corrective action.**

“No-Show” is a rider that:

- Cancels a trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time
- Places a request for service and does not meet the vehicle upon arrival
- Is not ready to board within five (5) minutes after arrival of vehicle during the Service Window and vehicle departs without them

Visitor

ADA visitors to Broward County who want to use TOPS! should call Customer Service. ADA allows travel as a visitor for twenty-one (21) days in a twelve (12) month period. Please provide a copy of your ADA Paratransit Certificate of Eligibility from your home transit agency along with your local contact information.

Compliment or Complaint

Compliments, complaints and suggestions are welcomed!

Contact the Call Center or Customer Service to file a compliment or complaint.

Provide specific, relevant details regarding the event. Share concerns about specific rides or incidents as soon as possible after the occurrence.

TOPS! Investigates all complaints and will:

- Record the description of the problem
- Research the complaint
- Resolve all complaints within a reasonable time frame
- Resolution of safety sensitive complaints will occur within twenty-four (24) hours (when possible)
- Complainant will be notified by letter of the resolution within five (5) days

Fixed-Route Service

Fixed-route transit buses provide access for individuals with disabilities on approximately 345 buses operating throughout Broward County with connections to Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties transit systems and Tri-Rail.

Fixed-route transit operates on timetables and does not require advanced reservations. Riders may travel individually and/or in groups spontaneously without concern regarding available space or advanced notice. All routes are wheelchair accessible.

Seniors, youth, students and riders with disabilities may qualify for reduced fare. For information on reduced fares or bus pass programs, contact Customer Service.

Travel Training

TOPS! provides travel training to assist individuals to use the fixed-route bus service independently. Our Travel Instructor provides personal and group travel training sessions at no charge. To schedule a session please contact our customer service department at 954-357-8400.

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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
OR DISABLED