



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MATA Announces Free Fares on All Modes
Effective March 25 Through April 30**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The Memphis City Council today unanimously approved temporary free fares for all customers who ride any mode of public transportation operated by the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA). This effort is part of an overall strategy to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The free fares will begin on Wednesday, March 25 and continue until Thursday, April 30. At this time, MATA is continuing to operate its normal service.

The move to make MATA rides free during a time when the transit authority is experiencing a drop in ridership is due to information provided by public health experts that the Coronavirus COVID-19 can live on paper (such as money and farecards) for days. Free fares will also help MATA to reinforce social distancing measures since passengers will be asked to board through the rear doors to limit direct contact with the operators. Passengers using assistive devices will still be able to board using the front door/ramp.

“We’re using tape to mark six feet spaces between the customer and the operator and we recently issued additional guidance to space customers apart so this is another move to try to combat the spread of the disease in Memphis and Shelby County,” MATA Chief Executive Officer Gary Rosenfeld said.

This guidance is *in addition* to previous information issued by MATA within the last few days:

MATA Fleet

- Per the Mayor’s Executive Order, no more than 10 people will be allowed to board fixed route buses and Trolley cars. **This new guidance is in effect until April 7 (unless otherwise extended).**
- Every other row on fixed route buses and Trolley cars will be blocked to maintain social distance and encourage customers to sit apart. ***Note: Since the capacity of the buses has been restricted to maintain social distancing guidelines, some customers may have to wait on the next bus to arrive.***
- No more than two passengers will be allowed to ride on any MATAplus paratransit vehicle (includes personal care attendant and/or escort).
- Effective **until April 7 (unless otherwise extended)**, MATA will only transport MATAplus paratransit customers to work, medical-related destinations (including dialysis, doctor appointments and pharmacies) and to purchase/collect food from grocery stores, restaurants, or food distribution centers at non-profit organizations.

MATA Facilities

- MATA headquarters, located at 1370 Levee Road, is closed to the public from March 24-April 7 (unless otherwise extended).
- The Trolley facility, located at 547 North Main, is closed to the public from March 24-April 7 (unless otherwise extended).
- The customer lobby areas and public restrooms at each Transit Center will continue to be closed to the public until further notice.
- The Assessment Center located in the Airways Transit Center is closed to the public until further notice.

As the disease continues to spread, MATA **will continue** performing its daily fleet and bus shelter cleanings which includes comprehensive disinfecting and sanitizing measures. In addition, customers can practice the following preventative measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Stay home if possible.
- If you're sick, stay home.
- Practice social distancing. Place **at least six feet** between yourself and others to reduce your risk of being exposed.
- **Wash your hands. Wash them often. Wash them thoroughly using soap and water for 20 seconds.** Use hand sanitizer frequently **if it is available**.
- Please avoid direct contact with others. No handshaking. A friendly wave, a head nod, a fist or elbow bump are all acceptable forms of greeting others.
- Eat right (fruits and vegetables) and drink plenty of fluids like water.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Practice respiratory etiquette by using a tissue if coughing or sneezing, then throwing the tissue away into a trashcan and washing your hands.

About MATA

The Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) is the public transportation provider for the Memphis area. As one of the largest transit operators in the state of Tennessee, MATA transports customers in the City of Memphis and parts of Shelby County on fixed-route buses, paratransit vehicles and vintage rail trolleys. For more information, visit www.matatransit.com.

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