

Bionic Bus

Passenger Information Guide



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Phone# 335-7595

Fax# 335-6647

Bionic-bus@uiowa.edu

Introduction

Operated by Cambus, the Bionic Bus system is The University of Iowa's specialized transportation service for persons with disabilities. It is a demand-response, curb-to-curb service (door-to-door assistance may be provided when necessary) designed to serve the needs of university students, faculty, and staff within most areas of Iowa City and Coralville.

The goal of the Bionic Bus system is to provide effective transportation to eligible riders within the university community. Though the system is utilized and shared by several passengers, we strive to do our best in being responsive to the needs of each individual. We hope to assist in making the university experience fulfilling for all of our passengers.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a detailed explanation of what the Bionic Bus system offers, so that you know what to expect from our service. Also outlined are procedures for scheduling, riding, and what your responsibilities as a passenger are.

Your feedback is very important to us. If you have any comments or suggestions for how we may improve, please let us know. The best way would be to send e-mail (bionic-bus@uiowa.edu), or you may call the Bionic Supervisor directly at 335-7595.

Hours of Operation

The Bionic Bus runs seven days a week on the following schedule. The times vary depending on the university's academic session. The Bionic schedule is set to reflect the hours of operation that regular Cambus routes run.

Fall and Spring Academic	Monday – Friday: 6:30am – 1:00am
	Saturday & Sunday: 12:00pm – 1:00am
Summer Academic	Monday – Friday: 6:30am – 12:00am
	Saturday & Sunday: 12:00pm – 12:00am
Interims & Breaks	Monday – Friday: 6:30am – 12:00am
	Saturday & Sunday: 12:00pm – 6:00pm

Holidays – Cambus and the Bionic Bus do not run on scheduled university holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas (2 days), New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. Schedules for other university-recognized holidays are likely to be altered as well.

Safe Ride – Most Fridays and Saturdays during Fall and Spring academic sessions, Cambus offers a Red and Blue Route that run until 2:15am. On these nights, Bionic will be able to provide service on a call-in basis only. Also, since regular Cambus service is limited to only Red and

Blue Routes during this time, the Bionic service boundary is set to reflect these routes more accurately from 1:00am until 2:15am. Generally, this means that Bionic will service 1-2 miles beyond the Red and Blue service area (this includes the Hawkeye apartments).

Service Boundaries

Bionic will serve areas within our boundaries, which are First Avenue in Iowa City on the east side, Highway 1/Highway 6 on the south side, Highway 218/Camp Cardinal Blvd/22nd Ave in Coralville on the west side, and Interstate 80 on the north. Click here to see a map of our service area: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~cambus/Bionic%20Service%20Boundaries.pdf>.

Businesses along the boundaries will be served by Bionic bus, such as Hy-Vee or Wal-Mart.

The only exception to this rule pertains to the Coral Ridge Mall area in Coralville. Bionic does not have the capability to service the Coral Ridge Mall and the surrounding commercial area on a regular basis. Therefore, Bionic will only service this area on Saturdays and Sundays.

Passengers may only have one ride to and from the Coral Ridge Mall area per weekend.

Monday through Friday, Coralville Transit services this area, so we will provide a ride downtown so that you may connect with one of these buses.

For any ride that is outside of the Bionic service boundaries, please contact Johnson County SEATS (339-6128).

Fare

Just as with Cambus fixed-route service, there is no fare to ride the Bionic Bus.

Eligibility and Certification Process

To be able to utilize the Bionic Bus system, you must obtain a “Certification of Eligibility” as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). During the process of certifying ADA eligibility, a person will be granted temporary eligibility to use the Bionic service for up to 21 days. Eligibility will be granted to individuals with qualifying permanent or temporary disabilities. Depending on your needs, your eligibility could also be conditional or unconditional. The Bionic Supervisor and Cambus Manager will determine eligibility. Decisions may be made in conjunction with the Faculty and Staff Disability Services or with your health care provider. All information remains confidential.

The Faculty and Staff Disability Services provide a number of useful services to persons with disabilities. In addition, they may be able to assist you in completing ADA accommodation requests, if needed. All passengers are strongly encouraged to register with their respective office.

Student Disability Services: 335-1462

Faculty and Staff Disability Services: 335-2660

Since these offices usually keep medical information relating to your disabilities, it is not necessary to provide Cambus with the same information if you have successfully completed registration with either office. However, if you are not registered, then your health care provider's information is necessary for us to complete certification.

University affiliation (student, faculty, or staff status) is also necessary for the Bionic Bus to be your primary provider for transportation. All other members of the general public should use Johnson County SEATS as their primary provider if they are eligible for service under the ADA. However, some Iowa City or Coralville residents who are certified with SEATS do attain university affiliation. When this happens, they become eligible for Bionic Bus service. While SEATS certification satisfies Bionic certification requirements; we ask that a form still be completed so that we have the complete information necessary to provide adequate service.

To complete the certification process, a prospective rider may either call the Bionic office (335-7595), or their respective disability services office.

Renewing Certification

All Bionic passengers must periodically renew their certification in order to remain eligible for service. For university students, certification is valid for one year. For university faculty and staff, certification is valid for three years. This is necessary to ensure that Cambus and Bionic Bus records are as up-to-date as possible, which helps in providing the appropriate service to meet everyone's needs.

Scheduling Rides

The Bionic Bus is a shared-ride service. This is based on the principle that several members of the university community rely on the Bionic Bus to meet their transportation needs. Although you may not have other passengers riding with you for many of your rides, it is best to keep in mind that there are several others riding before and after you. Remember that often it is necessary for everyone to be flexible so that no one's needs are left unmet. Although Bionic will do its best to avoid keeping a passenger on the bus for an excessively long trip, it sometimes is possible that the duration of a ride could last up to 60 minutes. This of course depends on several factors (ride requests, distance from campus, etc.)

It is also important to remember that not all ride requests can be accommodated right at the specific time requested. In some cases, we may have to offer a ride up to 60 minutes before or after the time that you request. Bionic will do everything it can to try to avoid any ride request denials that fall outside of this 60-minute time frame, and will try to fulfill all requests as close to the requested time as possible.

Call-In Rides

Call-in rides may be scheduled at any time, regardless of trip purpose. To schedule a ride on a call-in basis, the Cambus Dispatcher can be reached by calling the Bionic line at 335-7595. The phone is staffed during normal Bionic operating hours (shown on page 3) with only a few exceptions. The dispatcher will have the current week's schedules in front of them, and by Thursday evenings, will have the following week's schedules as well. Any ride requests that you want to make before the schedules are made available to the dispatcher, you can e-mail the Bionic Supervisor (bionic-bus@uiowa.edu). The following are tips to make the call-in scheduling smoother.

1. Have the following information ready at the time that you call.

- Your name
- Date of the trip
- Time to be picked up or dropped off (choose one, but not both)
- Specific locations of the pick-up and drop-off
- Whether a mobility device will be used
- Whether a service animal will be used
- Whether an attendant or companion will be accompanying the rider

2. Have any information for a return ride as well. This is the passenger's responsibility to schedule.

3. Keep the phone call short. If your information is not complete when you call, scheduling errors are more likely. Keep in mind that the dispatchers are very busy. In addition to the Bionic line, they also are responsible for three other department phone lines, as well as the Cambus radio. When scheduling rides, it is best to avoid peak rush-hour times on the phone. If the dispatcher asks you to call back, please be understanding because they are likely very busy at that given moment.

4. Be aware that all ride requests are subject to bus availability. The dispatchers are always as accommodating as possible, but there simply isn't always room in the schedules at the time you request. Remember that the more flexible you are, the more likely you will be able to schedule a ride.

5. Have a pen/pencil and paper handy write down the dispatcher's name, and time of your rides.

If you have sent in a ride request by e-mail, be sure to allow plenty of time for the request to be filled. Keep in mind that the Bionic Supervisor is the only one with access to the e-mail, and will generally only be checked during weekdays. Immediate changes or requests should not be done by e-mail, as they are unlikely to be viewed in time.

Ride Spacing Policy

Sometimes, due to scheduling constraints, it may be necessary to require 30 minutes between a passenger's drop-off and their next scheduled pick-up. This is usually the case when Bionic is operating only one bus on nights and weekends, and during other peak scheduling times. The reason for this is because Bionic needs to allow space between rides in order to be able to accommodate ride requests from other passengers. The Bionic Supervisor or dispatcher will be able to use discretion in scheduling such rides on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all of these relevant factors.

Dispatcher Availability

Dispatchers are normally available at the Bionic line during normal Bionic operating hours. The following are the times where the dispatcher will not be available during normal operating hours.

Weekday Mornings: The dispatcher is available as early as 4:15am. Until around 7:00-7:30am, however, they will be at the Cambus Maintenance Facility. If there is no answer on the regular Bionic line, please call 335-5208.

Late Nights: Bionic will provide service until 1:00am when there is no Safe Ride service. However, the dispatcher will leave the Cambus Office at 12:30am. If you need a same-day call-in ride late at night, be sure to call before 12:30am.

Interim Weekends: During interim weekend service, there will be no dispatcher on duty. All rides should be scheduled during the week prior to an interim weekend. If an immediate change is necessary, however, the driver must be contacted at the Cambus Maintenance Facility (335-5208). They will be available to answer the phone from 11:30am until 11:50am, and when they are not out providing a ride. In case of an emergency, a rider may contact UI Public Safety at 335-5022, who will then contact the driver over the Cambus radio.

Permanent Rides

A "permanent ride" is a ride that is automatically scheduled at the same time and day, every week, for the entire semester. Permanent rides are a privilege assigned to facilitate rider convenience and to utilize the available service more efficiently. Riders with permanent rides may also call in for additional rides at any time. For any correspondence regarding permanent rides, we request that this be done via e-mail whenever possible.

Scheduling permanent rides is quite different from scheduling a call-in ride. Trip purpose is considered when creating the permanent schedules. Rides to class and to place of employment will receive equal consideration over all other requests. In addition, there are several guidelines to follow when requesting and maintaining a permanent schedule.

Requesting Permanent Rides *Prior* to a Semester

For each and every change of session within the university, the Bionic Supervisor will create new Bionic Bus schedules. Approximately one month before the start of a new session, the Bionic Supervisor will send out a notice via e-mail, notifying all current riders of the upcoming scheduling process (those without e-mail will be sent a letter via US mail). **Please note that we will not receive these requests over the telephone.** Ride requests must be returned to the Bionic Supervisor by the indicated due date in order to receive priority in scheduling. Any ride requests received after the due date will be considered, but will be fit into the already existing schedule. Once the due date passes, a schedule will be constructed from the requests that will be effective throughout the entire session. Riders will be notified of their finalized permanent schedules, generally by the Thursday before the next session begins.

Requesting Permanent Rides *During* a Semester

Riders may make changes to their permanent schedule at any time during a session. Again, the preferred method would be to make such a request via e-mail. However, if the change is very simple, you can call the Cambus Office, and if the Bionic Supervisor is not available, you can leave a message with the dispatcher. Just as with requests that are received after the scheduling due date, these requests will also be fit into the existing schedules.

The Bionic Supervisor will always do their best to accommodate any and all ride requests. It is important to remember that all requests may not be filled if they exceed service availability. The goal of Bionic is to serve the greatest amount of people possible with the service available, and to get everyone where they need to be. Because of this, it is not always possible to accommodate all rides at the exact times requested. Your understanding of this fact will make the scheduling process operate much more smoothly.

Cancellation Policy

If you find that you do not need a ride that you have scheduled (call-in or permanent), you must call the dispatcher to cancel it. We ask that you please cancel your ride as soon as you realize that you do not need it, so that someone else may use your time slot. If a ride is not cancelled at least one day ahead of time, it is likely that the time slot will go unused. Bionic does realize that it is not always possible to cancel this far in advance, thus we allow riders to cancel up to one hour prior to their ride. Any ride that is not cancelled at least one hour prior to the pickup time will be considered a no-show.

While Bionic understands that every passenger will not use every permanent ride they have scheduled every single week, there is a limitation on how often a ride may be cancelled. Any

ride that is cancelled consistently (3 times per month, or more than 50% of the time) will be removed from the schedule. This is based on the assumption that if a rider cancels this often, then the ride is unneeded on a weekly basis. Such rides may be scheduled, as needed, by calling in to the dispatcher. We ask that you do not schedule permanent rides (or a call-in ride) “just in case.” This takes up valuable scheduling space, and as often is the case, keeps other riders from utilizing Bionic service. Please only schedule rides that you know you will use, and for permanent rides, ones that will be used on a consistent basis.

No-Show Policy

Generally, a “no-show” is when a rider does not show up for a scheduled ride. However, there are three things that Bionic considers a no-show:

1. A ride that is cancelled or moved with less than one hour’s notice.
2. A ride when the rider does not show up after the bus has arrived.
3. A ride for which the passenger shows up three or more minutes late.

When the bus arrives for a pick-up, the bus will wait for at least three minutes past the scheduled pick-up time (Cambus uses the US Naval Observatory for official time and are frequently checked during the day to ensure timeliness). Once three minutes has passed, the bus may leave without you. If the schedule permits, the bus may wait for a couple of extra minutes, but this isn’t always possible. In the case that a rider does not show up for a ride, the dispatcher will attempt to contact the rider to notify them of the no-show, and also to inquire about the status of any rides connected to the ride that was no-showed (in most cases, this means a return ride). **If the dispatcher’s attempt to contact is unsuccessful, all other rides for that day will be cancelled automatically.**

No-Show consequences

No-shows are a very serious disruption to Bionic service. Not only does it waste valuable service, it usually causes the bus to be late in picking up subsequent riders on the schedule. Therefore, any rider who has three or more no-shows within a 30-day period will be subject to consequences. Bionic transportation services may be limited, or could ultimately be suspended.

Following the third no-show in a 30-day period, the Bionic Supervisor will mail or email out a notice informing the rider that the no-show limit has been exceeded. At this time, the Bionic Supervisor will take appropriate action, which may include:

1. Issuing a letter of warning.
2. Suspension of permanent rides (will be limited to call-in rides only).

3. Limiting the number of rides that may be scheduled.
4. Suspension of Bionic eligibility.

The goal of this policy is to minimize the number of no-shows, ensuring that the Bionic service is used effectively. The Bionic Supervisor will work with the rider in an attempt to determine a solution that is workable for both parties.

Keep in mind that the goal of Bionic is to serve as many people as possible, getting everyone to where they need to go. Remembering these policies, as well as abiding by them, will help us greatly in achieving this goal. For this reason, we strictly monitor the aforementioned policies, especially in the case of no-shows. No-shows will be viewed and acted upon seriously.

Policies for Riding the Bus

The Bionic Department, in conjunction with Cambus management and the Department of Parking and Transportation, has formulated a set of policies for riding and for conduct on the Bionic bus. It is recognized that sometimes there will be a need to make an exception to a policy. However, this is limited unusual circumstances, and must be approved by the Bionic Supervisor, or by the Cambus Manager. These policies are intended to promote the safety and protection of you, other passengers, the driver, and all equipment. Failure to comply with these policies may result in refusal of service.

Wheelchair Loading and Securement

When wheelchairs are loaded by a lift, it is required that they board with the wheelchair facing outward. This is for safety reasons. While on the bus, all wheelchairs and mobility devices must also be secured with the proper restraints. All buses are designed to meet ADA requirements. However, if your wheelchair does not fit onto the ramp, lift or into the Securement provided, please contact the Bionic Supervisor immediately.

Seat Belts

Bionic does not require the use of seat belts while riding the bus. If the rider requests, however, the buses are equipped with seat belts on the seats, and all buses have the capability to use lap belts with the wheelchair securement.

Mobility Devices

Bionic can only guarantee to accommodate mobility devices that meet ADA specifications. Wheelchairs and scooters are preferred to have working brakes, and must not have leaking batteries. Gasoline powered devices are not allowed on the bus.

Medications and Other Medical Needs

Bionic drivers are not required, nor are they trained to administer medical assistance or assist in the administration of medication. Riders with these needs are required to make alternate arrangements to fulfill these needs.

Door-to-Door Service

Most Bionic riders utilize the service on a curb-to-curb basis. For those who request it, Bionic can provide door-to-door services when needed. This means that the driver will assist you to and from your door. There are restrictions, however, as to what the drivers may do. Drivers are only required to get the rider in and out of their door. They are not allowed inside the doors of any residency or residency building, nor expected to assist in dressing, preparing food or beverages, putting away items, or anything else inside the rider's door. There are also restrictions on the carrying of personal belongings (see the next section).

Drivers are not trained to do such activities, nor are they prepared to accept any liability that could result.

Personal Belongings

Drivers may be asked to assist in carrying of a small item for a passenger within reason, but are not required to do this. In the event that a passenger needs assistance in carrying items or bringing non-comforting items on their own, then it is recommended that the passenger have a companion ride along with the assistance of such matters.

In addition, passengers should not plan on bringing items that could compromise the safety of other passengers, or the safe operation of the Bionic vehicle. Bionic is not and shall not be utilized for the sole purpose of moving personal belongings. Our purpose is to take people, not packages, from one place to another.

Companions

Riders are allowed the privilege of bringing a companion or attendant along on their ride. There is no fare for companions, and up to two may ride. They must board and exit the bus at the same locations as the rider. To facilitate scheduling, riders should always indicate when another person will be accompanying them, and must indicate if their companion is in a wheelchair, due to limited wheelchair space on each bus. If a particular companion is found to be disruptive on the bus or is impeding service, then they will not be allowed to ride. The bus will also be unable to wait if a companion is late. If this happens, the passenger will either have to ride without the companion, or the ride will be recorded as a no-show.

Rider Conduct

Violent, illegal, or seriously disruptive behavior is not allowed on Bionic vehicles. This includes the behavior of all riders, companions, and service animals. Anyone who engages in such behavior will be refused service, or will only be provided service on a conditional basis. Please note that service will not be refused to an individual solely because their disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience the driver or other passengers.

With these policies, please keep in mind that the purpose of the Bionic Bus is to provide transportation to individuals with disabilities. Our mission is to transport passengers safely and to help individuals on and off of the bus. Your cooperation will enable Bionic to provide effective service to everyone who needs it. If there are any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Bionic service, please contact the Bionic Supervisor.

Contact Information

Bionic Department: 335-7595 (primarily use this number, scheduling rides, general questions)

Bionic E-Mail: bionic-bus@uiowa.edu

Cambus Maintenance Facility: 335-5208

Cambus Office (general information): 335-8633

Cambus Fax: 335-6647

UI Student Disability Services: 335-1462

UI Faculty and Staff Disability Services: 335-0052

UI Parking Department: 335-1475

Johnson County SEATS: 339-6128

Iowa City Transit: 356-5151

Coralville Transit: 248-1790