

Ride Hailing Services: A Few Things You May Not Know

Ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft are a great option for transportation and one that you are likely already aware of. If not, you can learn more about using these services in our comprehensive guide, [A Transportation Guide for Persons Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision](#). We will focus this brief on aspects of ride-hailing services you may not be aware of and provide some tips for using these services.

Using a Phone Call to Set Up a Ride

Although ride-hailing services typically involve using an app on a smartphone, other options exist, including contacting the provider directly via phone to set up rides. Information about the driver, their license plate number, and when they arrive is sent via text. The ride will be billed using the payment method you have on file if you have an existing account with the provider, or the agent you speak with can accept a credit card payment and set up a new account for you. You would pay any tip you choose to give directly to the driver. Learn more about this service from Uber at [Introducing 1-833-USE-UBER](#)

Working With Third-Party Providers to Obtain or Monitor Rides

Another option is to work with a third-party provider such as Aira or GoGoGrandparent to set up and monitor rides. Aira is a visual interpreting app for your smartphone. You connect with a sighted agent who can describe items or your surroundings using your phone's camera and assist with certain tasks. Aira has various pricing plans and works with many access partners, enabling you to use the service at no charge in specified areas. For scheduling rides with Lyft, you grant permission through the Aira app to access your existing Lyft account. Aira agents can then schedule the ride for you through the Lyft app, provide information about ride options and fares, and monitor the vehicle's status en route. They share information provided through your phone's camera to let you know when your ride arrives and can remain on the phone with you until you are safely in the appropriate vehicle.

GoGoGrandparent is a phone-based service for people 18 years and older. It does not require the use of an app. They have several pricing plans and fees associated with their various services. Fees are charged to the payment method you have on file. After registering on their website, you can call 855-464-6872 and select from their service options through keypad or voice entry. An operator will then set up a one-way ride, and you'll be notified when the driver arrives.

Learn more about these services at:

[Aira](#)

[GoGoGrandparent](#)

Other Helpful Service Features

Designed to help older adults feel more comfortable, confident, and successful with using ride-hailing services, Lyft offers an option through its app called Lyft Silver. This option offers enlarged text, simplified menus with less visual clutter on the screen, prioritizes vehicles that are easier to get in and out of, and provides access to live support for assistance. Schedule rides through the app or speak with an agent who can answer questions and offer support. Once Lyft Silver is turned on, tap the “Get help” button within the app, enter your phone number, and tap “Call Me” to have an agent call you back to provide assistance during standard hours of operation. Learn more at:

[Lyft Silver](#)

Tips For Using Ride-Hailing Services

Below are some tips, including safety tips, for using ride-hailing services as a person who is blind or has low vision.

- Ride-hailing companies may have specific drop-off and pickup points at some locations, which are not at the entrance or exit. Drivers are not required to assist you to or from the vehicle. Ask the driver for information and directions about where to find the entrance to the building. You may need to ask for directions or assistance from someone at your location to locate designated pickup points.
- Upload a photo of yourself with your cane or service animal to your profile in the service’s app. This will alert the driver who to look for and show that you use these mobility aids. Note that although laws and company policies prohibit discrimination, some drivers may refuse to accept a ride when they find out you have a service animal. Learn more about how to report issues related to service animals at:

[Uber service animal policy and accessibility](#)

[Lyft service animal policy](#)

- Some riders who use service animals may choose the pet-friendly option when ordering a ride to reduce the likelihood that their ride will be refused or cancelled when a driver becomes aware of a service animal. Pet-friendly options prioritize drivers who are willing to transport riders with pets. An additional fee will apply for the pet option, which would not be charged for a standard ride with a service animal.

It is not required for someone with a service animal to use this option. Learn more at:

[Uber Pet](#)

[Lyft Pet Rides](#)

- You may also use the app to call the driver to share information about exactly where you'll be standing and to let them know you're traveling with a mobility aid or service animal.
- Take note of the driver's name and the color and make of the vehicle. The service's app provides this information. Knowing this will help you identify the vehicle, and even if you cannot see these features, can be shared with anyone assisting you to ensure you approach the correct vehicle.
- Ask the driver, "Who are you here for?" Having the driver provide your name identifies their intended passenger. They will only identify the passenger by first name.
- Contact a friend, family member, or co-worker when in the vehicle to let them know you're on your way. That way, they will expect you and have a reference for your location. You can also share details of your ride with them through the ride service's app.
- Become familiar with and use the safety options in your ride-hailing service's app. This includes an emergency button that will connect you to emergency assistance if needed.
- Report any issues directly to the ride-hailing service.

Learn more at:

[Safety tips from Uber](#)

[Safety tips from Lyft](#)

Questions about this content? Contact Jennifer Ottowitz: jottowitz@colled.msstate.edu
or 662-325-2001.



blind.msstate.edu

nrtc@colled.msstate.edu

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