



ADA



RIDERS GUIDE TO COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to familiarize you with GPTC's ADA Complementary Paratransit service for individuals with disabilities and to answer questions about Paratransit service. Any questions which are not addressed in the following pages should be directed to GPTC's ADA Coordinator at 219-884-6100 extension 113.

Mission Statement

GPTC is committed to providing quality Paratransit service by offering the same safe, clean, reliable, efficient and courteous transportation services that fixed route riders are afforded. Please call 219-884-6100 whenever you have a comment.

Vision Statement

Remove travel barriers to provide an equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to seamlessly travel from their primary location to their final destination.

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General Information

Overview of Accessible Public Transit & the ADA

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in July 1990. Title II of the Act refers to public transportation and requires that all new fixed route buses purchased after July 1990 be accessible to passengers in wheelchairs. In addition, complementary paratransit service must be provided to passengers who are unable to use regular bus service due to the limitations imposed by their disability when they reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of fixed route services.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to use fixed route bus service as much as possible, as they are most cost-effective and do not require advance scheduling. However, complementary Paratransit services are available if that is not possible.

What is Complementary Paratransit Service?

Paratransit Service is complementary service provided by the Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) to Gary and other communities where our service operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the residents who are unable to use fixed route bus service due to a disability.

Service is provided to an eligible rider who has requested and reserved Paratransit service in advance of the day and time they need to use the service. Scheduling for service is by reservation only. Request for service can be made one day in advance up to seven (7) days in advance.

Complementary Paratransit service is provided during the same days and hours as fixed route service.

Residents who are eligible for Paratransit Service can ride to and from locations within GPTC's service area. All Paratransit vehicles are accessible to individuals with disabilities and are equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement devices.

Since 1992, GPTC has provided Paratransit service to residents of Gary. Low-cost fares, simple trip reservations, reliable service and convenient

door-to-door transportation make Paratransit service attractive to residents who wish to be active in the community.

Who operates the service?

GPTC provides Paratransit Service as part of its overall transportation services in the community. By Federal Standards GPTC must provide Paratransit service to individuals with certain disabilities who reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of any fixed route service that GPTC provides.

How do I know if I am eligible for service?

To be eligible for Paratransit service you must be determined eligible under one of the following categories:

Category I: Inability to independently navigate the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who is unable as the result of a physical or mental disability (including a vision impairment) and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device) to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Category II: Transit system's lack of accessible vehicles, stations or bus stops on the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance to board, ride, and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities. If the individual wants to travel on a route of the system during the hours of operation of the system or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route.

Category III: The inability to reach a boarding point or final destination on the fixed route system

Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment

related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on the fixed route system.

Can I be eligible for Paratransit on a temporary basis?

Yes, in certain situations a rider can be approved for Paratransit service on a temporary or conditional basis.

Examples:

Temporary eligibility:

Periods of physical therapy after hip replacement surgery, the time during which an artificial limb is being fabricated, etc.

Conditional eligibility:

Certain factors can determine if a person may be eligible for some trips but not others, such as, extreme heat in summer and severe cold in winter.

Temporary and conditional approval can range from one (1) to six (6) months. If the rider wishes to extend a temporary or conditional eligibility, a new Part II professional certification form must be completed. Riders will be notified by mail prior to their eligibility period expiring.

Steps to Service

How do I apply to become a rider?

- Call GPTC's ADA Coordinator at (219)884-6100 extension 113 or extension 106 to request a Paratransit application.
- Or on line at: gptcbus.com and click on the ADA Complimentary Paratransit page (download and complete application).

As the applicant, complete Part I of the application. Ask the licensed or certified professional most familiar with the limitations imposed by your disability to complete Part II of the application.

- Send your completed application to:

ADA Coordinator
Gary Public Transportation Corp.
2101 West 35th Avenue, Gary, IN 46408

- Apply in person at:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation's Maintenance Facility
2101 West 35th Avenue, Gary, IN 46408

NOTE: There is no cost for processing the application.

What happens if I am not approved to use the service?

If your application is not approved, you have the right to appeal the decision by going through the appeals process. Appeals forms are available by request and on line at gptcbus.com.

What is the appeal process?

If an individual has been denied, they may appeal decisions that affect their ability to use Paratransit within sixty (60) days of the initial eligibility decision by GPTC. All appeals must be submitted in writing or on video/audio tape to:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation
ADA Coordinator
2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46408

If assistance is needed, GPTC will provide a person to prepare an appeal request. GPTC will arrange for individuals to be heard in person and present information or arguments regarding their disability and ability to use transportation services. Every effort will be made to schedule the hearing at a time that is convenient for the person submitting the appeal.

The appeal hearing will be conducted by designated personnel who are not involved in the initial eligibility determination decision. The individual filing will be notified of the appeal decision in writing or in accessible format if requested. The notification will state the reason(s) for the decision if eligibility is still denied.

Individuals who are denied during the initial appeal hearing are afforded an opportunity to submit an appeal to the General Manager of GPTC within thirty (30) days from the denial notification. Appeal request should be submitted to the following address:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Attention: General Manager
100 W.4th Avenue- third floor
Gary, Indiana 46402

The final appeal hearing will be conducted by the General Manager based on a review of all relevant information and the individual will be afforded an opportunity to be heard in person. The individual will be notified of the final appeal decision in writing or in accessible format if requested. The notification will state the reason(s) for the decision if eligibility is still denied.

***Note:** During the appeals process, an individual's ridership privileges under review will not be denied transportation services.

When will I know if I can use the service?

Within 21 days of the date your completed application is received you will be notified in writing of approval or disapproval of your application. If your application is approved, you should visit the GPTC's Transportation Office at 2101 W. 35th Avenue weekdays between 8:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. to obtain a GPTC ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Card.

Certified Paratransit riders who are able to use GPTC's fixed route bus service may present their ADA photo ID card to drivers on GPTC's local and express routes and ride for the reduced fare afforded to seniors, Medicare, temporarily, conditional or permanently disabled riders.

What is an ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Card?

GPTC issues ADA Complementary Paratransit Photo ID Cards free of charge to all riders who are determined eligible for Paratransit (*the first Paratransit ride to obtain the ID card is provided free of charge*). Please carry the ID card with you at all times when using Paratransit.

** Note: the ADA photo ID card cannot be used as or in place of a multiple ride pass.*

What are the hours of service?

ADA Complementary Paratransit service is provided during the same days and hours as fixed route service.

Monday through Friday 5:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday 5:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.

What does it cost to ride?

The fare for one-way trips on Paratransit is \$2.50 within the City of Gary boundary and \$4.00 outside the city limits. Riders are encouraged to purchase ADA Paratransit Multiple Ride Passes

20 Local Rides: **\$50.00**

12 Non Local Rides: **\$48.00**

Can I travel outside of Gary?

Yes, GPTC's Service Area includes all of Gary and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile within our fixed route service in the following cities and towns: Calumet Township, Crown Point, East Chicago, Griffith, Hammond, Highland, Hobart, Merrillville and Munster.

Scheduling Trips

How should I schedule a trip?

Once you have obtained an ADA Paratransit photo ID card, you can begin using Paratransit service by phoning (219) 884-6100 extension 113 or extension 106 to make a reservation. Requests for service can be made by calling Monday through Saturday (Sunday by leaving a message on voicemail) 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.

What should I tell the ADA Coordinator?

At the time of your first call you will be asked several questions which will be used to establish your record such as, your home address, how you can be contacted in case of emergency or delayed service, etc. Each time you call, please give the date and time that you want to be picked up, the address of the pick up location, the address of your drop-off location, time of pick up for beginning and return trip and any information which may be helpful to a driver in finding your pickup location (i.e.; the door where you will be waiting, details about the building, etc.).

What is the best time to schedule a trip?

Heavy demands for service usually occur weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Requests for service during these periods may be more difficult to accommodate than requests during off-peak hours.

Negotiating a Pickup Time

There may be times when a rider is unable to schedule a ride for the exact time needed. To assist in scheduling a trip, you may be offered a flexible pickup time one hour before or one hour after your desired pick up time. You will not be required to schedule a trip to begin more than 1 hour before or 1 hour after your desired departure time.

Example:

You request a pick up time of 10:00 am. You may be offered a pick up time of 9:00am (one hour before) or 11:00 am (one hour after) your requested pick up time. Anything outside of this negotiating window would be considered as a trip denial.

How do I change a scheduled trip?

Because trip reservations can be made up to seven (7) days in advance, there may be times when you may have to change your travel plans and adjust your scheduled trip time. In cases like this, notify the ADA Coordinator no later than 4:00 pm on the day before your scheduled trip. The Coordinator will always try to accommodate your request but changes to your original requested trip may result in adjustments to your pick up times. Last minute changes cannot be made to pick up times or pick up locations on the day of your trip. This would be considered as same day service. These changes create an inconvenience to other riders and GPTC is not required to accommodate this type of request.

When will I know if my reservation has been confirmed?

Once you call the ADA coordinator or Dispatcher to schedule a ride, your ride (reservation) is confirmed at that point.

Missed Rides**What is a no-show?**

A no-show is defined as a trip in which the passenger is not present at the confirmed pickup time and location when a Paratransit vehicle arrives to provide service. The Driver will contact the dispatcher who will attempt to reach the passenger by telephone. After such attempts, the driver will wait no longer than five (5) minutes (under normal conditions) past the passengers **confirmed pickup time** for the passenger to arrive.

If you have confirmed rides for a round trip (2 one-way trips) and you are a no-show for the first leg of the trip your return trip will **not** automatically be cancelled unless you contact GPTC to do so. We will assume that you still

need your return trip. If you are not available for the second trip this will be another no show. If for reasons beyond an individual's control (e.g., medical scheduling) they are unable to travel at the scheduled pick up, a passenger will be given a "**B**" no show.

An "**A**" no show is defined as: a passenger is not at the place of pick up at the scheduled time due to the passenger's control.

A "**B**" no show is defined as: a passenger is not at the place of pick up at the time scheduled for reasons beyond the passenger's control.

Cancellations

What is a cancellation?

A cancellation is defined as a trip which has been confirmed but the passenger is unable to take. The passenger should make every effort to contact the service provider and cancel his/her trip as soon as possible up to a one hour notice. This will allow other passenger trips to be accommodated. If you call to cancel your trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup it could be considered a no-show.

How early should I make a cancellation?

You are encouraged to notify the service provider as soon as you know you will be unable to make a scheduled trip up to one hour before the scheduled pickup time. If you call to cancel your trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time it could be considered a no-show. Cancellations and no-shows usually result in empty spaces on Paratransit vehicles at times when other riders are available to use the service.

What is the Penalty for a no Show?

When it has been determined that a rider is in violation of the no show and late cancellation policy, the following progressive action will be taken:

- a) ***1st violation within a thirty (30) day period:*** rider will be issued a warning letter advising them that they are in violation of GPTC's no show and late cancellation policy.

- b) ***2nd violation within a thirty (30) day period:*** rider will be issued a second warning letter advising them that they are in violation of GPTC's no show and late cancellation policy.
- c) ***3rd violation within a thirty (30) day period:*** rider is issued a seven (7) day suspension for violation of GPTC's no show and late cancellation policy.
- d) ***4th violation within a thirty (30) day period:*** rider is issued a fourteen (14) day suspension for violation of GPTC's no show and late cancellation policy.
- e) ***Additional violations within thirty (30) day period:*** rider is issued a thirty (30) day suspension for violation of GPTC's no show and late cancellation policy.

An offense will be dropped if a subsequent offense does not occur within forty-five (45) days of the preceding offense.

Suspensions

Suspension of service: customers who develop a pattern or practice of missed trips and/or late cancellations may risk suspension of ADA Paratransit Service.

Notification of suspensions: Prior to a rider's suspension of service for excessive no-shows and/or late cancellations, GPTC will notify the individual rider in writing, explaining the reason for the suspension and the length of the suspension including exact no show and late cancellation dates, times, pick up location and destinations for the proposed suspension.

Appeals

An individual who receives a suspension notice may file an appeal questioning the decision. All appeals must be submitted in writing or on video/audio tape to:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation
ADA Coordinator
2101 West 35th Avenue, Gary, Indiana 46408

The appeal hearing will be conducted by designated personnel who are not involved in the initial suspension determination decision. The individual

filing the suspension appeal will be notified of the appeal decision in writing or in accessible format if requested. The notification will state the reason(s) for the decision if suspension is upheld.

***Note:** During the appeals process, an individual's ridership privileges under review will not be denied transportation services.

Timely Arrivals and Departures

Will the driver wait if I am late?

The driver will wait 5 minutes after the **confirmed pickup time** as a courtesy to the rider. If the rider has not arrived and boarded the vehicle after this time, he/she will be assessed a no-show.

Example:

Your scheduled (confirmed) pick up time is 11:00 am. The driver arrives at 10:55 am., the driver would wait at least until 11:05 (5 minute courtesy) before departing.

What if the vehicle arrives early?

All Paratransit rides are scheduled prior to the start of the driver's day. If a cancellation occurs while the driver is enroute and another trip cannot be scheduled in its place, the driver may arrive at your pickup location earlier than scheduled. However, you are **not** required to leave earlier than your scheduled pickup time. If you are prepared to leave earlier than your scheduled pick up time, you may board the vehicle at that time if you choose.

Example:

Your scheduled (confirmed) pick up time is 11:00 am. The driver arrives at 10:50 am., you are not required to board the vehicle until 11:00 am., your scheduled pick up time. If you choose not to board the vehicle early, the driver would wait at least until 11:05 (5 minute courtesy) after your confirmed pick up time before departing.

What should I do if service is delayed?

Traffic congestion, impeding weather or highway construction may cause delays in service. If the vehicle is more than 10 minutes late, call 'GPTC at 219-884-6100 extension 113. A Dispatcher will radio your driver and provide you with the driver's anticipated arrival time. Please be patient, as these incidents are limited and uncontrollable.

Visitors and additional riders

Visitor Policy

A visitor is an individual with disabilities who does not reside in GPTC's service area. GPTC provides ADA Paratransit service for visitors with disabilities who do not live in the GPTC service area. To receive Paratransit service all visitors must present documentation that they are ADA eligible for the jurisdiction they reside in. If a visitor is unable to present this documentation they will be required by GPTC to provide residency and/or disability documentation, or certification of said disability. Visitors may be found eligible based on an apparent disability and/or their use of a mobility device. Visitors will be eligible to use Paratransit service the next day after certification for a total of 21 days within a 365 day period beginning with the visitor's first use of service during the 365 day period.

Individuals must apply for eligibility with GPTC and be approved in order to receive service beyond the twenty-one (21) day period.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who may travel with a rider to assist with travel or personal care needs. If during the application process it is determined that you require a PCA when you travel, the PCA may ride free of charge. A PCA must board and alight at the same location and time as the eligible rider and will not be allowed to board or travel without the eligible rider. To ensure space availability for all riders, when reserving a trip, advise the ADA Coordinator that you will be traveling with a PCA. ADA drivers are not allowed to add riders who do not have a reservation.

Companions

A Companion is an additional individual accompanying the ADA Paratransit eligible rider, not someone a rider must bring to assist them. Additional individuals (Companions) will be provided service if there is space available for them on the Paratransit vehicle transporting the ADA eligible individual and that transportation of additional individuals will not result in a denial of service of the ADA eligible rider. Companions are required to pay a fare (same fare paid by the ADA eligible rider) when accompanying an eligible rider and must board and alight the vehicle at the same location and time as the ADA eligible rider. To ensure space availability for all riders, when reserving a trip, advise the ADA Coordinator that you will be traveling with a companion (s). ADA drivers are not allowed to add riders who do not have a reservation.

Type of service and assistance provided

GPTC provides Origin to Destination (door-to-door) service. Which means: service is provided from a rider's origin of travel (start point) to their destination (end point).

Paratransit drivers are trained to assist a rider when boarding or exiting a vehicle. Normal assistance is provided immediately outside the vehicle or at the curb. The assistance may include walking support and when possible, the maneuvering of a wheel-chair over the curb. Drivers are permitted to assist a rider from the curb to the first entry door upon request of the rider or on an as-needed basis, but under no circumstances are they required to enter a building or your residence.

Service Guidelines

GPTC has developed the following guidelines, which will be helpful as you use the ADA Complementary Paratransit service.

On-Time Arrivals

Timely pickups and arrivals are fundamental elements of paratransit service. For the purpose of monitoring on time performance of paratransit service, GPTC has established a reasonable on time window of 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after a confirmed trip time for day-to-day variability in the operation of paratransit service.

Destinations

Drivers are permitted to stop only at locations designated in the reservation. Travel arrangements with more than one destination will be treated as separate trips and must be scheduled as such. Please plan to schedule the appropriate number of reservations at the time of your trip request.

Fares

Established fares must be paid at the time a rider boards a vehicle. If a fare is not paid, including the use of a riding pass, the driver can refuse to provide a ride and a no-show will be assessed.

One-way trips: \$2.50 within the City of Gary boundary

Outside Gary city limits: \$4.00

ADA Paratransit Multiple Ride Passes:

20 Local Rides \$50.00

12 Non Local Rides \$48.00

Passes can be purchased at the Metro Center, 100 West 4th Ave, Gary, IN, 46402, 3rd floor, Monday through Friday 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Or by mail: send a money order payable to:

Gary Public Transportation Corporation to GPTC's Metro Center Office, 100 West 4th Ave, Gary, IN 46402 (no personal checks or cash accepted. Include your return address and a \$3.00 additional convenience fee that covers the cost of postage and fees. Please allow ten days for delivery.

Wheelchairs

“A wheelchair is defined as: a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.”

GPTC must carry a wheelchair and its user, as long as the lift can accommodate the size and weight of the wheelchair and its user and there is space for the wheelchair on the vehicle. However, if a lift or vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair and its user (if the combined weight exceeds that of the lift specifications or if carriage of the wheelchair is demonstrated to be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements), GPTC can decline to carry it. Wheelchairs that have brakes should be kept in good working order. GPTC is not required to permit (riders who use) wheelchairs to ride in places other than designated securement locations on the vehicle, where such locations exist.

Scooters

Some scooters (three wheeled mobility device) can be difficult to secure on Paratransit vehicles and come with a manufacture warning that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles.

Passengers who use battery powered scooters for mobility who cannot be restrained may be asked (but not required) by the driver to transfer to a seat and secured with a seat belt and the scooter will be secured as a wheelchair should be.

Mobility Device securement and seat belt policy

Drivers are responsible for ensuring that mobility devices are properly secured at all times during travel. Wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured in the four point securement position. However, riders are not required to use seat belts and/or shoulder harness.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

GPTC does not prohibit an individual with a disability from traveling with a respirator or portable oxygen supply. Drivers may assist the rider in securing this equipment on the vehicle but is not permitted to assist in the use of this equipment. If assistance is needed with this equipment, it is recommended that arrangements be made by the rider to have a qualified attendant to travel with them.

Service Animals

GPTC must “permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities in vehicles and facilities.” A service animal is “any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

GPTC cannot require riders to provide documentation for their service animal, but may ask riders whether animals are service animals (or pets) and what task(s) they perform.

The following guidelines also applies to service animals:

- GPTC may ask riders for notification of their intent to ride with a service animal in order to help ensure adequate space is available for the animal.
- GPTC cannot impose limits on the number of service animals that accompany riders on a single trip.
- GPTC can require service animals to remain under riders’ control and can require that service animals pose no direct threat to the safety or health of drivers or other riders or create a seriously disruptive atmosphere.

***For example:** a rider with a service dog is responsible for ensuring that the dog does not snap or lunge at the driver or other riders. Conversely, a dog that barks occasionally would not likely pose a direct threat or be seriously disruptive.

Packages

The driver may also assist you in carrying packages to and from the vehicle. Packages should be limited to no more than what can be carried in your lap.

Obstacles

Please keep ramps, sidewalks and driveways free of ice, snow, toys and other obstructions which may present a safety hazard to you and the driver offering assistance.

Minimum age Requirement

Passengers four years of age and younger must be accompanied by a responsible guardian or adult, and will not be charged a fare. However, the adult accompanying the minor on board must pay a full fare.

Proper Conduct

All passengers are expected to exercise proper conduct on vehicles. GPTC reserves the right to revoke riding privileges of riders who threaten the health or safety of driver or other passengers.

State Laws

Smoking, eating, drinking and the playing of radios while aboard the vehicle is prohibited by state law.

Complaints and Commendations

The goal of the GPTC is to provide the best ADA Complementary Paratransit service possible to the residents of the city of Gary and our surrounding service area. There are instances when the riding public may wish to express their thoughts and concerns to ensure that GPTC obtain that goal. Therefore, we encourage your input when we fall below normal standards as well as when we go beyond them.

A complaint: is a report by an ADA Paratransit rider (or representative of an eligible rider) to an objection to something that is contrary to these policies, are unacceptable, or otherwise not up to normal standards by a GPTC operator or representative of the GPTC.

A commendation: is a recommendation by an ADA Paratransit rider (or representative of an eligible rider) to acknowledge a driver or GPTC representative who have gone above and/or beyond what is required to provide outstanding service or the normal standards of the GPTC.

Reporting process:

When a customer, rider, or any other individual feel they are concerned, satisfied, dissatisfied, approve or disapprove of the behavior or operating practices of a GPTC employee, they can officially let the GPTC know by filing a complaint or making a commendation (see notification process below). Reported information is collected by a GPTC representative and an investigation is conducted to determine the nature and possible resolution (for complaints) and employee recognition (for commendations).

Complaints are investigated and resolved within seven (7) business days from being received. At the completion of the investigation process, a response will be provided to the complainant upon request.

All complaints and commendations should be accompanied with the following information:

- a. Name, address, and phone number (or person may remain anonymous),
- b. The date and time of the incident
- c. Vehicle number (if applicable) and the customer service or driver name,
- d. Description of the complaint or commendation (what happened and why).

GPTC employees will not be allowed to learn the identity of any person filing a complaint.

The person filing a complaint can request to be advised at the completion of the complaint process, however, they will not be advised of what actions are taken against a GPTC employee as a result of a filed complaint.

Complaints and Commendations can be reported via:

Mail: Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Attention: Director of Transportation
2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46408

Telephone: GPTC Complaint Hotline
219-884-6100 extension: 110 or 104

In person: Gary Public Transportation Corporation
Administrative Office: 100 W. 4th Avenue (**3rd floor**)
Transportation Department: 2101 West 35th Avenue
Gary, Indiana 46402/46408

Website: gptcbus.com

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