

NASFAA Annual Conference July 8 – 11, 2007

Getting around in Washington DC

Once you make it to the nation's capital it is time to find your way around. Each of the three airports that serve Washington DC (Baltimore-Washington International, Reagan National, and Dulles International) and the Amtrak rail stop at Union Station have connections to the city's transit system. The conference hotel is conveniently located at the Woodley Park/National Zoo/Adams Morgan metro stop. Numerous taxis and airport shuttles are also available to whisk you to the convention site as well. Once you are in the city, you may find the easiest mode of transportation to be by taxi, metrobus and rail, or by foot. Street and Metro maps will be provided to you and most bus stops have maps of the entire city showing you where you are. While it may not seem like it, it is hard to get lost in DC.

By Foot

Many of the areas most frequented in the District of Columbia are clustered together, which makes getting around by foot often the simplest mode of transportation. Cultural, historical, federal, and residential sites co-exist in the district. Once you get your bearings, it is not hard to find your way around due to the simple grid and diagonal system of streets and avenues. DC is a city of pedestrians. Pay attention to crosswalks and signals. If you get disoriented, bus stops and metro stations often have citywide maps and retailers are often helpful in giving directions. To get between these clusters many forms of transportation abound.

The Metrorail System

Most all attractions and events occur at or near Metrorail or Metrobus stations or stops. With 5 colored lines (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, and Blue), the Metro serves the City of Washington and extends well into the suburbs of Maryland and Virginia. Metro stations are identified by brown pylons topped with a large 'M' and colored lines to indicate which lines the station serves. Fares are based on location traveled to and time of day; the base fare is \$1.35. Each station has an information booth that lists the On-Peak and Off-Peak rate to all the stations in the system. Each station and train car also displays a full map of the metro system. Each train will display the final stop in the direction it is going. A Metrocard is needed to enter and exit the platform. Cards can be purchased in the station using cash, credit, or debit card. The fare is automatically deducted from the value of the card upon exit. Passes are also available but may not be valid at all times of the day. Obtain a transfer when you enter the station if your trip will continue by bus once you exit the train.

Tips for using the train

When using the escalator, walk to the left or stand to the right; do not block the way for rushed commuters.

Do not block the doors to subway cars, allow customers to exit before boarding.

The door closing chime is just that; stand back, the doors do not retract, another train will be by shortly.

The station manager is always there for assistance if something is confusing; ask!

Verizon phones work inside the subway, other carriers may work in some stations and on above ground tracks.

The Metrobus System

Metrobus expands transportation coverage to almost the entire District. Stops are frequently found at Metrorail Stations and every few blocks along the route. Many of the more modern buses also have audible announcements of what the upcoming stop is – particularly helpful after dark or on a crowded bus. Bus fare is \$1.25. Obtaining a transfer from the driver allows a rider unlimited bus use until the transfer expires. If you have a transfer from the train the fare is only \$0.30 for the bus.

Tips for using the Bus

Only exact fare is accepted and no change is given.

Pay upon entry and remember to get a transfer.

Wait for passengers to exit the bus before boarding.

Signal the driver by pulling the cord as soon as you know your stop is next.

Times for the Metrorail and Metrobus

The Metrorail opens at 5:30am on weekdays and 7:00am on weekends and closes at midnight Sunday- Thursday and 3:00am on Friday and Saturday nights. Some buses remain in service 24 hours a day but you will want to check route maps for individual route end times.

By Taxi

Taxis are another great way to get around the city. If you are giving directions to a driver by cross streets, be sure to include the quadrant (NW, NE, SW, SE). Drivers are also familiar with major attractions, hotels, restaurants and locations. Fares in DC are based on zones and often are considerably lower than metered fares in other cities. There are 8 zones and 23 subzones in DC. By law the zone map and fare information must be posted in each cab. A majority of activities and attractions fall inside zone 1, however, the convention site is on the line between zone 2A and zone 2B. The fare is based on the number of zones crossed. A typical fare will range between \$6.50 and \$18.90 with an additional \$1.50 per person. A \$1.00 surcharge is charged during morning and evening rush hour. To maximize your savings ask for a receipt up-front or inform your driver that you do not want to cross a zone because your destination is near the line. 15% is the

standard tip left on a cab fare. Taxis can be taken out of the District but you will want to discuss payment with the driver before getting in; they have the right to use a flat rate or meter when they leave the city.

Tips for taking the taxi

Give a clear destination to the driver and ask the fare before getting in the cab. Since fares are generally low, drivers prefer smaller denominations for fare. Some drivers may not be able to make change for a bill larger than a twenty. If a driver seems to overcharge you, ask for the cab ID number and the number to the cab agency. Do not argue with the driver.

Driving in the District

If you are coming by car, be aware that parking can be expensive and is often limited. Valet parking services are common at most hotels, attractions, and restaurants. *Using a cell phone while driving is illegal in DC and seatbelts are mandatory.* One way streets abound and some streets may be one way only during certain rush hours to help accommodate traffic. Traffic lights are usually on the side of the road as opposed to overhead. Extra caution should be observed in traffic circles and squares as certain lanes may merge or veer off unexpectedly.

Tips for driving in DC

Pull over for emergency vehicles as soon as possible. If you miss your turn, often you are usually able to get back on course by circling the block.

Useful websites:

www.wmata.com Metrorail and Metrobus service information including a trip planner, and connections to the local airports.

www.wmtc.gov information on cab services and zones.