

Group Travel Planner, Cheat Sheet

<https://www.busrates.com/group-travel-planner>

BusRates >>



Need a bus? Go direct and save up to 25%.

Compare Free Quotes and Save Money with Only Reputable Companies.

About BusRates

About BusRates.com: Save Money, Save Time... Go Direct!

We are a directory of contact information for bus operators that group travel providers across the United States and Canada can access. Use the BusRates directory to plan your group travel easily and directly. By directly, we mean you can "skip the middleman" and avoid the price markup that a national broker or travel agent would tack onto your rate. The BusRates directory allows you to do just that, saving you time and money! That's the BusRates advantage.

The BusRates directory has broken down each company listed on it into consistent data points that are easier to understand empowering users to find the company that best fits their needs and then easily compare it against others listed in those same search results. Companies on the site have had their DOT's verified, and their insurance listed so consumers can do their own research with that peace of mind. For more info go to:

<https://www.busrates.com>

Contact Us:

If you are a bus owner/operator and want to list your company on BusRates to supercharge your sales, or if you are already a member and have any questions or require assistance regarding your posting, please contact us at:

Ph: 866-375-0800
Ph: 703-838-2955
Fax: 703-563-0533
Email: info@busrates.com

Group Travel Planner, Cheat Sheet

Planning Group Travel by Motorcoach

Motorcoach travel is efficient, affordable, and fun. Whether you are a first-time planner or seasoned pro, the BusRates.com directory is your all-access pass to contact info for charter operators and group travel attractions and destinations.

Why Travel by Bus?

Buses are safe. The Bureau of Transportation reports that buses are twice as safe as flying and 46 times safer than driving an automobile.

2016 (the last year this information was made public) Fatalities by Mode of Transport:

Auto:	13,412
Air:	400
Bus:	40
Train:	8

(Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Center for Transportation Analysis)

1. Buses reach more destinations.
Buses take you right to the doorstep of your destination. Planes and Trains only take you to the nearest stop.
2. Buses allow mobility.
Buses are available to taxi your group around for your entire stay.
3. Buses are the most fuel efficient.
Buses only use 797 BTU's per passenger mile compared to planes using 4847, trains using 2450, and autos using 3639 according to the US Department of transportation energy book data.
4. Buses are better for the environment.
Because of their fuel efficiency, buses are better for the environment than most other alternatives.
5. Buses are inexpensive.
Chartering a bus is typically half the cost of flying, not including the benefits that buses provide local travel.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q: How much of a deposit is required? 87% of coach companies require a deposit when booking.
A: The average deposit is 22%.

Q: When is the final payment due? Typically, final payment is due 10 to 30 days before departure. What is the cancellation policy?
A: Most companies allow you to cancel without penalty 14 to 30 days before travel.

Q: How soon do I need to book? Ideally, you want to book at least 3 weeks in advance to ensure availability. The earlier you book, the more options you will have.

Q: Do I need to tip the bus operator?

A: The most common driver gratuity across North America is 10%, however in some metro areas, especially in the Northeast, companies charge 15% to 20%. Limobus and executive coach services with additional personnel on board usually ask for 15% to 20%.

Q: Do I pay for parking, tolls and other fees?

A: Most bus companies include these fees in their initial quote, but some companies separate them and have you pay as the fees are incurred. Just be sure to ask if these fees are included or are separate before booking.

Q: Do I need to book the hotel room for the bus operator?

A: Yes, for overnight trips, it is customary to book the operator's hotel room, but most hotels will comp the bus operator's room (provide the room for free) when you book rooms for large groups. Ask for someone in group sales at the hotel to ensure the operator's room gets comped.

Q: Is alcohol or smoking allowed?

A: About 80% of bus companies allow alcohol with a refundable deposit of typically \$150 to \$250 in the US. Alcohol is not allowed on buses in Canada. Only a small percentage of bus companies allow smoking.

Q: Can I purchase just one or two seats for a trip?

A: No, BusRates.com only lists bus companies in its directory that charter the entire bus. Greyhound provides single passenger tickets.

Q: I have a CDL License; can I charter a bus without an operator?

A: No, the bus owner's insurance policy doesn't allow it.

Charter Bus Amenities

Each company's fleet is indexed on BusRates.com with the following notations and common amenities.

- **Qty.** Quantity of this type of bus the company owns.
- **Seats.** The number of seats available for your group.
- **Bus Type.** We index 11 general types of buses. Visit the Bus Types Reference Guide for descriptions and approximate national rates.
- **Year.** The year of the bus model, frequently displayed as a range from oldest to newest.
- **OTR.** Is the company willing to take this bus "Over The Road" which is usually defined by traveling long distances out of state and overnight.
- **Rstrm.** Restroom on board.
- **DVD.** There are usually 5 to 6 TV monitors on board full-sized deluxe motor coaches with a DVD player. Most buses do not receive any channels unless equipped with satellite, which is uncommon.
- **CD.** CD player on board.
- **PA.** Public Address system on board to help make announcements to the group.
- **ADA.** Wheelchair elevator on board.

- **Alch.** Alcohol is allowed on board.
- **Trnsfr.** Any pick-up and drop-off typically from a hotel to an airport around 15 miles of travel (excluding 10% gratuity).
- **5 hrs.** 5-hour rates posted on BusRates.com are based on 5 hours of local use, low miles (excluding 10% gratuity). Bus companies most commonly have a 5 hour minimum of use with the exception of transfers.
- **Day.** Day rates posted on BusRates.com are based on 10 hours of local use, low miles (excluding 10% gratuity).
- **Mile.** The rate per mile of travel. Quotes are calculated per mile or per day whichever is greater. Trips averaging over 300 miles per day are usually priced per mile and not per day.

Other amenities found on buses are tables, booth-like seating, convertible bunks, shades, carpeting, satellite and catered food. Mini-busses have luggage racks and reclining seats.

Components of a Quote

Local Use Charters

- **Hours of use:** Local travel is most commonly based on hours of use. The national average rate per hour for a full-size deluxe motor coach in March of 2007 was \$90 (2004 was \$83; 2003 was \$68). Almost all companies have a 3, 4, 5, or 6-hour minimum charge; 5-hours being the most common across the U.S.
- **Gratuity:** The standard bus operator gratuity for chartering a bus is 10%. About a third of operator's pay comes from the gratuity as an incentive to provide good service. The average wage earned by bus operators is about \$12 per hour.
- **Sales Tax:** There is no sales tax when chartering a bus in most states (CA has a 1% tax, and OH appx. 7.75%).

Over the Road Charters

- **Mileage:** Buses traveling out of the local area and overnight are quoted based on miles. The average charge per mile across the nation in March of 2007 was \$2.94 (2004 was \$2.66) with the company's day rate as a minimum charge per day.
- **Day Rate:** The minimum charge per day if the per-mile charge is not more than the combined day rates. The average day rate in March of 2007 was \$821 (2004 was \$769; 2003 was \$703).
- **Fuel Surcharge:** During periods of fuel price volatility, bus companies often charge a fuel surcharge to prevent having to change their primary rates (filed and posted) daily. Bus companies commonly link their fuel surcharge rate with the Department of Energy's website.
- **Driver Change:** For every 10 hours of driving, or 15 hours of standby time, the law requires 10 consecutive hours of rest. If you plan on driving over 10 hours, an operator change must be made. Bus Operator changes range from \$200 to \$900 depending on how far from the departure city the change must be made.
- **Local Travel:** The amount of local mileage allowed per day once the bus reaches the destination city.

- **Driver Hotel:** Usually the customer books and pays for the operator's hotel room, but most hotels will comp the operator's room at no charge when you book several rooms for your group. Ask for someone in group sales at the hotel to ensure the operator's room is complimentary.
- **Gratuity:** The standard gratuity for trips over the road is 10%.
- **Sales Tax:** There is no sales tax when chartering a bus in most states (CA has a 1% tax, and OH appx. 7.75%).
- **Other expenses:** Depending on your destination, you may encounter other fees such as bridge tolls or airport taxes, most companies include these in your initial quote, and some have you pay for them as they are incurred.

Bus Charter Safety Regulations

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulates the United States charter bus industry. Bus operators are required to carry a current DOT Physical Exam Card, be drug tested under DOT rules and regulations, and maintain a log for miles and hours of service. Coaches are not required by state or federal law to have seatbelts. Some states require that operators be certified for all school-sponsored trips, grades 12 and under.

- The DOT regulation 395.10 restricts the bus operator's driving time. There are three parts:
- 10 Hour Rule. The bus operator cannot drive more than 10 hours following 8 consecutive hours off duty (except in emergencies)
- 15 Hour Rule. After 15 hours on-duty (driving and non-driving tasks), an operator cannot continue driving until 8 consecutive hours of off-duty time is taken.
- 70 Hour Rule. On duty time cannot exceed 70 hours for any period of 8 consecutive days.

[Transport Canada](#) regulates the Canadian charter bus industry. Bus operators are required to maintain a log for miles and hours of service. Unlike the US, alcohol is not allowed on buses in Canada.

The Commercial Vehicle Drivers Hours of Service Regulations (SOR/2005-313) Act restricts the bus operator's driving time.

- The bus operator cannot drive more than 13 hours in a day.
- After driving 13 hours in a day, at least 8 consecutive hours of off-duty time is required before driving again.
- The bus operator must have at least 10 hours of off-duty time per day. Daily off-duty time must include 2 hours that do not form part of an 8-consecutive hour off-duty period.
- The total driving time in 2 days cannot exceed 26 hours.

How to Use BusRates

In a nutshell, BusRates.com lists all the companies that own the buses they charter so you can contact them directly. Most charter bus sites on the internet are brokers adding a minimum 25% markup to the lowest bidder.

- Use BusRates.com much like the yellow pages to identify and contact bus-owning companies directly.
- Once you run a search in the database, you can view phone numbers or use the Quote Tool to email several companies at once.
- Emails are simply sent directly to the bus companies. Companies will reply or call you directly with a quote.
- Use the site’s guide to familiarize yourself with the industry and gain helpful tips.

Get the Most Out of BusRates.com

For most visitors, running a search in the database to browse bus company rates and fleet information is all they need. But if this is your first time chartering a bus, you may want to utilize some of the free extras this site offers.

<u>What this site provides</u>	<u>What it does not provide</u>
Custom Quotes	Bus availability
List of vehicle amenities	Booking your travel
Vehicle specs	Contact names
Vehicle inventory	Payment channels
Company description and reviews	Bus companies outside the US & Canada

Contact information; email, phone, web

1. **Increase your awareness.** Read over important information in the Tips & Info sections above to help guide you through the charter bus rental process.
2. **Choose a bus type.** Browse through the Bus Types Reference Guide and determine which type of bus will be best for you.
3. **Choose the amenities you want.** Familiarize yourself with the Bus Amenities section above and determine what you want your bus to include.
4. **Run a search in the area** from which you will be departing (For trips over long distance and overnight, you can search other cities up to 3 hours away if you want to choose from more buses).
5. **Choose bus companies.** Submit a quote request to several companies at once from the site, or contact companies direct. Ask each company the “Top 10 Questions to Ask Before Chartering a Bus” (found at the top of this page).

Book Your Trip! Make reservations with the option best suited to your group.

