

## TAXICABS

Houston boasts the second largest taxicab fleet in the country, with more than 1,400 vehicles in operation (source: [Houston-Guide.com](http://Houston-Guide.com)). If you are considering taking a cab from the airport and coming to University of Houston please keep in mind that Houston is served by two major airports-Hobby Airport and Bush Intercontinental Airport. Hobby Airport is approximately twenty miles closer (approximately \$25 by cab) to University of Houston than Houston Intercontinental Airport (approximately \$55 by cab).

TAXICABS		
Fiesta Cab Company:	713-225-2666	
Liberty Cab Company:	713-695-6700	
Square Deal Cab Company:	713-659-7236	
United Cab Company:	713-699-0000	
Yellow Cab Company:	713-236-1111	
EXPRESS SHUTTLE:	713-523-8888	
APPROXIMATE CAB FARE		
George Bush Houston Intercontinental Airport to:		
	6 a.m. - 8 p.m.	8 p.m.-6 a.m.
Downtown	\$37.50	\$38.50
Reliant Park Area	\$47.00	\$48.00
Texas Medical Center	\$43.50	\$44.50
Uptown/Galleria Area	\$43.50	\$44.50
Greenway Plaza	\$43.50	\$44.50
William P. Hobby Airport to:		
	6 a.m. - 8 p.m.	8 p.m.-6 a.m.
Downtown	\$20.00	\$21.00
Reliant Park Area	\$23.00	\$24.00
Texas Medical Center	\$23.00	\$24.00
Uptown/Galleria Area	\$38.00	\$39.00
Greenway Plaza	\$28.50	\$29.50

## **METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY (METRO)**

**[www.ridemetro.org](http://www.ridemetro.org) (for bus and rail maps and times)**

### **713-635-4000 Metro information**

Houston's bus system, operated by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) is a bargain. At \$1 for a one-way local fare, visitors can take in this great city without having to worry about navigating the freeways or mapping out directions to their destination.

In the heart of the city, the new METRO Rail system offers convenient, accessible service between downtown Houston and [Reliant Park](#), including the [Museum District](#) and Texas Medical Center. METRO also offers convenient service downtown on colorful, vintage replica trolley buses. The trolleys access remote parking, restaurants, shops, major hotels, the courthouse complex, [Minute Maid Park](#) and the [George R. Brown Convention Center](#). Visitors to the Texas Medical Center can take advantage of the free shuttle bus service between remote parking, restaurants, hospitals and other healthcare providers.

#### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

**METRO**, Houston's city transit system offers service between Bush Intercontinental and downtown Houston Monday through Friday with a one-way fare of \$1.50 (\$1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.). These buses run approximately every 25 minutes, from 6-10 a.m. and again from 2 -7 p.m. Service between Hobby Airport and downtown Houston runs seven days a week with a one-way fare of \$1. These buses run approximately every 30 minutes, from 5 a.m.-midnight. **Metro Information: (713) 635-4000.**

**Free Downtown Trolleys** Colorful trolleys provide free transportation within the downtown area. With more than 100 stops, METRO's trolley service can whisk you from the George R. Brown Convention Center to Bayou Place, or from Market Square Park to Foley's department store and back to your hotel. Call METRO for more information at (713) 635-4000.

**Greyhound Bus Lines** information numbers: (800) 231-2222, (800) 531-5332 (Spanish).

## **DRIVING IN HOUSTON**

Many long-term visitors to Houston find driving a car to be the easiest way to get around the city. Before driving in Texas, please review the driving laws which can be found in the Texas Drivers Handbook which can be found at the Texas Department of Public Safety website. The web site address is: [www.txdps.state.tx.us](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us). Additional helpful information can be obtained from that website. Generally, a person 18 to 75 years of age with a valid out-of-country driver license in their possession may drive a private, non-commercial motor vehicle in the State of Texas for up to one year from date of entry into the United States, if their home country has reciprocity with the U.S. In order to check for reciprocity agreement status, click on [Reciprocity In Driver Licensing](#) or you may contact License Issuance at (512) 424-5089 or by e-mail at [license.issuance@txdps.state.tx.us](mailto:license.issuance@txdps.state.tx.us).

Before driving on the Houston freeways, please become familiar with the car and the Texas laws. The Texas Department of Public Safety website sited above provides access to many of the laws. Some that may impact you are:

1. Texas requires a driver to carry proof of liability insurance as well as a driver license.
2. Children under the age of 5 years or under 36 inches tall must use a car seat.
3. **Driving while intoxicated is a serious offense in Texas. Under Texas law, one is "intoxicated" if he or she:**
  - a. **Does not have the normal use of mental or physical faculties by reason of the introduction of alcohol, a controlled substance, drug, a combination of two or more of the above, or any other substance into the body; or**
  - b. **has an alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more.**

## **OBTAINING A TEXAS DRIVER'S LICENSE**

To find an office near your place of residence, visit the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) website (Houston Dover DPS is the closest office to the UH campus): <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/>. You may click on the following link to download a driver's license handbook: <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/ftp/forms/DLhandbook.pdf>

## **DRIVING OPTIONS**

If you decide to drive while in Houston, you will have several options: renting a car, leasing a car, purchasing a used car, or purchasing a new car. There are advantages and disadvantages to each of the choices. Purchasing a new car is usually the most expensive option; some prefer leasing or buying a used car especially if the stay here is less than a year. Before purchasing or leasing a vehicle it is strongly advised that you consult with colleagues from Houston.

## **CAR RENTALS**

The full range of car-rental companies offer vehicles in various price ranges so it may be helpful to call several companies and compare prices. You should also purchase insurance for your rental unless you already have auto insurance that is applicable. Following are the web site links for some car rental companies:

- [www.alamo.com](http://www.alamo.com)
- [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)
- [www.budget.com](http://www.budget.com)
- [www.dollar.com](http://www.dollar.com)
- [www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com)
- [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)
- [www.nationalcar.com](http://www.nationalcar.com)
- [www.thrifty.com](http://www.thrifty.com)

## **PURCHASING A VEHICLE**

Before purchasing a used vehicle, be certain that the title is in the seller's name or is held by a reputable dealer. If you cannot assess the condition of the vehicle yourself, it is best to ask a friend for the name of a mechanic who can test the car for you. If you do not know of a mechanic to use, AAA and other consumer groups have lists of mechanics that must meet certain requirements (please see under car repairs).

If you decide to purchase a vehicle, you will need to be certain to transfer the title into your name, register the vehicle, and pay sales tax on it. Additional information on transferring the title can be found at the Harris County Tax Assessor's website which is located at [www.tax.co.harris.tx.us](http://www.tax.co.harris.tx.us).

To transfer title, the seller must write the purchaser's name and address, the odometer reading and date of sale in the title assignment. Purchaser and seller must each sign both the title and the title application form (Form 130-U). Both signed documents must be given to the purchaser, along with the registration receipt. The purchaser must then go to any Harris County Tax Office location and file the title application. Proof of current insurance will be required. The fee is \$33, plus motor-vehicle sales tax (6.25 percent). There is also a \$2.50 transfer of a current registration fee. If the license is not current, there may be a registration fee. When you purchase a vehicle from a licensed Texas dealer located in Harris County, the dealer is required to complete all the paperwork necessary to title and register the vehicle in your name. The dealer is also required to file the documents with the Harris County Tax Office within 20 business days of the date you purchased the vehicle.

## **BUYING A USED CAR**

To research new and used car prices and features, visit the following websites:

<http://www.autosite.com/>

<http://www.edmunds.com/advice/>

<http://www.chron.com/class/cars/index.html>

To evaluate a fair price for a used car, use the Kelly Blue Book that calculates the normal selling price of a used car. Visit: <http://www.kbb.com/>

For a large used car dealer with four locations in Houston, visit the Car Max website:

<http://www.carmax.com>

It is usually best to buy a used car that has at least a 90-day warranty and that is selling for the low "Blue Book" price (see above link). You can also arrange to pay for an auto mechanic to inspect the vehicle. You need to be careful to not buy a used car that has been in a major accident or has suffered flood damage. For a small fee you can check to see if a used car has been in an accident or suffered flood damage by going to <http://www.carfax.com/> by having the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) of the car you want to purchase. The VIN is located near the bottom of the window on the driver's side of the dashboard. It is also found at the end of the driver's door.

## **AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE**

The following information was obtained from the Texas Department of Insurance website which is located at:

<http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/consumer>.

Texas law requires you to have auto liability insurance, and if you still owe money on your car, your lender requires that you also carry collision and comprehensive coverage. Auto insurance pays for damages, injuries, and other losses specifically covered by your policy. Read your policy carefully to know exactly what it covers. Pay special attention to the exclusions section, which lists the

things your policy doesn't cover. The front page of your policy is called the declarations page. It contains useful information such as the exact name of your insurance company, your policy number, and the amount of each of your coverage's and deductibles.

Texas has an automobile insurance Consumer Bill of Rights. Your company must send you a copy with your policy or policy renewal. Take time to read it to fully understand your rights under Texas law.

### **Texas Requires Proof of Financial Responsibility!**

If you drive in Texas, you must show that you can pay for accidents you cause. Most Texas drivers do this by buying auto liability insurance. Texas law requires minimum coverage of \$20,000 per injured person, up to a total of \$40,000 for everyone hurt in an accident, and \$15,000 for property damage. This basic coverage is called 20/40/15 coverage. However, basic coverage might not be enough if you are held liable for an

accident. You should consider buying more than the basic limits. When you buy an auto policy, your insurance company will send you a proof-of-insurance card. You will have to show proof of insurance when are asked for it by a law enforcement officer, have an accident, register your car or renew its registration, obtain or renew your driver's license, or get your car inspected.

Texas law provides severe penalties for violating the state's financial responsibility laws. A first conviction will result in a fine between \$175 and \$350. Subsequent convictions could result in fines of \$350 to \$1,000, suspension of your driver's license, and impoundment of your automobile.

### **CAR LEASE**

Leasing a car is different from buying or renting one. You pay a down payment and a monthly rate for a specified time and then either turn the car in to the dealer or pay the balance to own the car. Go to [www.leaseguide.com](http://www.leaseguide.com) for more information.

### **CAR REPAIRS**

We recommend using an AAA Approved auto repair shop or take the car to a mechanic that is recommended by a trusted friend. You can find an AAA approved auto repair shops by visiting: [www.aaa-texas.com](http://www.aaa-texas.com)

### **AIR TRANSPORTATION**

The city's two major commercial airports, Bush Intercontinental (IAH) and William P. Hobby (HOU), are both just a short commute from the Central Business District and Uptown Houston and a reasonable distance from hotel hubs and convention facilities. Each year more than 43 million people zip in and out of Houston's airports. This high volume of travelers proves the city's transportation team can meet the challenge of getting you and your group into and out of the city on schedule.

A \$2.6 billion construction and development plan for the city's airport system continues to keep Houston's airport system among the best in the world for both passengers and air cargo. The recent addition of a consolidated rental car facility at Bush Intercontinental makes car rentals quick and easy for travelers, while reducing traffic and pollution around the airport.

A brand new International Arrivals building at Bush Intercontinental opened in January 2005, which allows 4,500 passengers to be processed per hour, more than double the previous capacity of 2,000. The Bush airport's recently opened Terminal E is one of the brightest and most spacious airport facilities in the United States, and with reconditioned runways, the airport now handles more than 1,400 arrivals and departures daily. Meanwhile, at Hobby Airport vast improvements are underway, with the central concourse transformation set for completion in 2006.

For up-to-the-minute information, including flight arrival and departure times, visit [www.houstonairportsystem.org](http://www.houstonairportsystem.org).

<b>DIRECT FLIGHT</b>	
Travel Times From Houston to Key Destinations	
Albuquerque	2:05 hrs.
Atlanta	1:50 hrs.
Boston	3:40 hrs.
Chicago	2:25 hrs.
Cleveland	2:35 hrs.
Dallas/Ft. Worth	:50 hrs.
Denver	2:20 hrs.
Los Angeles	3:30 hrs.
Miami	2:20 hrs.
Minneapolis	2:40 hrs.
New Orleans	1:00 hrs.
New York City	3:20 hrs.
Philadelphia	3:10 hrs.
Phoenix	2:40 hrs.
Portland	4:25 hrs.
San Diego	3:20 hrs.
San Francisco	4:10 hrs.
Seattle	4:30 hrs.
Washington D.C.	2:50 hrs.
<i>Above flight times in hours. Source: Continental Airlines.</i>	
<b>AIRPORT INFORMATION</b>	
Bush Intercontinental Airport	(281) 230-3000
William P. Hobby Airport	(713) 640-3000

<b>EXPRESS SHUTTLE USA</b>	
Bush Intercontinental Airport to Downtown (Terminal - Hyatt Regency on Polk Street side) Hours of Operation: 5:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	\$19
Bush Intercontinental Airport to Post Oak/Uptown/Galleria (Terminal - Doubletree Post Oak at 2001 Post Oak) Hours of Operation: 5:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	\$20
Bush Intercontinental Airport to Greenway Plaza (Terminal - Concourse Level between 3 and 4 Greenway Bldgs.) Hours of Operation: 5:20 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	\$20
Bush Intercontinental Airport to Medical Center (Terminal - Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Medical Center at 6800	\$20

Main) Hours of Operation: 6:10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	
Hobby Airport to Downtown (Terminal - Hyatt Regency on Polk Street side) Hours of Operation: 5:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m.	\$14
Hobby Airport to Uptown/Galleria (Terminal - Doubletree Post Oak at 2001 Post Oak) Hours of Operation: 5:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	\$15
Hobby Airport to Greenway Plaza (Terminal - Concourse Level between 3 and 4 Greenway Bldgs.) Hours of Operation: 5:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	\$15
Hobby Airport to Medical Center (Terminal - Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Medical Center at 6800 Main) Hours of Operation: 6:10 a.m.-11:00 p.m.	\$15

Some of the above-mentioned information and the tables/charts have been taken from Houston-Guide.com, which is a publication of Greater Houston and Convention Center.