

Consumer Need-to-Know: How to Choose Transportation Wisely

Identify chauffeured transportation companies – all members of the Greater Atlanta Limousine Association are in full compliance with Georgia State Regulations and Insurance Requirements – see a list of excellent companies [here](#).

Full contact information, including email link for price quotes and web site address, are included for each and every operator member company throughout the state of Georgia.

You may also check the safety record of operators who are licensed in Interstate commerce by going to the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website link](#).

9 Questions to ask before choosing your ground transportation provider

1) What services do you provide?

This may seem like a silly question, but it's important to know what your chosen ground transportation company can do for you. If your company takes regular group trips, you'll need a company with buses. If you require special services for your busy executives, make sure that's a part of the deal.

2) What is your rate structure?

Many companies offer flat rates for services, but you should investigate these prices fully before committing. Many companies will quote base rate of vehicle. Check for hidden fees such as travel time to/from pick up location, mileage, fuel, gratuity, travel time, STC charges, additional labor, and many other things you may not have considered. If you are quoted prices per mile or per hour, be sure you understand what happens if the trip exceeds the reserved time. Understanding the rates will help you choose the company that best fits your financial needs.

3) What areas do you serve?

It is important to note what areas your chosen ground transportation company serves so you're not surprised by elevated fees, or worse, a canceled trip. Before you choose a car service in any given city, be sure the pick-up point and destination are both covered under the service areas. The same goes for any group trips you may plan. If you choose a company that never travels out of the city, you could get a shock when it comes time to plan the corporate retreat.

4) What insurance do you carry?

The Department of Transportation requires ground transportation companies to carry

adequate insurance for all fleet vehicles and the passengers, but many businesses try to operate without paying the premiums. You have a right to see the insurance documentation before you agree to any contracts, so don't take another step until you've verified that your employees will always be covered in the event of an accident.

5) What is your maintenance schedule?

As a money-saving measure, many ground transportation companies may put off regular maintenance or stretch the times between repairs and preventive measure. Ask if they employ mechanics and do preventative maintenance in house. You should always feel free to verify that your chosen company keeps all vehicles in top shape at all times, whether you intend to make use of the entire fleet or not.

6) What happens if a car breaks down with company employees inside?

Every company should have emergency procedures and contingency plans in place for this possibility, and those procedures should take the clients into consideration above all else. Ensure they have the ability to bring a new vehicle immediately to continue the journey, and if not, consider taking your business elsewhere.

7) What is your cancellation policy?

There will come a time when ground transportation services will need to be canceled or rescheduled, and the best companies to work with are the ones that handle these events with patience and understanding. You can expect cancellation fees in many cases, so take notes on who offers the best policies. The best sedan and bus services simply allow rescheduling for another date and don't penalize unless time constraints are an issue.

8) Do you handle group events?

A ground transportation company that handles group events on a regular basis will be better equipped to meet your needs with a more diverse fleet than a company that just purchased the first bus for its fleet. Understanding the company's history will help you better plan group travel.

9) Do you work with affiliates?

A ground transportation company with affiliates can offer you more services over a wider geographic area, making that company a superior choice over those who operate without an affiliate network. Choosing a company with a robust affiliate network means your menu of services grows exponentially.

Read the information below for tips to guide your search for the chauffeured transportation service that suits your needs:

Congratulations on Your Upcoming Wedding! The Greater Atlanta Limousine Association (GALA) wants your experience with chauffeured transportation to be a memorable one. We want you and your loved ones to experience the style and elegance our industry provides and we want your day to be perfect in every way.

Here are some tips for choosing the best company and vehicle(s) for your wedding:

- Consult the GALA online membership database on www.georgialimo.org to find a limousine professional in your community.
- Determine the number of people you are transporting. Limousine companies typically quote the number of permitted passengers in their vehicles based on guidelines from the manufacturer. Typically, the manufacturer quotes a gross weight on the vehicle (FMVSS requirements) and a number of passengers based on 150 pounds per passenger. Unless you have extremely thin men in your party, booking the maximum number of people in the limousine will be extremely uncomfortable. For example, a six-passenger limousine is normally stretched between 65 and 70 inches. This is comfortable for four adults. So lesson #1 is do NOT book the limousine to its maximum capacity. Instead, rent a larger limousine or rent more than one limousine. Many chauffeured transportation companies also have stretched SUVs, mini-coaches or other larger vehicles for carrying groups. Never underestimate how warm and uncomfortable formal clothing is and how much worse its wearers can feel in close quarters.
- Many limousine operators use their colleagues to handle multi-vehicle charters. Ask your contact if another company will be working with them on your wedding day. If so, do your same due diligence on the other company. If you are not satisfied with the professionalism of the farm-out company, secure an operator who can manage the entire wedding charter.
- Timing: Weddings do not normally go off with military precision. Rent the limousine for at least an extra hour beyond the expected schedule. Have the limousine come 15-30 minutes early to allow extra time for photographs. Receiving lines take 25 minutes per 100 people and photographers take much more time than you might expect. It is extremely stressful on everyone if you have left inadequate time for your charter.
- Limousine operators often have more than one event to service in a day. Do not assume you can add time to your charter on your wedding day. Spend a few dollars more so your chauffeured transportation is guaranteed for all of the hours you require.
- Visit the limousine operator from whom you are renting the vehicle(s). Ask for references. Insist on a written contract within one week of leaving your deposit. Consider using a major credit card if you are unfamiliar with the company you have chosen.

- As much as possible, keep alcohol out of the limousine. Drinkers -- plus excitement and formal clothing -- can be a recipe for disaster.
- Consider hiring a full-size sedan or other vehicle to be on hand as "designated driver" transportation for those guests who may not have used their best judgment during the wedding reception.
- Typically a chauffeur is tipped between 15 and 20 percent of the total charge. ALL chauffeurs prefer a cash gratuity. If the chauffeur has treated you well, tip him/her handsomely and be sure to call the owner. If the chauffeur has NOT delivered good service, inform the owner as well.
- Breakdown: Limousines are machines. They unfortunately get flat tires and hoses and seals rip like any other vehicle. Unless you rent a "backup vehicle," most companies will have to scramble to transport you should there be a problem. Ask your limousine professional what system he/she has in the event of a problem.

Prom Tips for Teens

Prom night is one of the most anticipated nights on the teen calendar. A ride in a limousine to/from the big event can make the night extra-special and transform the entire event into an extraordinarily memorable and enchanting evening.

But, not all transportation companies are created equally. In fact, sometimes, chartering a limo from a poor quality company can ruin the entire night, which is why the experts at the National Limousine Association have a few tips on hiring professional and reliable chauffeured transportation:

- Talk to your friends early. The demand for transportation during the spring season can be overwhelming when so many others are chartering transportation for prom, graduation, and even weddings! Talk to your friends early and decide who will be in your limo group, so that you can book your reservations and get the vehicle you want.
- Show up in style. A unique chauffeured car will definitely set you apart from the rest. There are many styles available such as stretch limos with special interiors, sedans and party buses. Depending on the number of people you will have in the car, you may want a certain make or model. Choose something that shows you off. Consult the membership database of the Greater Atlanta Limousine Association on www.georgialimo.org to get a list of all the transportation professionals in your area, so you can check out what types of vehicles are available for rent.
- Allow time to take lots of pictures. If you want to have photos of prom night, plan for your friends to meet up for pre-prom at one location (make sure the limo company and the chauffeur have the address and directions). You can even ask the driver to position the chauffeured vehicle to be a part of the shot.
- Ask about the perks. Some companies provide food, beverages, and tunes for the ride over to the party. Ask in advance about the amenities that are available, such as sparkling cider to toast the night. Also ask about the type of music available – be prepared to take some mix CDs that will have enough music for the whole ride so that you have the coolest music for the special night!

- Extend the night. Don't forget the post-prom party! Remember to book your ride for a few extra hours to ensure you have time to have a great time!

Prom Tips for Parents

Prom night is one of the most anticipated nights on the teen calendar. From the moment your son or daughter find their date, to the moment he or she shows up at the door, every moment needs to count towards making the night both safe and special. Though you may worry about your child staying out late on prom night, hiring a chauffeured car for the most important social event of the year can transform the evening into an extraordinarily memorable, safe and enchanting time for your teenager -- while offering you the peace of mind to make it through!

The Greater Atlanta Limousine Association provides these five tips when you hire a transportation service for your teenager's big night:

- Ask the transportation company for the Prom Promise. This is a document that teens sign in agreement of not drinking or taking drugs on prom night. Many limousine and chauffeured transportation companies offer this contract as a way to help parents address the importance of safety on prom with their teens.
- Give the transportation company a curfew. That's right; the chauffeur will abide by any rules you set forth, and will make sure to pick up and drop off your kids at a designated hour. This is a great way ensure your kids make it home on time, no excuses.
- Check with industry associations to make sure the company you choose is reputable. Membership in organizations such as the National Limousine Association and the local livery association are good indications that your service provider does their due diligence. The Greater Atlanta Limousine Association's website www.georgialimo.org lists limousine professionals by community. Consumers can compare services, pricing, vehicle availability and receive non-binding online price quotes.
- Set some ground rules. As the parent, you have the right to tell the transportation company what will and will not be tolerated in the vehicle. For example, you can ask that the chauffeur keep the privacy screen down for the entire ride, so that he/she has a full grasp of what your kids are up to. If any of your rules are broken, the chauffeur can turn the car around and bring your kids home.
- Remember to sit back and relax. A reputable company hires drivers with proper training and licensing. This professionalism helps ensure your teenager's safety -- and your own peace of mind.