

Intercompany Transfers

Transfers between transit companies in Chicago started September 22, 1935. On that date full fare cash riders in the middle zone (south of Howard, east of Desplaines) could from the conductor or driver for 10 cents receive a transfer on CSL cars or buses or from ticket agents at CRT stations or on trains good for travel on the other system. (CSL fares at the time were 7 cents, CRT was 10 cents). Use rules were fairly complex, but basically you could ride multiple CSL routes to reach a station, as long as you did not pass another station en route, and likewise ride multiple CSL route after leaving the 'L', again as long as you did not pass another station on the way. You could only use the 'L' once. However, you could go from any 'L' station to any other station in the middle zone. Interestingly, while CRT issued transfers only at stations within the city limits, CSL did on the portions of the Cicero, Ogden, and Roosevelt lines that were in Cicero. CMC did not participate at this time.

CSL to CRT transfers were very similar to contemporary CSL transfers, however had the 'L' system shown on the map as dashed lines, had no ½ fare block, had a space for time stamping at the top and a footer stating good on Rapid Transit and must be timestamped when leaving station and thus were a half inch longer (6½ versus 6 inches long) and printed on grayish blue paper instead of white. Printing was done by the CSL's print shop.

Since CRT did not generally issue transfers between their lines (Niles Center and Evanston being only examples) and relied on small "raffle" style tickets, they came up with an all-new style, which had 10 versions, one for each branch plus Loop. An undated "Emergency" version was made for use if a station ran out of that day's transfers. All versions had a map of the entire 'L' system, plus the branch name and a series of numbers corresponding to the stations on that branch. Printing was in red on dark yellow (buff) paper. Printing was contracted out to the Ansell-Simplex Ticket Co., as CRT did not have printing capacity.

CMC began interchanging transfers with CRT January 19, 1936. The CRT transfers were identical to the form used for transfer to CSL, but printed on green paper. CMC had an all-new form similar to the CRT one, but showing the CMC routes. There were three versions, one for each division (North, West, South) and bore no resemblance to CMC local transfers, which were tear-off style. A rider needing to use two CMC routes to get to an 'L' station would get two transfers, an orange 'L' transfer and a tear-off CMC form. Again, a rider could use CMC before and after the 'L', but the 'L' only once. At this time transfers between CMC and CSL were not yet available.

Yet a third intercompany arrangement started January 16, 1938, between CRT and Chicago & West Towns Ry in the western suburbs. Issued by CRT at all stations in the city, this transfer did not have a map, but instead have punch boxes to indicate date and time of expiration. Printed on pink paper with a red stripe, the companion C&WT to CRT transfer had a map of C&WT routes, punch blocks to indicate route of issue, and date and time of expiration, and was printed on red paper with a pink stripe. This arrangement did not prove successful and was discontinued August 14, 1938.

Very little changed until 1943. CSL did reduce the number of red plates in October 1942, but the base did not change except a slightly different clock starting in 1939. The reason for reducing the number of forms appears to be so that more transfers could be printed in a given time span. Due to WW2 restrictions, riding had increased dramatically to the point where the print shop was having a hard time keeping up with transfer needs. Having fewer plates meant fewer plate changes, thus more impressions per day.

Again because of wartime pressures, on October 1st, 1943, a new transfer interchange between CSL and CMC was started, and concurrently transfer rules were relaxed. Previously a rider wishing to change from CSL to CRT or CMC to CRT had to take the straightest route to the nearest 'L' station. Sometimes this resulted in strange routings, especially on the west side. For instance, a rider boarding a Pulaski streetcar going to Hoyne on the Garfield Park 'L' was required to change to the Lake St. 'L', take that downtown, then ride the Garfield Park 'L' back. Under the new rules, the standard CSL "points of intersection, divergence, convergence or extension" the passenger could ride past the Lake St. 'L' and change directly to the Garfield Park 'L'.

As of October 1, 1943, CSL introduced a new pink form for changing to CMC. Basically, a blue CRT form printed on pink paper. Again, due to war-related constraints, printing was contracted out to Ansell-Simplex, a first for CSL. At the same time, printing of the blue forms was contracted out to Ansell-Simplex also, though the blue forms were brought back in house by 1947 as postwar riding and thus transfer requirements fell.

CMC at this time replaced their three orange division-specific forms with a new orange form good on either CSL or CRT (but not both). These were very similar to contemporary CSL forms with a map and showing one or two routes. CRT yellow and blue transfers remained unchanged.

The State St. Subway opened October 17th, 1943,³ and CRT started a new "Subway" form in yellow and green with a new map showing the subway, but other forms (except the "Emergency" form which was updated to show the subway) still did not show the subway.

January 1, 1944, CMC replaced the orange transfers with a green transfer to CRT and a pink transfer to CSL. Overprints remained unchanged. CRT yellow transfers also changed color, to blue. Overprints were not changed immediately, but were at some point soon after so all forms now had the subway on them. Colors were now paired for simplicity. CRT-CSL blue, CRT-CMC green, CSL-CMC pink.

This scheme remained unchanged until the CTA takeover October 1, 1947. Initially, the only changes were that CRT blue and pink transfers were now available at all 'L' stations, and reduced fare riders could obtain them too. Additionally, a rider changing from surface to 'L' now paid the two cents at the 'L' station or to the conductor on the train instead of when first boarding the streetcar or bus.

Weeks later, on November 7th, 1947, blue transfers were eliminated on the surface division. Passengers changing to the L now used regular white transfers. However, the restriction on using the 'L' only once remained. The pink surface transfers remained in use, as did the blue and green 'L' and pink and green CMC forms.

December 1947 saw another major reshuffling of route combinations on surface transfers, this time driven by a desire to reduce printing requirements as postwar riding was rapidly falling.

CMC green and pink forms were replaced by a single new orange form (identical to the one used 10/1/43 to 12/31/43!) good on both CTA surface and 'L' routes on November 14, 1948.

Effective August 1, 1951, CTA eliminated the pink surface and green 'L' transfers, all riders now using regular white surface or blue 'L' forms.

Finally, on October 1, 1952, with CTA takeover of CMC, the need for intercompany transfers ended entirely, and the CMC tearoff intracompany transfers were eliminated, leaving only the orange Boulevard System forms. Even these were eliminated July 8th, 1953, with another reshuffling of routes on red plates as the Boulevard System was absorbed into the surface division.

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