

Regular Issue Transfers

Until 1914 the two traction companies had separate and distinct systems for transferring between routes. Chicago City Railway and its subsidiary & South Chicago Railway as of March 1st, 1912, used a system consisting of eight forms of varying colors:

A and B had all north-south routes on them
C and D had all east-west crosstown routes
E and F were Calumet forms
G and H were "special" transfers for thru routes

Each pair had a version for each direction, identified by color.

Chicago Railway as of January 1st, 1913, had a similar arrangement, though divided by division, North (east of the North Branch), West (west of the North Branch) and Thru Routes. Again, colors designated direction of each pair of forms.

Riders changing routes received a new transfer, punched east or west if turning in a north or south transfer, north or south if turning in an east or west transfer. Thru routes did not accept transfers, issuing transfers on cash fares only.

February 1st, 1914, all these forms were replaced by new Chicago Surface Lines forms which included routes formerly operated by all three companies. A and B were north-south forms, C and D were east-west forms. Colors were as follows:

A northbound (salmon)
B southbound (white)
C eastbound (cherry)
D westbound (green)

Thru routes were included on the regular forms. The biggest change was now a rider could transfer to any other route, regardless of former operator, and thru routes were now to be treated the same as any other route.

From time-to-time routes were added or deleted, and the A-B-C-D form numbers soon disappeared. But the basic form remained the same until May 18th, 1930, when a series of numbers was added along the right edge, and a series of letters near the middle. Their purpose was to allow conductor to punch where the exchanged transfer was issued, for instance a transfer punched "40" was exchanged for a Crawford transfer, and thus would not be accepted on a Crawford car, eliminating a common method of making a stopover, by changing to a cross route, getting off a block later, walking back, doing your business, then boarding a car on the route you started on with the transfer from the cross line.

October 1st, 1932, transfers, and transfer rules, were completely revised. All transfers were printed on white paper and most routes had their own form, for a total of 70 different forms. A clock was added so conductors no longer had to look for time punches on separate hours and minutes strips. A map was now the main feature, divided into 15 block by 15 block squares. Time punched was now time car would pass next zone boundary to nearest next 10-minute increment instead of time car would arrive at terminal. Finally, riders would retain the same transfer for entire trip, with time allotted based on how many zones they had traveled through. This eliminated most abuses possible under the old system.

Revisions started almost immediately. January 1st, 1933, the 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 minutes numbers were made bold face so as to be easier to read.

Another issue was resolved in May of 1933, when lines depicting the routes were added in red to the map. Previously it had been hard to determine where a rider's journey had begun.

During the May 1933-October 1934, the Century of Progress World's Fair in Grant Park, special transfers were issued at the two streetcar terminals serving the Fair. They were printed on "gold" stock, and after the Fair closed leftover stock was used to print regular transfers during late 1934.

During February of 1934, the AM, PM, and Next Day "pie slices" were removed from the center of the clock and placed on the lower left, lower right, and upper left of the clock perimeter. Minute numbers around the outer rim of the clock were removed, while hour numbers were added, leaving a much more streamlined looking clock. A strange variant of this style was seen between February and June of 1934, when a majority (but not all) transfers were printed on 6½ inch paper instead of the normal 6 inch. It is believed this had to do with using a second press that had already been set up to print the longer transfers that would be needed when the CSL-CRT transfer agreement went into effect after many delays in 1935.

Soon after, in July 1934, a large dot was put into the center of the previously empty circle in the center of the clock, basically so it would look better, as it served no necessary purpose. Also, for strictly aesthetic reasons, Lake Calumet was added to the map.

After several years of stability, on May 10th, 1938, the clock was again changed, with a bold perimeter and smaller dot in center. The AM and PM "pie slices" were removed, as AM was now designated by punching two holes in the center of the clock and PM by punching one hole. The ND pie slice was moved to the lower left of the clock, where the AM had been.

Minute numbers around the perimeter came back in January of 1939, this time very small and showing every 15-minute increment. This style was one of the longest lasting, until February of 1943.

August 1942 saw a major change in the appearance of many forms. During the 1930s as new routes were started new forms were produced. New extension buses were simply added to the

existing route's forms, but entirely new services got completely new forms. Even though during this time several forms had been eliminated due to route consolidations such as Broadway and State and Division and Ban Buren and the consolidation of allied routes on the same form such as South Deering and Windsor Park and Hammond and Whiting, the total number of forms had grown slightly from 70 to 72. Wartime riding had increased to the point where the Printing Shop was having a hard time keeping up with the increasing need for more transfers, so in August 1942, a number of forms had second routes added to them, thus reducing the number of forms to 50. This did not reduce the number of transfers that needed to be printed, but did speed up the process as plates had to be changed less often.

February 1943 the E (Emergency), Depot Car, and Half Fare squares in the lower left of the transfer were replaced by "E" and "D" squares to the right of the Loop in Lake Michigan, and a "½" in a circle in the upper left corner of the transfer. This was the final change under CSL.

About a month after CTA took over, November 8, 1947, the former CSL white transfers to other surface routes and blue transfers to L routes were replaced by a single white form good on both. However, this used the former L form with the L routes shown as dashes, but with a ½ circle added as it had been on surface forms.

December 1947 saw another rationalization of route combinations on transfers. Over the previous 15 years, the number of forms had grown slightly to 52. Now 25 new plates were made, while 15 old ones were retained and 37 were eliminated, leaving a total of 40. CTA was experiencing a serious labor shortage, and coupled with a massive postwar riding drop, this move made transfer printing substantially more efficient.

February 1948, the footer was reworded, replacing "Surface Lines" with "Surface Division" and "Rapid Transit System" with "Rapid Transit Division", along with a change in the footer from upper and lower case type to all upper case.

October 1st, 1951, saw paid advertising replace transfer rules on the back of transfers, with "See Other Side" added to the bottom edge.

June 1st, 1952, saw T "Token" and 20 (cash) boxes added under the route names. Originally apparently brazed on to existing plates and oriented horizontally, by August 1952 they were oriented vertically on new base plates. This change was caused by a change in policy as to how fares initially paid with a reduced rate token would be handled when paying step-up charges versus fares initially paid with cash.

July 8th, 1953, route combinations were again reconfigured as former CMC routes were now added to the regular white transfers.

December 1953, a minor change in CTA terminology resulted in the D (Depot Car) box changed to S (Station Car).

December 1954, fare increase caused the "20" box to be replaced by "25".

July 17th, 1955, brought major changes. A new base map changed the L from dashes to dots and removed the abandoned Humboldt and Normal Park branches. The clock was moved from the base to the overprint, as was the "S" box. This was now identified as the "D" base, and the overprints were for the first time given plate numbers starting with BA through DS. Many route pairings were again changed. In addition, this same base was used for now-green L transfers printed on 6-inch-long forms replacing former blue forms printed by Ansell-Simplex.

October 28th, 1959, saw a new base (G) with "Chicago Transit Authority" under the serial number, the 0-15 South/0-15 West zone outlined in a bold line, and abandoned Kenwood and Stock Yards branches deleted. The shape of Lake Calumet was also changed.

December 1960 "bus" replaced "surface division" and "rapid transit" replaced "rapid transit division" in the footer, but for reasons unknown, the plate designation remained G until August 1961 when it changed to G1. The T and C boxes were ground off in November 1962.

As of December 27th, 1962, the overprints were again revised. The S (Station) box was replaced by "Other". Instead of only the direction punch boxes relating to the travel on that route, now all possible direction circles were on all forms, but only the relevant ones were filled in, rest being outlines. The overprints now carried numerical designations 01 through 83 instead of letters. Green L transfers printed on this base were now same length as bus transfers, 6 ½ inches. There was a plan floated to have clocks on L transfers at this time in order to eliminate time-stamping transfers at L stations, but it was never adopted, and L transfers continued to have a large blank space at the top.

1969 new G2 base appeared, showing the Kennedy, Dan Ryan, and Englewood L extensions. The footer changed from all upper case to upper and lower case. The outer end of Ogden and the upper end of the South Chicago base map lines were ground off effective February 3rd, 1972, and in this form the traditional map transfers ended their run January 6th, 1974, being replaced by the "big zone" format.

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