

TRANSIT

ADA Paratransit Policies and Procedures



TransIT Services of Frederick County
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This document is available in large print or audiotape format upon request by persons with visual or other disabilities.

TransIT MISSION STATEMENT

TransIT is a team of transportation professionals committed to providing high-quality public transportation, paratransit, and commuter services in a safe, dependable, and courteous manner. TransIT promotes mass transportation alternatives in the region and assists Frederick County citizens to select the most cost-effective and convenient transportation alternative.

THE PARATRANSIT SERVICES OPERATED BY TransIT

TransIT offers two paratransit services for persons with disabilities: TransIT-plus and ADA Paratransit. The two services have different eligibility requirements and different service characteristics (including fares, trip purpose restrictions, and advanced reservation requirements). Please refer to the TransIT-plus Policies and Procedures for more detailed information about TransIT-plus.

1. **TransIT-plus** is our countywide, shared-ride, curb-to-curb paratransit service for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. People with valid medical assistance cards who do not live near a bus route may use TransIT-plus for medical trips only. Medical trips are prioritized, and other trips are provided on a space-available basis. Passenger trips will be coordinated to serve as many people as possible and to use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.
2. **ADA Paratransit**, a component of our TransIT-plus service, is available only within Frederick City and is provided only to persons with disabilities that prevent them from using accessible fixed-route transit. ADA Paratransit service is provided during the same days and hours as our fixed-route bus services. Trip purposes are unrestricted.

ADA Paratransit

ADA Paratransit is a service provided only to individuals with disabilities who are unable to ride accessible fixed-route public bus service because of their disability. ADA Paratransit service is designed to ensure that the civil rights of these individuals are guaranteed as protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). ADA Paratransit is comparable to TransIT's fixed-route bus service in Frederick City in terms of service area, days and hours of service, fares and response time as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and subsequent rulings of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

TransIT's ADA Paratransit is a component of our TransIT-plus service. ADA Paratransit's eligibility criteria are more restrictive than those of TransIT-plus (which is available to any senior or disabled person in Frederick County), but ADA Paratransit provides a higher level of service than does TransIT-plus in order to meet fixed-route comparability standards as required under the ADA. Persons who are eligible for ADA

Paratransit are also eligible for TransIT-plus. However, persons who are eligible for TransIT-plus are not necessarily eligible for ADA Paratransit.

Passenger trips will be coordinated to serve as many people as possible and to use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.

POLICIES

General Policies

The following policies apply to all of TransIT's services, including ADA Paratransit.

1. Passengers must pay the fare upon boarding the vehicle. Exact change or valid ticket or pass is required.
2. For the comfort of all passengers, smoking, eating, drinking, chewing and using illegal substances in TransIT vehicles are prohibited.
3. When playing an audio device, use a headset and keep the volume low so that others are not disturbed. Also, be considerate of other passengers when using personal communication devices. Keep the conversation brief and your voice low.
4. Limit your conversation with the driver to questions regarding TransIT services only, so the driver can focus his attention on safe driving.
5. A driver may refuse to transport a passenger who appears to be under the influence of alcohol, illegal or dangerous substances, or whose behavior or language appears abusive, offensive, disorderly or dangerous to himself, the driver or other passengers.
6. Passengers may not carry articles onto a TransIT vehicle that cannot be held by the passenger or secured under the seat. Passengers shall not place articles in the aisle of the TransIT vehicle.
7. Strollers are permitted on TransIT vehicles only if folded. Please fold the stroller before boarding and carry your child on the bus.
8. A parent or guardian must accompany children under age 12.
9. Service animals trained to assist an individual in living independently are permitted on board TransIT vehicles. Service animals must be registered with TransIT. Pets and other animals not specifically trained to be service animals are not permitted.

The remaining policies are specific to ADA Paratransit.

Eligibility

Persons with disabilities who are unable to ride accessible fixed-route bus service because their disability prevents it are eligible for ADA Paratransit certification. Eligible individuals will fall under one of these three major categories.

1. Individuals who are unable to “navigate” to the fixed-route system. For example, someone who is blind and has not learned to ride fixed-route transit, or someone with severe cognitive disabilities who cannot learn to ride fixed-route transit.
2. Individuals who are unable to get to the bus stop, wait for a bus, or use the accessible buses. For example, someone who has extreme fatigue and can't walk the distance to the bus stop.
3. Individuals who use wheelchairs would not automatically qualify for ADA Paratransit, since the fixed-route buses are accessible. Exceptions can occur on the days when the wheelchair lift is not functioning, or if the path between the individual's home and the nearest bus stop has environmental barriers that prevent them from getting to the stop (such as sidewalks without curb cuts, sidewalks under construction, or winter weather conditions).

Both temporary and permanent conditions may qualify an individual for ADA Paratransit services.

Passengers must be certified as ADA Paratransit-eligible before ADA Paratransit service can be scheduled, with the exception of visitors who have been certified as ADA Paratransit-eligible with other fixed-route transit systems and provide proof of certification. These individuals are eligible for temporary visitor status and do not need to be recertified by TransIT unless they will be using the service more than 21 days during the calendar year.

Geographic Areas Served

ADA Paratransit is available within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of TransIT's fixed bus routes operated within the City of Frederick. A map showing our fixed routes and the areas served by ADA Paratransit will be provided upon request. Origins and destinations outside of this service area will not be served by ADA Paratransit, although they may be served by TransIT-plus on a space available basis. ADA Paratransit will provide a level of service that is comparable to the regular fixed-route bus service.

Days and Hours of Operation

The hours of operation for ADA Paratransit are Monday–Thursday, 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Friday 5:30 a.m. to 9:45 p.m., and Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. ADA Paratransit may be provided directly by TransIT or by a private operator under contract to Frederick County.

ADA Paratransit service does not operate on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. For specific dates of these holidays during the current year, please call the TransIT office at 301.600.2065.

Advanced Reservation Policy

Trip reservations, including return trips, must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day before the requested service. Reservations are accepted as much as 10 days in advance. Your trip may be scheduled up to one hour (60 minutes) earlier or later than your requested pick-up time in order to serve as many people as possible and to use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.

Late Policy

In order to provide service to as many people as possible, it is essential that all passengers be ready at their scheduled time. Passengers who are not ready for the scheduled pickup time cause the driver to fall behind schedule and inconvenience other passengers. Therefore, there is a five-minute limit to the amount of time TransIT-plus drivers will wait for a late passenger.

It is the passenger’s responsibility to be ready and waiting at their door (or curb, if they are able) by their scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger is not ready and at the door within five minutes of the scheduled pickup time, and has not called the dispatcher to reschedule or cancel the trip, the driver will notify the dispatcher and depart for the next pickup, and the late passengers will be considered “no-show.”

“No-Show” Policy

From time to time, it may be necessary for a scheduled passenger to cancel a trip for unexpected circumstances beyond their control. Last minute cancellations or “no-shows” are detrimental to the efficient and effective operations of a demand-response transportation system. They waste resources that could be used to provide transportation to others. TransIT has instituted a “no-show” policy to prevent and remedy abuse.

What Constitutes a “No-Show?”

If a passenger is unable to make his or her scheduled trip and does not call the dispatcher to cancel the trip before 4:00 p.m. the day preceding the scheduled trip, the trip will be considered a “no-show.” Passengers who are not ready by their scheduled pick-up time may also be considered a “no-show” if they are more than five minutes late; the driver may leave after waiting five minutes and contacting the dispatcher.

Consequences

A “no-show” has the following consequences:

1. First offense: written or verbal reminder
2. Second offense: warning letter
3. Third offense: suspension of service for one month and fine amounting to fares of all three no-shows
4. Fourth offense: Suspension of service until reinstated at the discretion of the Operations Manager and fine amounting to the actual cost of service.

An offense will be dropped if a subsequent offense does not occur within 45 days of the preceding offense.

Appeals Process

The passenger may appeal any of the above four actions if he or she feels a “no-show” occurred because of unexpected circumstances beyond his or her control (e.g. medical or family emergency). Written appeals should be addressed to the Assistant Director within ten (10) days of notification of the offense.

Fare Policy

The fare for an ADA Paratransit trip is \$2.50 each way.

A registered Personal Care Attendant may accompany their client at no additional charge. One other additional companion may accompany the individual with prior notice to the dispatcher for \$2.50 each way. Additional companions may be transported on a space-available basis for the same fare.

Since persons who are eligible for ADA Paratransit are also eligible for TransIT-plus, they may choose to schedule medical trips between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, under the TransIT-plus program, with 48-hour advanced request, to qualify for \$2.00 TransIT-plus medical trip fare. Please inform the dispatcher when scheduling which service you are requesting.

Passenger Assistance Policy

All TransIT drivers are trained in passenger assistance techniques and will provide passenger assistance, if requested, in boarding and disembarking the vehicle. Passenger assistance may include guiding the passenger to the vehicle, lending a steady arm for balance in boarding the vehicle, finding a seat or securing a wheelchair.

However, ADA Paratransit drivers will not provide assistance that involves bearing weight, including lifting and carrying passengers. The driver may refuse service if the passenger cannot safely travel to and from the vehicle without the driver lifting or carrying the passenger. Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling should arrange for a Personal Care Attendant to accompany and assist them. ADA Paratransit does not provide Personal Care Attendants. When service is first provided to a new passenger, a Supervisor may be present to assess assistance needs of the new passenger.

ADA Paratransit drivers will not enter passenger's homes. For the safety and protection of both drivers and passengers, it is against our policy to provide this type of assistance.

ADA Paratransit is not a delivery service. Passengers are responsible for carrying their own belongings. Packages that cannot be stowed on your lap or under the seat are not permitted.

Personal Care Attendant Policy

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help an individual with a disability meet his or her personal needs in daily living activities. Passengers needing the assistance of a PCA must indicate this on their ADA Paratransit eligibility application form. A registered PCA may accompany the ADA passenger free of charge.

Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling (beyond that which the ADA Paratransit driver can provide), including lifting, carrying, support during the ride, and behavior control, must arrange for a PCA to accompany and assist them. ADA Paratransit does not provide PCAs. It is strongly recommended that a person who requires the use of a PCA always travel with their PCA since drivers cannot provide assistance beyond that which is described in the previous section.

Policy on Portable Breathing Aids

Portable oxygen supplies and respirators are permitted on board ADA Paratransit with proper notification. Oxygen tanks must be secured so they do not move during transport. Information about the use of this equipment must be provided to the dispatcher when scheduling service.

Passenger Securement Policy

Wheelchairs

All standard wheelchairs (those measuring no more than 30 inches wide, from outside of wheels, and 40 inches long, from the back wheels to the footrests, and weighing no more than 600 pounds total combined weight of the chair and person) will be accommodated. If the total combined weight of the individual and their wheelchair exceeds 600 pounds, TransIT's ability to accommodate the wheelchair will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All wheelchairs must be secured to the vehicle in the designated area. The driver will provide assistance in securing the wheelchair.

Wheelchairs that cannot be properly secured (i.e. three-wheeled scooters) will be accommodated so long as they meet the size and weight restrictions above and fit within the securement area.

An individual using a wheelchair may transfer to a regular seat on the vehicle so long as they are able to accomplish the transfer independently or with the assistance of a Personal Care Attendant. Drivers will not lift passengers.

Seat Belts

TransIT strongly recommends that all passengers wear seatbelts in vehicles equipped with them; persons traveling in the front seat of sedans or vans are required to wear them. Persons using wheelchairs should be secured to their chairs in addition to having their wheelchairs secured to the vehicle. The driver will provide assistance in fastening seatbelts upon request.

Child Safety Seats

All children less than 6 years of age or 40 pounds in weight must be secured in a child safety seat. TransIT will provide the safety seat with advanced notice.

Lift Use Policy

TransIT strongly recommends that persons who wish to use the lift to board do so only when seated in a wheelchair. Persons who do not use wheelchairs but wish to use the lift to board or de-board the vehicle must inform the dispatcher when scheduling service. This is necessary for vehicle scheduling considerations. Also, if requested in advance, ADA Paratransit will provide a manual wheelchair for use when riding the lift.

Visitor Policy

Out-of-town visitors will be eligible for ADA Paratransit if they are eligible to use the ADA Paratransit provided by their home system. Visitors must provide proof of residence outside of Frederick County, and ADA Paratransit certification from their home system. If a visitor's home system does not provide ADA Paratransit certification, other documentation is required to justify the individual's claim to eligibility (such as a doctor's letter). Visitors will be provided only 21 days of ADA Paratransit service per calendar year. Individuals intending to use the service for more than 21 days will be required to apply for certification.

PROCEDURES

How to Apply for ADA Paratransit Certification

To register for ADA Paratransit, an application must be completed and approved by the Operations Manager. Applications are available at the TransIT office, 1040 Rocky Springs Road, Frederick, MD 21702, 301.600.2065.

The application requests information about the nature, extent, functional effect, and duration of your disability. Professional certification is also required. Your physician, caseworker, or other professional familiar with your disability and functional abilities must complete this part.

Once your completed application is submitted, the Operations Manager (TransIT's ADA coordinator) will evaluate your application, make a determination, and send you written confirmation of the decision within 21 calendar days. If you have not received a written response within 21 calendar days of submitting your application, you will be presumed eligible for services until you have been notified.

Written notification from TransIT's Operations Manager will serve as your temporary ADA Paratransit ID. You may obtain an ADA Paratransit photo ID by scheduling an appointment on photo ID days (offered periodically throughout the year). You may use your TransIT ADA Paratransit ID to qualify for visitor eligibility on ADA Paratransit services in many other cities throughout the U.S.

How to Appeal if Your Application for ADA Paratransit is Denied

If your application is denied, you will receive a letter describing why you were denied eligibility and how you can appeal the decision.

Denied applicants have 60 days to file a written appeal with the ad hoc Appeals Review Committee. The applicant may receive a hearing in-person, if desired. The Appeals Committee will have 30 days from the date of the appeal to render a decision. After 30 days, the applicant will be presumed eligible until a decision has been reached.

How to Schedule a Trip

Call the TransIT Dispatcher at **301.600.1725** between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday, at least one (1) business day before your appointment time (reservations are accepted up to 10 days in advance). You will hear the following options:

- *“If you are calling to schedule a trip or need information, please press 1.”*
Use this option, during business hours, to schedule future trips on TransIT-plus. The best time to call is between 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. To schedule an ADA trip after business hours, press 2.
- *“If you are calling to cancel or inquire about your trip for today, please press 2.”* Use this option to cancel or check on your trip for today or schedule an ADA trip after business hours.

Hearing-impaired customers can use Maryland TDD Relay System, 1.800.735.2258 to contact TransIT to schedule a trip.

We strongly recommend that you call during office hours on the business day preceding the requested trip. Please keep in mind that if you leave a voice-mail message for next-day service, you must be ready one hour (60 minutes) in advance of your requested pick-up time because the dispatcher may be unable to confirm your pick-up time before the driver arrives. Your trip may be scheduled up to one hour earlier or later than your requested pick-up time to use our available resources in the most efficient manner. Remember, the easiest way is to call the dispatcher during office hours.

What Information the Dispatcher Will Need

When you call to schedule your trip, please be prepared to give the dispatcher the following information.

1. The fact that you are scheduling an ADA Paratransit trip.
2. Your name.
3. Your daytime telephone number and a telephone number where you can be reached at least 60 minutes prior to travel time.
4. The date on which you would like to make the trip.
5. Where and when you would like to be picked up.
6. Where and when you need to be dropped off.
7. The time you wish to return, if a return trip is needed.
8. Special assistance needed or other considerations (for example, if you use a wheelchair or travel with a PCA or service animal).
9. Whether or not an additional companion will be traveling with you.

Trips will not be scheduled until complete trip information is received. Your trip may be scheduled up to one hour (60 minutes) earlier or later than your requested pick-up time

in order to serve as many people as possible and use our vehicles in the most efficient manner.

The dispatcher will schedule your trip and let you know when you should be ready to be picked up. If you leave a voice-mail message for next-day service, you must also provide a requested pick-up time and be ready one hour (60 minutes) in advance of your requested pick-up time.

Please note that you must also schedule your return trip at least one day in advance. ADA Paratransit does not provide return trips on a will-call basis.

If your pick-up or drop-off locations or travel times do not fall within the ADA Paratransit service area or days and hours of service, we will not be able to provide the trip.

How to Cancel a Trip

If you change your mind or are unable to make your scheduled trip, please let the dispatcher know as soon as possible, but at least before 4:00 p.m. the day before your scheduled trip. If you do not cancel your trip in advance, it will be considered a “no-show” (see “No Show” Policy) and could result in suspension of service.

How to Pay the Fare

Each time you board the vehicle you must pay the fare in exact change or by tickets. The fare for ADA Paratransit is \$2.50 each way. Your companion (permitted only if scheduled in advance) must also pay the \$2.50 fare. If your ADA eligibility card shows that you require a PCA, your PCA will not be charged a fare.

How to Purchase Tickets

Tickets are \$1.25 each and are sold in books of 10 for \$12.00 through the mail or in person.

By Mail

To purchase tickets by mail, send a check or money order payable to Frederick County Treasurer, along with a TransIT order form stating the number of TransIT-plus tickets requested to: (Please allow 1 – 2 weeks for delivery)

Operations Manager
TransIT Services of Frederick County
1040 Rocky Springs Road
Frederick, MD 21702

In Person

Tickets may be purchased at the TransIT office at 1040 Rocky Springs Road Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Cash or checks payable to the Frederick County Treasurer are accepted.

How to File a Compliment, Complaint or Suggestion

If you would like to recognize a driver or other member of our staff for excellent service, to file a complaint, or to make a suggestion for how we can provide you with better service, please use one of our mail-back cards supplied on the vehicle or write to:

Operations Manager
TransIT Services of Frederick County
1040 Rocky Springs Road
Frederick, MD 21702

You may also call TransIT at 301.600.2065, Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Be sure to provide your name and telephone number or address if you would like a response.

PASSENGER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The passenger has the right to:

1. Safe, comfortable, and courteous service.
2. On-time service as scheduled by the dispatcher.
3. Information presented in an appropriate format.
4. Appeal any actions that result in a denial of service.

The passenger has the responsibility to:

1. Be ready for the driver by the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Inform the dispatcher of any special assistance needs.
3. Cancel by 4:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled trip.
4. Inform TransIT of any service problems (or exemplary service).

OTHER SERVICES WHICH MAY MEET YOUR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Public Transit

TransIT operates fixed-route bus service in Frederick City and commuter shuttle service between Frederick and Emmitsburg, Thurmont, Brunswick, Jefferson, Walkersville, Spring Ridge, to the business centers along Route 85, and the Point of Rocks train station. For more information, please call 301.600.2065, or visit the TransIT office at 1040 Rocky Springs Road, Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or check the website at: www.co.frederick.md.us/transit.

Schedules are also available by mail, on board TransIT vehicles, or at the following locations: Winchester Hall, Frederick County Public Library, FCC reception desk, Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Frederick County Visitors Center, FrederickTowne Mall, Francis Scott Key Mall, and many other community service organizations.

Reduced Fare Program

Senior citizens and persons with disabilities are eligible for reduced fares on our fixed-route bus services upon presentation of a reduced fare ID card. For more information about the reduced fare program and how to get an ID card, please call 301.600.2065, or visit the TransIT office Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Travel Training

For assistance in learning to use the fixed-route system, view the travel training video, “Road to Travel Independence,” on TransIT’s website. Additional training, including the video and travel planning assistance, is available. For more information, please contact the Operations Manager at 301.600.2065.

TransIT-plus Paratransit

TransIT-plus is our county-wide demand-response shared-ride paratransit service for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and, for medical trips only, persons with valid medical assistance cards. Medical trips are prioritized, although other types of trips may be provided to senior citizens and persons with disabilities on a space-available basis. Transit-plus service is available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fares for medical trips are \$2.00 cash each way (\$1.50 if using the TransIT-plus Multi-Trip ticket) and \$3.00 each way for other trips (\$2.50 if using the Multi-Trip ticket). Eligible Medical Assistance cardholders ride at no charge.

If you are eligible for ADA Paratransit, you are also eligible for TransIT-plus. TransIT-plus costs less for medical trips, but ADA Paratransit may be more convenient for you.

For more information, please call 301.600.2065, Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.