



GREATER CLEVELAND RTA PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER HANDBOOK

*A guide for using ADA Paratransit
Service*

www.riderta.com/paratransit

REVISED
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INTRODUCTION OF PARATRANSIT SERVICE

GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ensures that nondiscriminatory accessible transportation service is available for persons with disabilities. The law contains provisions for the acquisition of accessible vehicles by public and private entities, requirements for ADA complementary paratransit service by public entities operating a fixed-route transit system, and nondiscriminatory accessible transportation service.

Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (“GCRTA”) Paratransit is a “shared-ride”, origin-to-destination service available for those who, due to a functional disability or condition, are unable to use the fixed-route system. Eligibility may be unconditional, temporary, or under certain conditions. Federal regulations define the ADA paratransit service area as being within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a local fixed route when that route is in operation.

* This Paratransit Customer Handbook may be periodically updated. The most up-to-date version may be found online at www.riderta.com or may be mailed upon request. The Paratransit Customer Handbook will be followed by all services provided by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s Paratransit Department including, but not limited to all contracted services unless stated otherwise in those contracts. GCRTA reserves the rights to alter, add to, or delete from this Paratransit Customer Handbook in order to comply with ADA, federal, state, local or company guidelines at will.

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A. Scheduling

Once you have received your ADA Paratransit Service Card, you are registered to use paratransit services and can begin to schedule rides.

Trips may be scheduled up to three days in advance. Paratransit reservations should be made at least one (1) day in advance of the day you need your trip for better scheduling opportunities.

To schedule by appointment time;

Tell the reservationist the time you would like to be at your destination or appointment. You will be given a pick-up window that will get you to your destination by your appointment time.

To schedule by pick-up time;

Tell the reservationist the earliest time you will be ready for pick-up. You will be given a window that starts within one hour of your requested time.

For example, if you are off work at 1:00pm, you may receive a window of 1:00 - 1:30 (you may consider time to put on a coat or use an elevator and request a window of 1:05-1:35). Please note that you may be on the bus for up to 90 minutes and you are required to be at your next destination for at least 30 minutes. As a result, any subsequent trips will not be scheduled for 2 hours after the end of the pick-up window. In this example, the next pick-up window cannot start until 3:30.

To schedule, cancel or review trips online:

Schedule online at <http://www.paratransit.gcrtc.org/>. You will need your Client ID Number and password. We recommend saving this in your favorites.

To schedule by phone with a live reservationist:

Call 216-621-9500 and follow the prompts to schedule a ride. If a reservationist is not immediately available, you may hold or enter a telephone number for a return call. Calls will be returned in the order they were received.

To schedule, cancel or review trips by phone with the automated system:

Call 216-621-9500 and follow the prompts to schedule. Have your Client ID Number and password ready.

B. Wait Time

Passengers are expected to be ready and waiting at the beginning of the pick-up window. Passengers are strongly encouraged to wait for their ride at the front door of their house or in the lobby of a complex, apartment building or office, with a clear view of where the bus will arrive. It is recommended that you schedule your pick-up window to begin once you are completely ready for pick up. Consider time required for factors such as clocking out, collecting belongings, waiting for an elevator, and walking to the building entrance.

Operators are required to wait only five (5) minutes for a passenger after arriving within the 30-minute pick-up window. The “No-Show” provisions described in Section D below will take effect if the passenger does not utilize the scheduled ride when the Operator arrives within the pick-up window. The “No-Show” provisions would not take effect if an Operator arrives after the pick-up window ends.

C. No Show, Late Cancel, and Cancel at the Door

GCRTA has established an administrative review process to suspend (see **Section Q**), for a reasonable period of time, the provision of complementary paratransit service to ADA eligible individuals who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips.

Advance Cancel and Same Day Cancel

Passengers are encouraged to cancel a trip with as much advance notice as possible. A trip canceled before the day of the scheduled ride is considered an “Advance Cancel”. A “Same Day Cancel” is more than 60 minutes prior to the start of a pick-up window. 0 points will be assessed for an “Advance Cancel” or “Same Day Cancel”.

No-Shows

A no-show is any trip scheduled but not taken due to passenger error or circumstance. 2 points will be assessed.

Late Cancel

Trips canceled within 60 minutes prior to the start of the pick-up window. 1 point will be assessed.

Cancel at the Door

Trips canceled after the window has started or after the bus has arrived at the pickup point within the 30 minute pick-up window is considered a Cancel at the Door. 2 points will be assessed.

Ridership will be reviewed on a monthly basis for No Shows, Late Cancells, and Cancells at the Door (defined as absence rate). Passengers with 2 or more points and whose absence rate exceeds 7%, will be penalized. The following are the progressive levels of penalty for flagged months within a 6 month period:

If the most recent month evaluated is flagged as a penalty, the chart below defines which level the passenger will receive.

- 1 Month of last six months – Educational Letter
- 2 Months of last six months – Warning Letter
- 3 Months of last six months – 3 Consecutive Day Suspension
- 4 Months of last six months – 7 Consecutive Day Suspension
- 5 Months of last six months – 15 Consecutive Day Suspension
- 6 Months of last six months – 30 Consecutive Day Suspension

D. Bags and Items

Passengers are limited to four carry-on bags or packages not to exceed a total of 50 pounds. If your carry-on bags or packages exceed the maximum quantity or weight, you and your items may not be transported. Operators cannot assist passengers with large items weighing more than 25 pounds such as a television or furniture.

E. Mobility Devices, Ramps, Curbs, and Steps

Vehicles will accommodate wheelchairs and mobility aids that measure up to 33 ½ (33.5) inches wide, 48 inches long, and weigh 800 pounds or less when occupied.

Be sure ramps and walkways at your home are clear of ice, snow or other debris, so operators can safely assist you. If your bus operator feels the area is unsafe, assistance may not be provided.

F. Seatbelts

All passengers are strongly encouraged to use a lap belt and shoulder harness if one is available.

G. Service Animals

GCRTA allows service animals to ride in accordance with ADA law. The ADA defines a service animal as any animal trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform for themselves. "Seeing eye dogs" are one type of service animal, used by some individuals who are visually impaired.

The care or supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of the owner. The passenger and the service animal may be asked to exit the vehicle if the service animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

H. Fares

With your valid paratransit card, paratransit "door-to-door" service currently costs \$2.75 each way. Fixed-route bus and rail service are \$1.25 for ADA-eligible persons. Personal Care Attendants, as defined by the ADA, travel free on Paratransit ONLY and pay applicable fares on Fixed-Route bus and Rail. Discounted fare cards may not be used for paratransit service.

I. Travel Time

Expect your maximum on-board time to be similar to a comparable trip taken on GCRTA's fixed-route service, to include any walking, waiting, and transfers. Your onboard travel time may also vary depending on the travel distance, demand, traffic, weather, and construction.

J. Minimum Stay Time

Customers are required to stay at any location for a minimum of 30 minutes.

K. Unattended Customers

Customers determined as unable to be left unattended (based on age, cognitive limitations or special request of the responsible party) may schedule rides and ride unattended; however, arrangements must be made to have a responsible party meet the Paratransit vehicle at each location. A customer or their legal guardian must request a reasonable modification to be determined as unable to be left unattended. To submit a request, please call GCRTA at 216-356-3085.

The driver will only wait five minutes for the responsible party to meet the Paratransit vehicle. If no responsibility party arrives, the driver will notify GCRTA and continue on their route with the passenger still on board. GCRTA will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer is not met by the end of the route, they will be returned to the bus garage. The customer will not be left unattended and the police will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party. Customers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination may be subject to suspension of services.

L. Passenger Assistance

You may ask an operator to assist you to and from the vehicle to the door (or lobby for apartment buildings) of your residence or to the first point of reception for a public building. Operators may not enter a residence at any time. Further information may be subject to **Section O**.

M. Personal Care Attendants and Companions

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is defined by the ADA as someone who provides the assistance in activities of daily living for a passenger. One (1) PCA is allowed to ride with the passenger if the eligibility determines it necessary. If the PCA is not authorized the person accompanying the customer is considered a companion. A maximum of one (1) PCA and one (1) Companion are permitted on any trip.

All ADA passengers are permitted one companion rider to accompany them at the current ADA fare. This companion must be made known at the time of scheduling the trip so that the appropriate vehicle space is scheduled.

N. Reasonable Modifications

In determining whether to grant a requested modification, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority ("GCRTA") will be guided by the provisions of the United States Department of Transportation regulations and guidance provided in Appendix E of Title 49 CFR Part 37.

Requests for reasonable modifications will be considered as follows:

- 1) A passenger requesting a reasonable modification will be required to describe what the passenger believes is needed in order to use GCRTA's transportation service(s). The passenger is not required to use the term "reasonable modification" when making a request. The request for modification can be for any of the transportation services provided by GCRTA.
- 2) The reasonable modification provisions apply to individuals who are disabled under the ADA.
- 3) GCRTA has designated the following individual to be responsible for handling requests for modification and procedures pertaining to the appeals of such decisions:

Senior Manager of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity
1240 W 6th St
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-356-3085
ADA-Civilrights@gcrt.org

- 4) Whenever possible, the passenger should make requests for modification and allow GCRTA an opportunity to determine whether the request will be granted in advance. Requests do not need to be in writing.
 - a. Requests made during the ADA eligibility process.
 - i. Requests made through eligibility will have determinations processed along with the eligibility determinations within 21 days for new applicants and with the renewal determination for requests made during the recertification process.
 - b. Requests may be made while scheduling trips.
 - c. Requests may be made by completing the Request for Reasonable Modification Form available for download on the website or by request.
- 5) When requests for reasonable modification cannot be practicably made and determined in advance, a GCRTA staff member will make a timely determination so long as such actions do not result in a direct threat or fundamental alteration of services.
- 6) If the request occurs at the time of service, GCRTA and/or a staff member may make a determination. Such determinations are made on a non-precedent setting basis based upon the facts and circumstances unique to that request.
- 7) Requests for modifications of policies and practices can be denied due to one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of the transportation services, programs or activities;

- b. Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
 - c. Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use the services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose;
 - d. Request creates an undue financial and administrative burden.
- 8) If an initial request for modification is denied, GCRTA will to the fullest extent possible, take any other actions and/or find a suitable alternative to ensure that the passenger with a disability receives the services provided.
- 9) If a request for reasonable modification is denied, the passenger may file an appeal. GCRTA has established a process for investigating and resolving appeals. A form is available on our website or by request and includes the procedures by which GCRTA processes and responds to appeals.

O. Abusive & Disruptive Behavior

Abusive or disruptive behavior (including language) directed towards GCRTA employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse or a disruption of service will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. GCRTA reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well-being of employees and/or passengers is compromised or when the behavior results in a disruption of GCRTA's operations.

P. Contraband and Hazardous Materials

Contraband (including illegal drugs) and hazardous materials are prohibited on all GCRTA vehicles. Violators may be prosecuted and suspended from service.

Q. Suspensions

A rider may utilize the administrative review and appeal processes outlined below when RTA denies or suspends service for violating any of the provisions contained in the Greater Cleveland RTA Paratransit Customer Handbook.

Administrative Review process is the first step and will be conducted as follows:

- (1) Before suspending service, the following administrative review process shall occur:
 - (i) Notify the customer in writing that GCRTA proposes to suspend service to include the length and reason for the suspension.
 - (ii) Provide the customer an opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments;
 - (iii) Provide the customer with notification of the decision and the reasons for it.
- (2) Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond their control (including, but not limited to, trips which are missed due to Operator error) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists.

- (3) The appeals process following an administrative review is available to an individual on whom suspensions have been imposed under the “No-Show and Late Cancel” provisions listed in **Section C**.

The suspension is delayed pending the outcome of the appeal.

Appeal Process – available for customers that have a pending suspension:

1. Before filing an appeal, customers should first contact ADA-suspension@gcrta.org or 1-700-431-0104 to request an administrative review of the infraction by the manager of paratransit scheduling within 10 days of the date on the letter. Notification shall be made to the appellant within 10 days.
2. If the suspension resulting from the infraction(s) is upheld, a request may be made within 30 days of the date of the original suspension letter to:
Senior Manager of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity
1240 W 6th St
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-356-3085
ADA-Civilrights@gcrta.org
3. Appeals will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee that convenes once per month. The panel is comprised of two RTA staff members and a volunteer from the ADA Committee of the Citizens Advisory Board.
4. The panel shall provide notification to the appellant of the final decision.

R. Reapplication

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant, or responsible party representing the applicant, to apply or reapply for ADA privileges in a sufficient amount of time to complete the application process. Reapplications will be accepted 90 days prior to expiration date. Please, remember to allow 30 to 60 days for processing to avoid disruption of service. All forms and assessments must be completed fully. Expiration dates are clearly noted on Eligibility Letters.