

Moving People

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Welcome to Moving People

This is a special issue of *Moving People*, RTA's newsletter for Paratransit customers. It contains vital information about functional testing, which will be a new part of the Paratransit application process.

If you prefer receiving the newsletter in a different format (Braille, cassette tape, larger type or electronically), please let us know. Mail your preference to: RTA Marketing Department, 1240 W. Sixth St., Cleveland, OH 44113, or send e-mail to: jmasek@gcrt.org.



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
1240 West 6th Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1331

Functional testing: Great news for Cleveland's disabled community

After several years of serious study, RTA Trustees have approved a resolution to establish a functional testing component as part of RTA's Paratransit application process.

Actual testing by NovaCare Rehabilitation of Ohio is expected to start within 90 days.

This is great news for disabled persons throughout Cuyahoga County. Functional testing will increase access to our Paratransit service, by ensuring that the service will be there for those who truly need it.

In the past, it was fairly easy to obtain a Paratransit pass. All a person had to do was provide signed form from a health-care provider.

Now, when a customer seeks to obtain a



RTA Board member Jesse Anderson tries out the new wheelchair lift at Shaker Square. The rail station is now ADA-compliant.



***A message from
Joe Calabrese,
CEO & General Manager***

Paratransit pass, RTA will have the option of sending that person in for functional testing, to determine if there is truly a need.

If a person demonstrates the mental and physical ability to use public transit, they will be directed to our fixed-route service.

RTA estimates that only about 40 percent of new applicants will be tested, as a determination will be made that some 60 percent will automatically qualify.

During the next three years, some persons coming in for renewals may also be tested. Each renewal is good for three years.

Functional testing has been used extensively in other major cities. Some agencies have seen a drop in the number of applicants, simply because applicants know that they may have the ability to use regular fixed-route service on the public transit system.

The bottom line: By accurately determining the riding capabilities of the prospective Paratransit riders, we can better allocate our resources to serve those who truly need it.

Demand for this door-to-door service rises each year, and RTA needs to ensure the service will continue to operate efficiently.

How will functional testing affect you?

Do all Paratransit applicants need to undergo functional testing?

No. RTA estimates that 60-65 percent of Paratransit applicants will not be required to complete a functional assessment. The assessment option will only be exercised when it's felt that the information on the customer's application is insufficient to make an eligibility determination.

Who will conduct the assessments?



RTA has contracted NovaCare Rehabilitation of Ohio to provide testing services. NovaCare is a national firm that has corporate experience providing similar services to transit authorities in Las Vegas and San Jose. NovaCare has a number of offices locally that provide effective market coverage. Licensed staff with experience in functional testing will conduct the assessments.

If I'm tested once, could I be referred to functional testing again when it was time to renew my certification?

Although possible... it's not likely. Once you have successfully completed a functional assessment, we would most likely not request you take another one every three years.

How is the functional test scheduled?

RTA staff will work with you to select a time and place that best fits your schedule. NovaCare has numerous sites throughout Greater Cleveland where assessments will be provided. Offices will be open 40 hours a week, including 8 hours on

Saturday, offering you greater flexibility in scheduling your assessment.

How do I get to the assessment site?

You are free to coordinate your own transportation to the assessment site. When requested, RTA will provide Paratransit service.

What is included in a functional assessment?

The functional test to be used by RTA is one that was developed by the Federal Transportation Administration in conjunction with Easter Seals. The test is comprised of a series of exercises that try to replicate activities associated with riding a bus or train. These include:

- traveling over various surfaces.
- paying a fare.
- differentiating service types and stops.
- the ability to stand/balance at a bus stop as well as on a moving vehicle.
- navigating around architectural barriers, such as curbs, curb cuts and intersections.

Will the assessment cost me anything?

No. Although we recognize that "time is money", the cost of the assessment itself is borne by RTA.

Is this testing being used in other cities?

Yes. Functional testing has proven to be a valuable tool in markets across the country. Large (Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Chicago), mid-size (Detroit, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh) and smaller communities (Akron, Louisville, Dayton) have successfully incorporated functional testing into their certification process.

Help us make Paratransit work for you

The Paratransit staff is excited about the upcoming functional testing, because it will enable us to better serve disabled persons.

RTA is constantly seeking ways to better serve you. Here are ways that you can help make Paratransit more efficient for everyone.

1. Schedule more trips on-line.

RTA offers Paratransit customers a flexible on-line scheduling service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Using this service frees up our schedulers to help those who must use the telephone to schedule trips.

Just follow this path: www.rideRTA.com > Riding Options > Paratransit online

There, you can schedule new trips, review trips you have scheduled, and cancel trips.

The first time you visit this page, you will be asked for your user name and password. Just type your pass number into both areas. After you log in, you can reset both your user name and password.

2. Schedule more trips using our automated phone line.

Call the RTA Answerline, 216-621-9500. Select either English or Spanish. Press #3 for Paratransit trips and services. Follow the prompts to schedule a new trip, review trips you have already made, or cancel a trip. You will need the same user ID and password that you have for the on-line scheduling.

3. Call later in the day to schedule a trip.

Our schedulers are busiest at 8:30 a.m., when the call center first opens. If you can wait and call later in the day, you will find a shorter wait time. By revising the way we handle calls, we have reduced waiting time more than 200



*A message from
Michael Hargrove,
Paratransit Director*

percent. With your help, we can reduce that even further.

4. Have information ready before you call.

Before you call a scheduler, have your client ID number, exact times and addresses ready. The quicker we can serve you, the quicker we can move on to serve others and keep the wait time down for all callers. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

5. Cancel trips early.

As soon as you realize that a trip needs to be canceled, go on-line or call us. There are 13,000 disabled persons registered to use Paratransit service, so there is always someone waiting to use that time slot.

6. Used fixed-route service when possible.

If you are ADA-certified, you can ride free on any of the more than 100 bus and rail fixed routes that RTA offers. All buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts, and most key rail stations are ADA-compliant.

RTA has dedicated 170 Paratransit staff, 77 public vehicles and 22 contractor vehicles to provide more than 1,700 trips each weekday, and more than 450,000 trips annually. The numbers rise each year.

We are here to serve you. Please help us in that effort.