

# Paratransit Service

Helping people with  
disabilities get more out  
of RTA.





## **GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

RTA has dedicated  
185 Paratransit staff,  
80 public vehicles and  
83 contractor vehicles  
to provide more than  
1,800 trips each weekday,  
and more than 700,000  
trips annually.

The numbers rise  
each year!

# PARATRANSIT SERVICE, AN INTRODUCTION

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into federal law in 1990. The ADA protects the rights of all people, without regard to their physical and/or cognitive disabilities. The ADA states that all individuals have a right to use available public transportation. The ADA requires that individuals not able to independently ride public buses be provided with an equivalent, corresponding service for their transportation needs within the established service area.

This corresponding service is called Paratransit. Paratransit service is provided to persons who, because of their disabilities, are unable to independently travel on the public transit system.

Tens of thousands of people choose RTA as a convenient, economical way to get around the Greater Cleveland area. RTA is proud to count so many people with disabilities among its riders. All over town, you will find RTA buses with the universal "wheelchair symbol" on the front, complete with wheelchair lifts or ramps to help people to board buses safely and easily.

RTA was one of the first transit authorities in the nation to operate a bus fleet that is totally accessible.

RTA also offers ADA-accessible Rapid Transit stations, to help passengers safely ride RTA trains.

. Some riders may need more assistance than the standard RTA service offers. These riders may be eligible for ADA certification to travel on specially equipped Paratransit vehicles.



# PARATRANSIT CERTIFICATION PROCESS

## Are you eligible for ADA certification?

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To determine if you qualify for Paratransit service, simply answer these questions:

1. Are you unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment, to travel on the public transit system without the assistance of another?
2. Do you need a wheelchair lift or similar device to board the vehicle, but one is not available at the Rapid Transit station where you wish to board?
3. Do you have an impairment-related condition that prevents you from traveling to or from a station or stop on the public transit system?

If you responded "yes" to any of these questions, you may be eligible for RTA's Paratransit service, as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Service eligibility

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As a Paratransit - certified customer, you will be provided "door-to-door" travel from your home to a destination within a five-mile radius.

Service beyond this five-mile radius may be available, if there is a standard RTA route during the desired time and date, with stops within 3/4 of a mile from your places of pickup and drop-off.

## Obtaining an application

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- Go to RTA's Web site, [www.rideRTA.com](http://www.rideRTA.com), and click on the blue wheelchair icon.
- Call **216-566-5124**, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. If you are hearing-impaired, call **216-781-4271 (TTY)**. An application will be mailed to you.
- Feel free to call these numbers if you need assistance completing the application.
- Go to RTA's Main Office, 1240 West Sixth Street, in the Warehouse District. Two downtown trolley routes provide free service to this location.
- Applications are also available in accessible formats upon request.

## Completing the application

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- Please complete pages 1-11. A medical professional must fill out pages 14-18.
- Mail the application to:  
RTA-ADA Eligibility  
1240 West Sixth Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1331

- Fill out all parts of the application. If the application is not completely filled out, it will be returned to you.
- After your application is received, an RTA employee may call you to clarify certain parts of your application. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

## Functional testing

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When your application is complete, an RTA employee will review it to determine the next step.

- If it is clear that you qualify for Paratransit service under federal ADA guidelines, the RTA employee will approve the application and notify you in writing. The letter will include instructions on how to pick up your Paratransit ID card.
- If it is NOT clear that you qualify for Paratransit service, the RTA employee will call you to schedule a functional test to determine your eligibility for Paratransit service.

About 40 percent of all Paratransit applicants are required to take a functional test. If you need to schedule Paratransit service to reach the functional testing location, tell the RTA employee when you are called.

A trained professional conducts each functional test. It starts with a 10-15 minute interview. The entire test should be completed within one hour. The purpose of the test is to determine if you

have the physical and cognitive ability to ride fixed-route RTA service.

If you miss your functional test appointment, the application process will not continue. You will have to re-apply.

After the functional test is complete, the testing agency will make one of three possible recommendations to RTA.

- You qualify for the Fixed-Route Disability Fare Program
- You qualify for Travel Training
- You will be certified for Paratransit service

Based on the testing agency's recommendation, RTA will make a determination. You will be notified of your ADA eligibility status within 21 working days from the date that RTA received your completed application.

If RTA fails to notify you within 21 days, you will be eligible to ride Paratransit until a decision is made.

## Appealing the Decision

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If you disagree with RTA's decision, you have 60 days to write a letter notifying RTA that you plan to appeal.

See the **Paratransit Appeals Process** section for more details.

# USING PARATRANSIT SERVICE

## Getting started

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After you receive your letter describing the approved service, bring the letter and a photo ID card to the ADA Office on the first floor of RTA's Main Office Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, to receive your ADA identification card.

You can begin using RTA's call-ahead system to request Paratransit service, **after receiving your ID card.**

## Affordable fares

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With your valid ID 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 full price on Fixed-Route bus and Rail. Please note that Paratransit riders may not use discounted fare cards for paratransit service.

## Arranging your travel

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Once you are certified for Paratransit service and have your ID card you can schedule your trips in several ways;

**1. Call 216-621-9500.**

- Select either English or Spanish.
- Press "3" for Paratransit trips and services.
- Select "2" for the scheduling office.

- Hearing-impaired persons can call **216-781-4757 (TTY)** to schedule service.

RTA reservation operators handle trip requests seven days a week, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

If you have a computer, consider using RTA's flexible on-line scheduling service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. *This frees up staff to help those who must use the telephone to schedule trips.*

## Other Options to Schedule Your Trips:

**1. Go to [paratransit.gcrt.org](http://paratransit.gcrt.org)**

RTA's flexible on-line scheduling service. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Using [paratransit.gcrt.org](http://paratransit.gcrt.org)** you can schedule your frequent trips performed, review trips you have already scheduled, and cancel trips.

The first time you visit this page, you will be asked for your user name and password. Type your Paratransit passenger number into both data fields. After you log in, reset both your user name and password.

## 2. RTA's Interactive Voice Response, or IVR.

To use the IVR: **Call the RTAnswerline** at; 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. Use the same user ID and password that you have for on-line scheduling.

## 3. Scheduling by E-mail

The e-mail address:

[Paratransit@gcrtta.org](mailto:Paratransit@gcrtta.org)

Trip requests using e-mail must be received no later than **48 hours** prior to the requested trip time.

Requests can be made no earlier than seven (7) days before the trip request date. (Monday/Monday, Tuesday/Tuesday, etc.)

Customers using e-mail to schedule their trips will be confirmed via e-mail or contacted via telephone, if the requested time is not available.

**E-mail trip requests will not be accepted for same day or next day's service.**

[Paratransit@gcrtta.org](mailto:Paratransit@gcrtta.org)

May not be used to cancel or modify previously scheduled trips.

Trip cancellations must be made by:

- A. Calling our trip cancellation mailbox at 216-356-3702.
- B. Calling Dispatch at 216-566-5244

Unexpected delays may arise from traffic conditions, inclement weather and stops required for other passengers.

RTA requires that you give at least 60 minutes notice for cancellations.

## Calling to schedule a trip? Please remember:

- Reservation Operators are busiest at 8:30 a.m., 11:30am and 3:30pm, If you call not close to the times mentioned, your wait time may be shorter.
- Have your identification number on your ADA card ready.
- Have the address of **both** your pickup and drop-off points. Tell the Reservation Operators what entrance you want to be picked up at. When appropriate, name buildings or landmarks.
- Have the day of the week, month, date and times of pickup and drop-off ready. Reservations can be made up to seven days in advance.
- Trips may be requested by either pickup time or by drop-off time.  
**Paratransit requires a minimum stay of one hour after a drop-off at any destination. This does not include travel time.**
- When reserving a return trip from a medical appointment, remember that medical appointments are rarely completed on time. Please allow additional time for your requested return pick-up time.
- Let the reservationist know if someone will be traveling with you. Unless they are a Personal Care Attendant, guests are required to pay a fare.

- The reservationist will arrange your trip request while you are on the phone, and will give you a window of time for your pickup. *You must be present on the phone for the trip to be valid.*

## Tips for Smooth Travel

- Paratransit trips are scheduled with 30 minute windows. Consist of 10 minutes before your requested time and 20 minutes after, so please be ready at the beginning of your window. For example, if you requested a 1:30 p.m. pickup, the driver may come as early at 1:20 p.m., or as late as 1:50 p.m. However, in order to accommodate all scheduled riders, the time of your window may vary. Your scheduler will give you the window of time for your pick-up when you make your trip reservation.
- If you need to arrive by a definite time, please request your trip be scheduled by drop-off time.
- When your vehicle arrives, you are **required** to show your ADA ID Card to operator and pay your fare.
- Eating, drinking and smoking are **prohibited** in all RTA vehicles and facilities.
- If your vehicle arrives within your pickup window and you are unavailable for more than five minutes, the driver must continue on. If your pickup point is your home, the vehicle will not return for you.



- To minimize delays, riders are limited to four carry-on packages weighing no more than 50 total pounds.
- Be aware of the opening and closing times of your destination to avoid waiting outside. If your destination is closed at the time you arrive, the Paratransit driver cannot wait with you until facility opens.
- Wait where you can see the bus arrive, or where the driver can see you. Drivers are not allowed to enter your home or beyond the common waiting area at any location.
- RTA will make every attempt to accommodate standard wheelchairs, scooters and similar devices. If your device exceeds standard regulations, RTA may not be able to provide Paratransit service.
- Paratransit drivers will secure all mobility devices.
- Paratransit vehicles are equipped with seat belts for passengers. All riders are asked to use the seat belts.

*Note: Unexpected delays may arise from traffic conditions, inclement weather and stops required for other passengers.*

## **Using fixed-route service**

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All buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps, and most key rail stations are ADA-compliant.

## **Paratransit service limits**

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RTA's goal is to accommodate all Paratransit riders. However, drivers are not allowed to:

- Lift you in and out of wheelchairs or scooters. You must provide your own Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or escort for assistance. A PCA can ride free (Paratransit only). If you use a wheelchair, you must have a safe ramp or be at ground level to board RTA vehicles.
- Assist you on unsafe mobility ramps.
- Clear snow, ice or other objects from your steps, driveway or walkway.
- Lock or unlock house doors.
- Load or unload personal items.

## **How to cancel a trip**

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As soon as you realize that a trip needs to be canceled, please call the cancellation hot-line;

**1. 216-356-3702**

**Leave your ID Number, Date, Address and time(s) of your trip(s). If canceling one part of trip, please specify "ONE WAY ONLY".**

There are over 16,000 disabled persons registered to use Paratransit service. Please be considerate of your fellow Paratransit customers.

Whenever possible, call to cancel 24 hours or greater before your scheduled trip, so RTA can schedule

other passengers.

If a 24-hour notice is not possible, RTA requires that you give at least 60 minutes notice for cancellations.

# PARATRANSIT RULES AND POLICIES

## Paratransit Customer Policies

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RTA's Paratransit service is committed to providing safe, reliable, clean, courteous public transportation to our customers. To ensure this level of service, your cooperation and support is critical. It is for this reason that RTA has adopted these policies.

## Customer Behavior Policy

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Ensuring the safety of our customers and employees remains our top priority. Any action taken that jeopardizes the safety of our riders and staff will not be tolerated. Threats, acts of violence, general harassment or sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. These include any physical or verbal action (profanity) that endangers, harms or injures another rider or RTA employee.

Any act of violence or abusive behavior will result in the immediate suspension of service.

## No-show policy

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When a Paratransit customer does not show up for his/her scheduled trip, or cancels a trip with little advance notice, other Paratransit customers' service may be adversely affected.

Customers are expected to be ready for Paratransit trips at the beginning of the 30 minute pickup window.

Due to the uncertainty of scheduling, you must remain available for pickup for the entire 30-minute period.

If you are either not available, not ready, or refuse to take a scheduled trip within the 30-minute pickup window, you will be considered a "No-Show" for that trip.

Remember, the Paratransit vehicle is required to wait only 5 minutes for you when arriving within the 30-minute pickup window. That's why it is critical for you to be ready for the trip when the vehicle arrives.

If your Paratransit vehicle fails to arrive within the 30-minute pickup window, you should contact the Paratransit Dispatch at 216-566-5244.

## **Late cancellation policy**

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There may be occasions when a scheduled Paratransit trip needs to be canceled. It's important that you notify Paratransit at least 60 minutes prior to your scheduled pickup. This may allow RTA to reroute the assigned vehicle to provide service to another Paratransit customer.

If you fail to call at least 60 minutes before your scheduled trip, you will be charged with a "Late Cancellation."

## **Identification Policy**

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Customers must show their ADA ID card before each trip. If you fail to do so, you will be subject to the "No-Show / Late cancellation penalties. The "No-Show of ID" will be noted in your file and should be subject to suspension, if there are too many infractions.

## **Warning and suspension process**

After a minimum of 10 booked trips, a warning letter will be issued when the number of no-shows/late cancellations exceeds three (3), or 15% of the booked trips in a 30 day period.

Should the number of no-show/late cancellations exceed four (4), or 20% in a 30 day period and a warning letter has already been issued, the rider will be subject to a 7 day suspension of service beginning 30 days from the date of the suspension letter.

Subsequent violations (over a one year period since first suspension) will result in the following suspensions;

- Second violation 14 day suspension
- Third violation 21 day suspension

- ☒ Fourth violation 30 day suspension

The no-show threshold will be reset following each suspension.

## **PARATRANSIT APPEALS PROCESS**

### **Appealing Suspensions**

When a Rider receives a notification of a suspension, the Rider may appeal the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving the notification. RTA has established an appeals procedure for persons who have received suspension notices and for applications for Paratransit eligibility that have been denied.

You may file an appeal when RTA denies Paratransit service for any of the following reasons:

- Denial of eligibility
- Suspension resulting from excessive no-shows or late cancellations
- Suspension for disruptive behavior

Riders will receive written notification, from RTA of a decision to deny eligibility status or to suspend service.

Requests to appeal a denial of eligibility must be received within 60 days of the date of the eligibility denial letter.

Requests to appeal a suspension must be sent in writing and received within 60 calendar days of the date of the notice of suspension letter and mailed to the ADA Administrative Appeals Committee at the following address:

Senior Manager, EEO & ADA Programs  
Attn: ADA Appeal Request  
RTA Office of Equal Opportunity,  
1240 West Sixth Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Once the request for an appeal is received, it will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee that convenes once a month. The Appeals Committee consists of two RTA staff members, and a volunteer from the ADA Committee of the Citizens Advisory Board. The

Appeals Committee will issue a final written decision within 30 days of the appeal hearing. The decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

RTA is not required to provide service to individuals who are pursuing an eligibility appeal. However, if the Appeals Committee has not made a decision within 30 days after the hearing, temporary service will be provided. This temporary service will continue until a decision on the appeal is reached.

If you request an appeal, you will be notified in writing of the time, date and location of the appeal hearing. You are encouraged to attend the appeal hearing, although attendance is not mandatory. If you cannot attend your hearing, you may request a telephone interview or have another person(s) represent you at the hearing. If you or your designated representative is not present at the appeal hearing, the Appeals Committee decision will be based on the documentation submitted. All copies of the appellants' application and all supporting materials used in the appeals process will remain confidential.

Upon appeal for a No-Show or Cancellation suspension, Paratransit service will be provided pending the appeal; suspension of service will not begin until the appeals process is complete. If a decision is not made within 30 days of the completion of the appeal hearing, you will be granted service until a final decision has been reached.

If you have questions about your right to appeal, call the RTA ADA Eligibility Service Center.

Voice: (216) 566-5124; TDD for the hearing impaired: (216) 781-4757

## Questions about appeals

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If you have questions about your right to appeal, call the RTA ADA Eligibility Service Center at;

(216) 566-5124  
(216) 350-5284 (fax)

Or Appeals Department  
216-356-3085

Our TDD for the hearing impaired is (216) 781-4757.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For an ADA application, call:

- 216-566-5124 or (216) 350-5284 (fax)
- 216-781-4757 (TDD)

### **To schedule Paratransit services after you have received your ADA ID card:**

- Go to <http://www.paratransitgcrta.org>
- Call 216-621-9500 or
- Call 216-781-6148 (TDD)

If your vehicle has not arrived at the end of your scheduled window of time, call:

### **Paratransit Dispatch:**

216-566-5244, option #4

### **To Cancel a Paratransit Trip:**

216-356-3702

For general questions about RTA Service call;

RTAnswerline:  
216-621-9500

### **On-line information:**

Go to [www.rideRTA.com](http://www.rideRTA.com)

Go to [www.pاراتransit.gcrta.org](http://www.pاراتransit.gcrta.org)