

MILFORD TRANSIT DISTRICT

(MTD)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

VAN SERVICE

HANDBOOK

“RIDE THE WAVE”



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WHAT IS THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT?

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) stated national goals are to guarantee that persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity, a chance to fully participate in society, are able to live independently and can be economically self-sufficient.

The ADA has five sections or Titles. An important part of Title II addresses transportation provided by public systems. In general, the law prohibits public transit systems from denying individuals with disabilities the opportunity to use public transportation services if the individuals are capable of using the system. It also prohibits public entities from providing services which discriminate against persons with disabilities. Specific actions must be taken by public transit agencies to avoid discrimination. For example, the law requires that:

1. All newly purchased or leased vehicles used in fixed-route service must be accessible to persons with disabilities, meaning they must be equipped with a wheelchair lift.
2. Public agencies which provide fixed-route public transportation services also must offer similar paratransit services to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed-route system.
3. New facilities must be accessible.
4. Alterations to facilities must include features to make them accessible.

HOW DOES THE ADA AFFECT MILFORD TRANSIT'S EXISTING SERVICES?

MTD shall provide complementary paratransit services to individuals with disabilities that are similar to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed-route system. In MTD's case, providing paratransit service that is comparable to MTD's fixed-route service has resulted in an expansion of paratransit service hours to include longer service hours on weekdays and the addition of service on weekend evenings, Saturdays and Sundays for those persons who are certified as being ADA eligible.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR COMPLEMENTARY ADA SERVICE?

ADA complementary paratransit service must be provided to all passengers who are deemed ADA eligible through MTD's certification process.

The following three general categories of persons with disabilities will be certified as being "ADA eligible".

1. Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding device to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle in the system. Included in this category are individuals with mental or visual impairments who cannot navigate the system.

2. Persons who cannot use vehicles without lifts or accommodations. These persons are eligible for paratransit service if accessible fixed route vehicles are not available on bus routes in which they need to travel when they need to travel. MTD's "ADA Van Service" eliminates any eligibility in this category because it enables the scheduling of an accessible fixed route vehicle on any route in the MTD system by calling (203)-874-4507.

3. Persons with specific impairment-related conditions who cannot travel to a boarding location or from a disembarking location to their final destination. The condition must prevent the person from using the fixed-route system. Conditions that make getting to the bus stop more difficult do not grant eligibility. In addition, architectural barriers (such as no curb cuts) not under the control of MTD, and environmental barriers (such as distance, terrain, and weather) do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. If, however, travel to or from a boarding location is impossible when these factors are combined with the person's specific impairment-related condition, paratransit service will be provided.

HOW DO I BECOME CERTIFIED AS BEING ADA ELIGIBLE FOR COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE?

Applications for certification as being ADA eligible for MTD's ADA Complementary Paratransit service are available at MTD's offices at 259 Research Drive in Milford. You can call 203-874-4507 and we will mail the application form to you or you can download the forms from our website, www.milfordtransit.com

Once the application is received MTD will notify the individual within 21 days of his/her eligibility status.

During this 21-day period, applicants may use the service until the decision is made. If a decision is not made within the 21-day period, the applicant will be treated as eligible and will be provided service until or unless MTD denies the application. You will receive a letter verifying whether or not you are eligible.

APPEALS PROCESS FOR DENIAL OF ADA ELIGIBILITY

MTD has established an administrative appeals process through which an individual who has been denied ADA paratransit eligibility can obtain a review of the denial.

1. An appeal of the denial to certify an individual ADA paratransit eligible must be filed within 60 days of written notification of the determination of eligibility.
2. Upon receipt of the denial, MTD will provide the individual the opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to an individual not involved with the initial decision to deny eligibility. MTD will again provide determination as to the decision made upon completion of the appeals process and the reasons for it.
3. MTD is not required to provide paratransit service to the individual pending the determination of the appeal. If the final determination is not made within 30 days of the completion of the appeal process, MTD will provide paratransit service from that time, until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

SERVICE AREA

ADA complementary paratransit service is provided to all regions and destinations within a certain service area. For MTD the basic service area is provided in an area centered on each fixed route bus route and extending $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from either side of the routes. Since doing so in this manner would create pockets of areas that would not be served in Milford the MTD Board of Directors voted to include all of the City of Milford in its base ADA service area.

Trips can be made to other areas in co-operation with neighboring transit service providers. Call for more details on this service. (203-874-4507)



SERVICE RESPONSE TIME

Requests for service by certified ADA eligible users on a particular day will be accommodated if the reservation is made anytime during the previous day. Appointments may be made up to two weeks in advance of service.

Request for service will be taken during the hours of 6 AM to 4 PM, Monday thru Friday.

An answering service is used on weekends to take appointments on Saturdays and Sundays.

Pick-up times will be negotiated with ADA users to make scheduling more efficient. MTD can require a change in the requested pick-up time of up to one hour. Any changes in pick up times beyond one hour must be negotiated with the ADA eligible user.



FARES

Fares charged for an ADA eligible paratransit service may be twice the amount of the base cash fare paid by riders of the fixed-route system.

THE CURRENT FARE IS \$3.00 EACH WAY WITHIN THE CITY OF MILFORD.

THE FARE IS \$3.00 EACH WAY OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF MILFORD.

HOURS AND DAYS OF SERVICE

ADA complementary paratransit service to ADA eligible users of MTD's ADA Van Service will be offered during the same days and hours that MTD's fixed-route bus system is in operation.

Weekdays: 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Saturdays: 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Sundays 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM



RESERVING YOUR ADA RIDE

ADA reservations are made Monday thru Friday from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm.

On Saturdays and Sundays reservations can be made by leaving a message for the dispatch office with your requested ride. **Call 203-874-4507**

There is no limit to the number of requests per phone call and you may call as many times as you like each day. Be sure to inform your reservationist of any additional information needed for your trip such as landmarks to look for, special pick-up entrance, etc. and if you will be traveling with a personal care attendant (PCA) or companion. If you are scheduling a round-trip ride, the reservationist will ask you for a return time, even though this might be difficult to judge for medical appointments. If you schedule your trip as a "will call when ready return trip" please know that it may be up to an hour wait although we will do everything we can to get you as quickly as possible.

The reservationists do their best, but it is inevitable that some trips will be impossible to schedule at certain times. Although we do not deny eligible trips, you may be offered a trip time up to one hour before or after the time you requested. You will receive the most satisfaction from the ADA service if you can be flexible about your request.

Please reserve your ride as soon as possible within the reservation guidelines. You may schedule your ADA ride up to 14 days ahead of time with no shorter than one day before your

trip. Same day rides may be requested but there is no guarantee that we will be able to provide the trip.

GETTING READY

Our reservationist may give you a 1/2 hour (30 Minutes) “window” time during which your ride will arrive. You may not be given a specific time. Instead you must be ready at any time during your 1/2 hour “window”. For example, the “window” for a ride at 8:00 am is 7:45 to 8:15 am. The driver could arrive at any time during that 1/2-hour window. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers can only wait 5 minutes for you after arrival. However, we will make every effort to contact you before instructing the bus to leave.

TYPES OF TRIPS



There are no restrictions on the type of trip requested. Medical, shopping, socialization and all other types of trips are treated equally. On some trips there may be other passengers on the van at the same time as you are, depending on the trips and times that are requested.

SHOPPING TRIPS

To ensure timely service, passengers are limited to four (4) shopping bags. Drivers will assist passengers to the front door of their place of residence or, if the passenger’s residence is an apartment building, to the front door of the building. If you have more than four shopping bags, you will be required to carry them yourself. Passengers are welcome to bring a collapsible shopping cart on board the vehicle.

SERVICE ANIMALS



Service animals such as guide dogs are always welcome on the ADA paratransit bus. When you are reserving a trip, please let the reservationist know if you will be traveling with a service

animal. ADA riders with a service animal must maintain control of their animal at all times. The driver will refuse to transport a service animal if it demonstrates disruptive behavior such as growling, being threatening or lunging toward passengers or other animals on the ADA vehicle.

DOOR-TO-DOOR POLICY

To ensure timely service MTD's ADA Van Service is responsible for providing door-to-door service. Drivers have been instructed to pick-up and drop off passengers at the front door of the places of residence or at the front door of the apartment buildings in which they live. It is the passenger's responsibility to make arrangements for a personal care attendant to assist to or from the front door, as needed.

Our drivers have also been instructed to wait at a residence for a period not to exceed five minutes from the scheduled pick up time. Please be ready to be transported a few minutes ahead of the schedule. If a passenger is not ready at the scheduled pick-up time and the van driver leaves, he or she will be instructed to leave to continue their regular schedule. Every effort will be made to contact you if this occurs. A return trip for that ride will not be arranged.

ATTENDANT POLICIES

Personal care attendants will be permitted to accompany ADA eligible riders on ADA trips at no charge. MTD will require that individuals state the need for a personal care attendant when they request ADA eligibility certification.

One companion will be allowed to accompany an ADA paratransit user on their ADA trip. More than one companion will be allowed on a space available basis. A personal care attendant is not considered a companion.



TYPE OF VEHICLES USED

An MTD paratransit van (White with Blue and Green Waves) will be used to transport you to and from your appointments. All vehicles are wheelchair equipped. Please note that some vehicles may also carry paid advertising on the exterior of the vehicle.

CANCELLATION AND NO-SHOW POLICY

If you need to cancel your trip please let us know as soon as possible but no later than two hours before your scheduled pickup. When a driver arrives at a pick-up location and the rider does not board the bus, he/she may be considered a no-show within 5 minutes of a scheduled trip.

Cancellations not made in advance and no-shows waste valuable service time. Unfortunately, consistent no-shows and late cancellations (cancellations inside of the 2 hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time) may lead to suspension of transportation privileges under this program.

Additionally, we ask that you minimize cancelling and rescheduling the same trips within a week. Prior to MTD taking any action regarding excessive or late cancellations or no-shows, we will contact you and take the following steps:

1. A rider will receive written notification when they have over 10% no shows, late cancellations or frequent cancellations in any one 60-day period. This will initiate a review of the rider's trip history.
2. If it is determined that a pattern of no-shows or excessive cancellations exists, the individual will be notified in writing that they are on a 60-day probationary period and face the potential suspension of their riding privileges.
3. If the individual is cited for the same violation one or more times during the probationary period, the rider's service suspension will begin 60 days from the date of the second letter and will last for 30 days. This determination may be appealed by the rider. Cancellations or no-shows that are not under the control of the rider will not be considered in this matter.

APPEALING A SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

If the rider feels that the suspension of their riding privileges was not correct, MTD will provide the individual with the opportunity to be heard and to provide information and arguments contrary to the proposal to suspend service.

After reviewing the individual's information provided and arguments given contrary to the proposed suspension of service, MTD will provide notification of its decision and the reasons for it.

Appeal of the decision to suspend service to an individual must be filed within 60 days of written notification of the decision to suspend service.

Upon receipt of the appeal, MTD will provide the individual with the opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to an individual not involved in the initial decision to suspend service. MTD will again provide written documentation as to the decision made upon completion of the appeals process and the reasons for it.

VISITORS POLICY

MTD will make complementary paratransit service available to any individual with disabilities who does not reside in the jurisdiction served by MTD or other entities that work with MTD to provide coordinated complementary paratransit service.

MTD will treat as eligible all visitors who present documentation that they are ADA eligible under the ADA paratransit eligibility criteria in the jurisdiction in which they reside.

All visitors requesting complementary paratransit service in the jurisdiction in which MTD provides service, who do not present such documentation will be required by MTD to show documentation of the individual's place of residence and documentation of his or her disability, provided it is not apparent. MTD shall accept certification from such an individual, that he or she is unable to utilize fixed route transit service.

MTD will provide complementary paratransit service to said visitor, who does not have documentation that they are ADA eligible for no more than 21 days from the first day of service to such an individual. In order to receive beyond the 21-day period, the visitor will be required by MTD to apply for eligibility under the process for determining ADA paratransit eligibility that MTD has established.



WHEELCHAIR LIFT AND SECUREMENT USE /SCOOTERS

All MTD vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. For Wheelchair/Occupant combinations that are larger or heavier than those to which design standards for the vehicle and equipment of ADA regulations refer, MTD will carry the occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically and safely accommodate them.

For your safety we strongly recommend you use a seatbelt at all times on the paratransit vehicles. If you need assistance, ask your driver. Riders may use wheelchairs, scooters, canes, walkers and other mobility devices on ADA paratransit vehicles. A wheelchair is defined as a mobility aide belonging to any class of three (3) or more wheeled devices, whether manually operated or powered. Scooters meeting the definition of wheelchair are included. ADA operators must carry any wheelchair and occupant regardless of size and weight if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless in doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements. ADA operators are also not required to permit wheelchairs to ride in places other than designated securement locations in the vehicle. MTD requires a 4-point securement for wheelchairs.



SCOOTERS. Riders using 3 wheeled scooters are strongly encouraged to transfer out of their scooter into the seat of a paratransit vehicle whenever possible. Scooters cannot always be adequately secured and could pose a safety hazard to the user, other passengers and the driver if the passenger is transported seated in the scooter. Riders who are transferable are able to move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle and back with a minimum of assistance from the driver. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the rider transfers. Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying riders. Also, use of the shoulder and lap belt is recommended for the rider's maximum safety.

OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES, LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT

Persons are permitted to travel with respirators, portable oxygen and other life support equipment. Travel with this equipment will only be denied if it violates rules concerning the transportation of hazardous materials.

All ADA paratransit riders will be permitted to travel with service animals trained to assist them. Service animals include guide dogs used by persons with vision or hearing impairments and dogs and other animals that provide aid to persons with mobility impairments.



TEMPORARY DISABILITIES

Any individual with a temporary disability, for the purposes of determining ADA eligibility will be subject to the same standards as those with permanent disabilities. Certification of eligibility in such cases will be subject to a specific expiration date.



WINTER WEATHER TIPS

- *Check the local radio stations to make sure that Milford's ADA Van Service is operating. The local stations are: WICC 600 AM and WPLR 99.1 FM.
- *Call MTD at 203-874-4507 as soon as possible to cancel any trips.
- *Please make sure that a path from your front door to the street is clear of ice and snow. If there is not a safe path to the vehicle, the drivers have been instructed not to provide transportation. This is for your safety as well as the driver's.
- *Please be ready a few minutes earlier than your originally scheduled pick-up time, just in case the driver arrives early.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

All material made available to applicants will be provided in accessible formats upon request.



WHEELCHAIR LIFT AND SECUREMENT TRAINING

Those people who would like to learn how to use the lift equipment on an accessible fixed route bus can do so on a vehicle that is not in regular service. Whenever possible, MTD will try to make available a demonstration which you could attend and will arrange special transportation services to such sites for those who need it. MTD staff may be able to accompany you on your entire first trip if advance arrangements are made.

SERVICES OUTSIDE OF MILFORD

If you need to travel from Milford to Greater New Haven, Greater Bridgeport or to the Naugatuck Valley areas, arrangements can be made through MTD's office in cooperation with the adjoining transit agencies. Ask the dispatcher/reservationist for details.

IF THERE IS SOMETHING THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND ABOUT OUR POLICIES OR IF YOU NEED AN INTERPRETER PLEASE CALL 203-874-4507.

SI HAY ALGO QUE NO ENTIENDES ACERCA DE NUESTRAS POLITICAS O SI NECESITA UN INTERPRETE POR FAVOR LLAMAR 203-874-4507