

WILLIAMSBURG AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Paratransit Rider's Guide



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Meeting Our Customer's Travel Needs

Accessible Fixed-Route Bus Service

Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) is committed to providing a seamless transportation system for everyone. All “fixed-route buses” operating on our regular schedule, are equipped with low-floors, and are wheelchair accessible to better serve our customers.

For benefit of all our customers (or riders/passenger), on our fixed-route buses, audio announcements of stops help riders recognize their bus stop or point of transfer. Near the bus entrance, a limited number of seats are designated for persons who have disabilities or frailties. These spaces are also reserved for persons using wheelchairs to provide a safe and secure ride.

WATA provides reduced-fare cards (half the standard fare) for disabled riders to ride our fixed route buses. This fare allows an Paratransit eligible individual to travel at a discounted rate when utilizing WATA's fixed-route bus.

For route and scheduling information, or any questions you may have about using WATA fixed-route bus services, go to www.goWATA.org or call 757-220-5493.

Paratransit Service

For riders who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on fixed-route buses, WATA offers a, door-to-door service called **Paratransit**, for a majority of our service area and Route Deviated service for the Surry Service. The Paratransit shared-ride service is called “Handi-Transit” because it is provided as part of our efforts to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA). Both **Paratransit** and Route Deviated service must be reserved at least one business day in advance. The service is provided with lift-equipped accessible vehicles, scheduled through WATA's office. Route Deviated service uses the same fixed route vehicle as the regular route service, and the vehicle will deviate from the route up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to drop off, or pickup an ADA approved passenger. This service operates in the same areas (within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles radius of our fixed-routes) and during the same days and hours as the fixed-route bus service. The service can be used for any trip purpose, except for emergency trips to the hospital, return after surgery, though calling further in advance will ensure you get the time you need. After scheduling your trip, the vehicle may arrive 10 minutes prior to, or up to 20 minutes late as we add other customers on

our vehicles to ride together. Please be ready at least 10 minutes in advance of your pick up time..

If you still have questions after reading this Guide, you can call the WATA office at 220-5493, and press the extension for Paratransit. On request, copies of this Guide can also be provided in electronic format or other accessible format upon request.

How to Apply for Paratransit Service

Individuals interested in using Paratransit must first be determined eligible for the service. The eligibility review considers each person's functional ability to use WATA fixed-route bus service. If a disability prevents you from using fixed-route buses under normal conditions, you will be determined "**Unconditionally Eligible**." If you can use the fixed-route buses some of the time, but not at other times, you will be determined "**Conditionally Eligible**" for those trips that you cannot make by bus. If you are found eligible and require temporary access to the service you will be found "Temporary Eligible". Please see below for further information regarding the categories.

To receive information about the eligibility process, call the WATA office and ask to have the Paratransit eligibility information emailed or mailed to you. Once you have reviewed the eligibility information, and feel you may be eligible for Paratransit service, complete the application fully including contact phone number, and send it in to "WATA Paratransit Office, 7239 Pocahontas Trail, Williamsburg, VA. 23185". Once a complete review of the application is completed, an in-person interview and assessment will be scheduled. If you need assistance in filling out the application, it will be provided at the time of your appointment, but may increase the length of your appointment.

Your interview will be scheduled at a time that is mutually convenient for you and WATA. If you need transportation to and from the interview, ask when you make your appointment and free transportation will be provided for you. Your functional abilities will be reviewed at the time of the interview. The application is designed to gather information from the applicant regarding his/her disability and the applicant's own assessment of his/her environmental and functional ability to use WATA's fixed-route bus service. The person who interviews you will, as part of the eligibility process, if needed help you complete the application form, and will discuss your travel abilities and needs in detail. You can also ask any questions you have about the service. At the interview, you may be asked to take a "mock" bus trip. This will give us a better idea of your travel abilities, and take about 30 minutes.

You will be notified in writing of your eligibility status within 21 days after the interview. If deemed eligible, you will also receive a Paratransit Eligibility Card.. This card may be used to identify yourself as an eligible Paratransit rider in WATA 's service area, or any other transit system's ADA compliant services (See Service To Visitors, page 6). If a decision is not made within 21 days, Paratransit service will be provided until a final decision is made. **If your application is rejected, you can appeal the decision to a review panel .**

To begin the eligibility process, call the WATA office at 259-5493, and press extension for Paratransit.

Who is Eligible for Paratransit Service?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for Paratransit services under one of the following categories:

I. Category 1 Eligibility (Unconditional Eligibility):

The first category of eligibility includes those persons who are unable to use fully accessible fixed-route bus services for any trip. Included in this category is:

“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 assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any bus on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.” (Section 37.123(e)(1) of the ADA regulations)

This applies to an individual who cannot independently negotiate the fixed-route bus system (board, ride, or disembark from a bus).

II. Category 2 Eligibility (Conditional Eligibility):

The second category of eligibility (Trip by Trip) is for individuals who can ride the fixed route buses under certain circumstances and includes:

“Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.” (Section 37.123(e)(3) of the ADA regulations).

This applies to an individual who, because of his/her disability, cannot access a bus stop or board the fixed-route bus system and cannot access his/her final destination after disembarking from a fixed-route bus. Eligibility, in this category, is determined each time the eligible customer requests a ride. Two important qualifiers to this category are included in the regulations. First, environmental conditions and architectural barriers not under the control of the public entity do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. Inconvenience in using the fixed-route bus system is also not a basis for eligibility.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to customers who have a temporary disability that prevents them from using the WATA bus system. Eligibility will be provided for the expected duration of the disability.

Ineligible Applicants

Applicants who complete an application and who are not found to be eligible under category 1 or 2, will be notified and reminded that they may ride on the fully accessible fixed route buses at their convenience.

Service for Visitors

Visitors to the Greater Williamsburg area can use Paratransit for up to 21 days per 365 day period by providing documentation that they are eligible for similar ADA Paratransit services by a transit agency in another part of the country. Visitors who do not have any certification of eligibility documentation, because they live in areas without public transit service may be asked to provide documentation regarding their health condition or disability which would meet the eligibility requirement.. Customers who wish to receive service beyond this twenty-one (21) day period must apply for eligibility with WATA.

Recertification of Eligibility

Each WATA Paratransit customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. It may also be necessary for WATA to require a rider to re-certify his/her eligibility. This request may occur when there is a status change of the customer. For example, if there is a disability change. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. The customer's Paratransit Eligibility Letter and Card will indicate his/her paratransit eligibility expiration date. It is the customer's

responsibility to reapply for services prior to his or her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew paratransit eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he or she is determined eligible through the certification process.

Paratransit Service Area and Service Hours

The Paratransit service is designed to be “comparable to” (or similar to) WATA’s fixed-route bus service. For this reason, an ADA Paratransit service transports riders to and from locations which are within a radius of three-quarters (3/4) of a mile of a bus route, and during the same days and

Operating Days and Hours (hours may vary)

Monday-Thursday	Friday-Saturday	Sunday
6:00a.m.-9:00p.m.	6:00a.m.- 9:00p.m.	8:00a.m.-6:00p.m.

Services after core bus service hours (9:00 pm Monday to Saturday and 6:00 pm Sunday) are limited to the ¾ mile radius of the bus routes still in service.

Services are not provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	January 1
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

Fares

The one-way trip fare for Paratransit service is \$3.00. **The fare must be paid by cash, check, or Handi-Ride ticket when boarding the vehicle.** If paying by cash, exact change is required. The drivers carry no change. WATA is not able to accept prepayment for future trips, nor do we allow a customer to pay after their trip.

Handi-Ride Books of Tickets may be purchased the WATA Customer Office at Williamsburg Transportation Center at 970 N. Boundary St., Williamsburg, VA. From 8 am to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday. A book of 10 is \$30. A book of 20 is \$60.

Scheduling Rides on Paratransit

When to Schedule a Ride

You can reserve your Paratransit ride from 1 to 14 days in advance of your trip, unless you have recurring trips.. The WATA Paratransit scheduling office is open Monday through Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., and a dispatcher is available on the weekends from 8 am. to 4 pm.

If you need to call on weekends or on a holiday to request a ride for the next day, you may need to use our phone answering system at 220-5493 to record your request, and we will call you back as soon as possible to confirm your ride. Your trip will not be confirmed until someone notifies you that the trip was scheduled.

Please do not schedule a trip several days in advance if you are not sure if you will actually be going or if you are not sure of the time you want to go. We cannot guarantee any trips that you require changing the trip details such as time, locations, etc. Reserving rides and cancelling them can cause other customers to be denied service, and can significantly increase the cost of the service, and can lead to suspension of your Paratransit service.

Scheduling Tip: During the busiest scheduling times of the day (early mornings) you may be placed on hold until a WATA employee can assist you. If you are able, you may want to plan to place your trip request during the middle of the day when the

How to Schedule a Ride

To request a trip, call the WATA Customer Service Office at 220-5493, press extension for Paratransit..

The Transit Assistant will guide you through the process of scheduling your ride. Please this information ready before you call:

1. **Your first** and last name.
2. **The date** and day of the week you need to ride.
3. **The complete street address** including building #, specific entrance or side of building if there are multiple entryways, where you need to be picked up.

4. **The complete street address** including building #, where you need to be dropped off.

5. **The time** you would like to arrive, or the appointment time, if applicable.

6. **The time** you will be ready to be picked up for a return trip.

* If you are going to a doctor's appointment you can tell us an approximate time, and

then call us when you are ready (See Will Call's).

* Let us know if you won't be available before your pickup time, such as getting out of

work. We won't come early if you tell us.

7. If you will be using a **mobility aid** such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or if you will need to use the wheelchair lift.

* If you use a very large wheelchair or other large mobility aid, please see the "Wheelchairs and other Mobility aids" section later in this guide for information about the maximum size and weights our vehicles are designed to transport.

8. If a **personal care attendant** will be traveling with you.

9. If a **guest or child** under the age of five (5) will be traveling with you.

10. If a **service animal** will be riding with you.

11. **Any other information** you feel we should know to safely and comfortably serve you.

We will coordinate the pick-up time with you based on our availability. Remember this is a shared-ride program so your pickup time may vary by up to one hour to accommodate other passengers, and you may share a ride while we transport other customers to their destinations.

Scheduling Tips:

Schedule your return trip later if you are not sure when you'll be done. Sometimes it is difficult to know ahead of time exactly when you will be ready for your **return** trip, it is very important to schedule the time as accurately as possible. If you are not ready within 5 minutes of the bus pulling up, the driver will be told to go to their next pickup so they do not miss their next customer. If you have an appointment, allow extra time to get to and from the Paratransit vehicle. For example, if you have an appointment at 9:00 a.m., you might want to tell the Transit Assistant you would like to arrive no later than 8:45 a.m. Similarly, give yourself time to get to the Paratransit vehicle for your return trip. For example, if you work until 5:00 p.m., you might want to ask the Transit Assistant for a 5:15 p.m. pick-up to give you time to get to the vehicle. If you cannot be picked up earlier to return than a certain time (for example, you cannot be

After the passenger has provided the above trip information, the Transit Assistant will provide the passenger with their trip options. We will make every effort to offer a pick-up and drop-off time that is as close as possible to the times requested. We strive to be able to do that within 1 hour of the requested time. Since Paratransit is a **shared-ride service**, and other customers may need to be scheduled on the same vehicle. It may be necessary for WATA, to get the passenger to their appointment earlier or pick them up for a return later than you requested.

The Transit Assistant will offer a pick-up time. You can accept or ask for another. The **Paratransit vehicle might arrive up to 10 minutes before your pick-up time, and up to 20 minutes after your pick-up time**. This is called the 30-minute **Pick-up Window**. This window of time is needed to group passengers and to accommodate unexpected traffic conditions, weather conditions, or other delays and schedule changes. It is important that you be ready to meet the Paratransit vehicle during this 30-minute “window”.

To ensure that the scheduling options that are offered will meet your needs, WATA has established the following guidelines for the Paratransit scheduling process:

- Every effort will be made to schedule your trip so the bus do not arrive more than 10 minutes before your requested pick-up time and no later than your requested drop-off time.
- Every effort will be made to schedule a return pick-up no later than 30 minutes after the time you have requested and no earlier than the time you have requested.
- Every effort will be made for will call return trips to be picked up within 45 minutes of the phone call request.
- Every effort will be made to schedule trips so that the travel times are comparable to the time it would take to complete the trip by fixed-route bus.

Out of courtesy for other Paratransit customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the driver will wait no longer than five (5) minutes after their arrival time within the pick-up window. The vehicle will depart when the five-minute period is up.

If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within five (5) minutes after the vehicle arrives, the driver will be instructed to move on.. The trip will be considered a No-Show, and any further trips for that same day will also be cancelled. If the passenger still needs a trip later in the day, they need to call the office and see if the time is still available, though there are no guarantees. It is the customer's responsibility to be ready, and prepared to board when the vehicle arrives, so that we can serve everyone with the highest level of service.

Scheduling Multiple Trips

We strive to help as many customers on the phone as possible. A passenger can request up to three (3) round-trips per call. If you have more than three round-trips that need to be scheduled, please call back during office hours to schedule these other trips or allow the customer service representative to help other customers.. This limit on scheduling has been set to minimize the telephone hold times for all customers.

Scheduling Tips: When you call to schedule trips, have a pen and paper handy so you can write down all important information. If you are scheduling several trips, have all of the information for each trip available before you call. This will help the Transit Assistant to serve you efficiently.

Subscription Service

If you need a ride to the **same place**, at the **same time**, at least once a week, on an on-going basis, "Subscription Service" is offered as a privilege to help meet the passenger's scheduling and transit needs. This service allows a passenger to schedule their on-going trips with one call. The passenger will then be automatically placed on the schedule each week. Ask the Transit Assistant for more details regarding this option.

This service is a privilege. If a passenger is receiving "Subscription Service," it is important to **let WATA know immediately if you do not need a ride on a particular pre-scheduled day**. This way, WATA can make the adjustment on our paratransit service schedule in advance. For example, if you have "Subscription Service" for a trip to school each weekday, call us in advance of holiday and vacation times when school is not in session. This will help us avoid unnecessary trips or missed connections.

Based on demand, it may be necessary to limit the number of subscription trips that we provide, to allow for providing service to the greatest amount of customers. If this happens, your request may be resubmitted later if the time slot becomes available..

Feeder and Deviated Services for Conditional Eligibility

A rider who is conditionally eligible for Paratransit service may be provided deviated fixed-route service. Also, trips close to the Surry Route may be provided by the Surry bus deviating from its route to provide door to door service to an ADA customer. If you are able to use fixed-route buses, but you have difficulty getting to and from the bus stops, “feeder service” may be provided for you. To get you to or from a fixed route bus stop. A **Paratransit** vehicle can take you to a nearby bus stop for you to transfer to and then pick you up at this stop when you return. Regular service charges for both the fixed route and paratransit services apply. This transfer allows customers full access to all our fixed routes.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

If your plans change and you need to adjust your ride times or location, call WATA’s Customer Service Office at 220-5493 at least one day before your trip to reschedule your trip. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee we can accommodate all changes though we will work hard to adjust your schedule to best meet your needs. Remember, to call during business hours. Calling outside of business hours should only be for same day emergencies, trip cancellations or to request to change a same day trip. If a passenger calls on a Saturday, Sunday, or on holidays to change or request a ride for the same or next day only, an answering machine will take the information and we will call you back that evening to confirm your trip. If you do not hear from us, assume your trip was not scheduled at your requested time, and call us back in case your information was misplaced.

Tell the Transit Assistant you would like to change a ride that has already been scheduled. The Transit Assistant will ask you:

1. Your first and last name.
2. The date and time of the trip you are calling to change.
3. The new times or location that you would like to schedule, or changes you would like to make.

We will always try to accommodate your needs, but changes to your original ride request may result in adjustment to your pick-up times.

Note: Staff may not be able to change pick-up times or pick-up/drop-off locations on the day of your ride. Call to check .

If Your Appointment is Running Late

Passengers may occasionally have circumstances outside of his/her control that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If your appointment is running later than you expected and there is a chance you will not be ready for your scheduled return trip (or if you have missed the bus), call the Customer Service Office before the pickup time, or as soon as possible, to discuss your situation. The Transit Assistant can then coordinate your request to the driver. You will be asked:

1. Your name
2. The time of your scheduled return trip.

Every effort will be made to adjust your return trip pick-up time and assign another bus to pick you up at a later time. **Since schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay before a vehicle is available to accommodate your new trip, or another bus may not be available. If a bus was en-route to your pickup location before you call, the trip will be considered a No-Show unless the situation was uncontrollable by the customer.**

Remember: Allow extra time for appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle.

NOTE: If you call to change your appointment because you are running late, you may have to wait considerable time for the next available vehicle.

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

If you have scheduled a ride that you no longer need, please call the Customer Service Office as soon as you know or at **least one business day in advance** of your scheduled pick-up time.

If you need to cancel a trip on the day of your ride, please make every effort to call at least one hour before your scheduled pick-up time so that the driver can be notified

in time to not make the trip unnecessarily and so you as the scheduled passenger, are not considered a “no-show” and charged. Early cancellations also allows other customers to use that time on the bus.

No-Shows

A “no-show” occurs when:

- After scheduling a trip, the customer no longer needs the ride and fails to call and cancel before the vehicle is en route to the pickup point.
- The vehicle arrives within the ready window, waits for five (5) minutes, but the customer is not available or ready to depart at the requested pickup location.

If a passenger is a “no-show” for the first leg of a trip, **all later rides for the day will be automatically canceled**. If the passenger misses a scheduled ride for any reason, they must call the Customer Service Office, if they still want to keep other trips on that day. The passenger must immediately call the Customer Service Office to reschedule any cancelled trips later in the day, otherwise the passenger may not receive the original times for other trips.

If a schedule delay, bad weather, or breakdown causes the paratransit bus to be late or to miss a pick-up, and the passenger makes other travel arrangements to, please let us know you have done this and that the passenger would/would not like a return ride. If we do not hear from the passenger within one (1) hour after your scheduled pick-up time, all later rides will be canceled.

When the Paratransit Vehicle Arrives

The Paratransit driver will pull the vehicle up to the door as close to the front of the pick-up address you provided. Please be on the lookout as they may be on a different entrance. **The vehicle may arrive up to 10 minutes before your request and up to 20 minutes after your return time.** Please be ready to board when the vehicle arrives so that the driver can stay on schedule for all customers. The driver is not permitted to honk the horn to let you know the vehicle has arrived, so wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the driver will be able to see you. Drivers cannot search facilities to locate someone who is not next to the front door.

If you think it may be difficult for you to know when the Paratransit vehicle arrives (because of the passenger’s disability, or where the passenger is being picked up),

please let us know. We will work with you to figure out ways that we can help alert you to when vehicles arrive, if at all possible.

Driver Assistance

Paratransit is a door-to-door service. Drivers are not permitted to assist riders inside facilities. If requested, drivers will assist you as you enter and exit the vehicle. Drivers also operate the wheelchair ramp or lift and will assist customers with the securement of wheelchairs and mobility aids, and with seat belts. **Bring only what you can carry on or off in one trip. Drivers do not provide assistance loading or unloading groceries , etc.**

If you need assistance getting from your departure point to the vehicle, or loading or unloading items, please arrange to have a personal care attendant other than the driver assist you.

Paying Your Fare

Fares must be paid when the passenger boards the vehicle. If the passenger does not pay, the driver will refuse to provide the ride, and the trip will be considered a No-Show. Drivers do not carry change. Please provide exact fare or a ride ticket.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone the passenger needs to bring with you to assist you with life sustaining activities. The duties of the Personal Care Attendant include minor medical assistance, aid rider in getting to/from the vehicle, and general assistance of passenger as required, etc. PCAs are not required to pay a fare when traveling with the passenger if they were scheduled with you for the trip, and are required for your trip.. PCAs must get on and off the bus at the same places and times as you.

To be able to have a maximum of one PCA ride free, the passenger must be **registered with us as requiring a PCA**. This is done as part of the eligibility process, and can be updated at any time. If the passenger did not indicate a need for a PCA when the passenger first applied to be eligible for Paratransit and now need a PCA, you should call the Customer Service Office 220-5493. Additional documentation of your need for a PCA may be requested.

The passenger will need to tell the Transit Assistant when they schedule trips that a PCA will be travelling. This ensures that there will be room in vehicle for the passenger, the PCA, and other scheduled riders.

Guests/Companions

A guest/companion is someone the certified passenger wants to bring along to share the trip, help them to carry multiple packages, etc.. Guests/companions must pay a regular fare when accompanying the passenger, and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as the passenger.

The passenger will need to tell the Transit Assistant when they schedule trips that one or more guests/companions will be travelling, to ensure there will be space on the vehicle. Drivers cannot pickup any additional riders who do not have a prior reservation.

If the certified passenger makes a reservation, they are entitled to bring one guest/companion with them. Additional fare paying guests/companions will be accommodated if there is enough space on the vehicle.

Children

All children twelve (12) years of age and under, must be accompanied by an adult. They cannot ride unattended. If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, children under twelve (12) do not need to pay a fare.

Children twelve (12) years of age and under will be considered for Paratransit eligibility based on the functional ability of both the accompanying adult and child (as a team) to use fixed-route bus service. When an eligible child is traveling with an adult (who is serving as a personal care attendant), a fare must be paid for the child and the attendant rides free.

In addition, children under five (5) years of age (or under 40 pounds) must travel in an approved child seat provided by the rider. WATA requires the accompanying adult provide an appropriate legal car seat. WATA does not provide any car seats, and does not accept any liabilities for any failures of the car seat.

An adult accompanying a child on Paratransit is responsible for the child at all times. For an adult, who is not the child's parent, written permission from the parent is required. This written permission is required prior to scheduling the trip. Drivers can assist with

securing child seats, but are not permitted to carry children on or off the vehicle.. If assistance with the child is needed, please bring an guest companion.

Wheelchairs and other Mobility Aids

Paratransit vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. The operator must be allowed to properly secure the device and also the rider using securement straps including the lap belt for everyone's safety. We may not be able to safely accommodate you, though, if the passenger's wheelchair or mobility aid exceeds the following dimensions due to safety reasons.

- More than 30 inches wide at the widest point.
- More than 48 inches long at the longest point.
(Measured two inches above the ground)

We will also not be able to accommodate you if the weight of the passenger's wheelchair when occupied is more than 600 pounds for safety reasons.

Scooters

WATA strives for safety at all times. Mobility aids such as scooters must be secured tightly too the vehicle to ensure everyone's safety although many cannot be due to their design. Some scooters also come with a warning from the manufacturer that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles. Because of this, the driver may recommend the passenger transfer to a vehicle seat if they are able. While the driver will not require the transfer, we strongly recommend it be done so we can provide safest possible ride. Our drivers are safe though we cannot guarantee what other drivers will do around our vehicles. Those refusing to transfer cannot hold WATA responsible if they are injured due to no fault of the WATA employee.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on the bus if they are able to be secured.. The driver will assist the passenger in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted, however, to assist in using this equipment. If assistance with portable life support equipment is needed, please arrange to bring a qualified attendant along with you. If any hazardous material equipment is not able to be securely fastened WATA will refuse to transport the passenger for everyone's safety.

Service Animals

Riders may travel with a certified service animal. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals trained and certified to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Be sure to inform the Transit Assistant when scheduling a ride if a service animal will be traveling, and any space or other requirements they may have.. The passenger is responsible for managing their service animal including keeping them out of other passengers path way and ensuring they are not aggressive toward anyone.

Pets

Animals that are not service animals may ride on Paratransit only if they are properly secured in a cage or kennel that can be carried easily with one hand.. For safety reasons, drivers are not permitted to carry cages or kennels on or off Paratransit vehicles. If you need assistance with a pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you.

Safety Belts

For your safety and security, WATA requires use of the safety belts and to remain seated while riding on Paratransit vehicles while the vehicle is in motion.

Packages and Personal Items

Grocery bags, luggage, or other packages or personal items are permitted on the bus. Drivers are not permitted to assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items, please do not plan to bring more than the passenger and/or the assistant who is traveling with you can manage without delaying the vehicle. Also, keep in mind that this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Store shopping carts are not permitted on vehicles, but personal two-wheeled, collapsible carts are permitted if they can be secured.

Emergency Procedures

WATA strives for safety though emergencies can happen. In the event of an accident or emergency, please remain calm and follow the instructions of the driver. They have been trained to handle emergency situations and will know how to handle any situation.

A rider who becomes ill, or notices another rider who may be ill, should immediately inform the driver.

If a rider, due to their disability, has to be met when they are dropped off and the person meeting them is not there when the bus arrives, the rider will be transported back to the WATA office (or to another safe location) and the rider's guardian or caregiver will be notified if possible, and required to come to pick-up the rider or to make other transportation arrangement. If we are unable to make contact with the guardian or caregiver, WATA will attempt to make contact with an individual listed on the Emergency Contact list on file, before contacting authorities for their on-going safety.

Inclement Weather

WATA reserves the right to suspend, modify, or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions that may jeopardize the safety of our riders and employees. On severe weather days, listen to WTKR Channel 3 television, or WATA's Customer Service for closure reports.

Rider Courtesy and Conduct

WATA has a list of commonsense rules to ensure the safety of all riders, drivers, and those around us. We ask that riders, their personal care attendants, and any guest companion(s) traveling with riders observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- No smoking in the vehicles.
- Riders shall maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene.
- No eating or drinking on board (unless required for health reasons, and noted in the file).
- No riding with open alcohol containers or illegal drugs.
- No abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions.

- No deliberate fare evasion.
- No physical or verbal abuse of another rider or driver.
- Do not pet guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner.
- Music/audio devices must be used with earplugs or headphones, and the external volume kept at a low level so as not to affect other passengers or the driver.
- No operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment.
- Littering is prohibited.
- Shirts and shoes or other footwear must be worn.
- Baby strollers must be folded and stowed so as not to block the aisle, take up seats, or cause injury to persons on the bus.
- Heads, arms, and other body parts must be kept inside the bus at all times.
- Objects must not be thrown from the bus window.
- Parents must control children to maintain safety and courtesy for everyone..
- Federal regulations prohibit the transportation of flammable or explosive materials on transit vehicles.
- Concealed weapons are prohibited on WATA buses, given all regulations are followed.. WATA will comply with Virginia's Open Carrying of Weapons Law.

Riders, their personal care attendants, or companions traveling with riders, who violate rules of safety, courtesy and conduct, may be subject to penalties, up to and including suspension of service.

Riders, their personal care attendants or companions traveling with them, who engage in physical or verbal abuse or cause injury to another rider or driver, or who engage in other illegal activities, may be subject to **immediate or permanent suspension** from

Paratransit service. They may also be subject to possible criminal prosecution, including fines.

Riders or their personal care attendants or companions, who engage in an activity that seriously disrupts the safe and effective operation of Paratransit services, may also be subject to a suspension of service. If a rider is seriously disruptive to WATA service, WATA reserves the right to require that a personal care attendant travel with the rider as an option instead of service suspension.

Any rider who is suspended from service will be notified in writing, and will be given an opportunity to appeal.

Appealing a Suspension

A rider who receives a suspension notice may file an appeal of WATA's decision to suspend his/her services. Enclosed with the suspension notice will be a copy of the Appeal Procedure for Suspension of Paratransit Services. If an appeal is filed, WATA will continue to provide service to the rider (unless the suspension is the result of a serious safety related violation) until the appeal hearing is heard and decided. Appeals will be heard by a person or panel of people uninvolved with the initial decision to suspend service. Prior to passenger hearings, WATA will investigate the rider's appeal using computer, onboard video, and GPS vehicle tracking technologies to assist in determining the validity of challenges to no shows or other behavior.

