

WILLIAMSBURG AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ADA Complementary Paratransit
Service Rider's Guide



Revised May 2021

Table of Contents

Meeting Our Customer’s Travel Needs	3	Feeder Service or Conditional Eligibility	
Accessible Fixed-Route Service	3	How to Change a Scheduled Ride	12
Paratransit Service	3	If Your Appointment is Running Late	13
How to Apply for Paratransit Service	4	How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride	13
Who is Eligible for Paratransit Service	5	No-Shows	13
Category 1 Eligible Unconditional Eligibility	5	When the Paratransit Vehicle Arrives	14
Category 2 Eligible Conditional Eligibility	5	Driver Assistance	14
Temporary Disabilities	6	Paying Your Fare	15
Ineligible Applicants	6	Personal Attendants	15
Service for Visitors	6	Guests/Companions	15
Recertification of Eligibility	6	Children	15
The Paratransit Service Area and Service Hours	6	Wheelchair and Other Mobility Aids	16
Operating Days and Hours	7	Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment	17
Fares	7	Service Animals	17
Scheduling Rides on Paratransit	7	Pets	17
When to Schedule a Ride	7	Safety Belts	18
How to Schedule a Ride	8	Packages and Personal Items	18
Your Pick-up Time and Pick-up Window	10	Emergency Procedures	18
Scheduling Multiple Trips	11	Inclement Weather	18
Subscription Service	11	Rider Courtesy and Conduct	19
		Appealing Suspensions	20

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 the benefit of all our customers (or riders/passengers) on our fixed-route buses, audio announcements of stops help riders recognize their bus stop or point of transfer. Near the entrance to the bus a limited number of seats are designated for persons who have disabilities. 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 individual with disabilities to travel at a discounted rate when utilizing WATA's fixed-route service.

For route and scheduling information, or any questions you may have about using WATA fixed-route 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 *ADA Paratransit (“Paratransit”)*, an origin-to-destination service named because it is provided to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA). The service is provided with lift-equipped accessible vehicles and scheduled through WATA. 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 or return after surgery, and calling further in advance will ensure you get the time you need. After scheduling your trip, the vehicle may arrive 15 minutes prior to, or up to 15 minutes after, your scheduled time as we add other customers on our vehicles to ride together. Please be ready at least 15 minutes in advance of your pick up time..

If you still have questions after reading this Guide, please call the WATA office at 757-220-5493, and press the extension for Paratransit. Upon request, copies of this Guide can also be provided in electronic format or other accessible format.

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 and send it to "WATA Paratransit, 7239 Pocahontas Trail, Williamsburg, VA. 23185". Once a 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 can be provided at the time 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 service. The person who interviews you 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 may 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 you as an eligible Paratransit rider in WATA's service area or 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.**

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 fully utilize 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 Eligibility

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 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 beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during such 365-day period. Any visitors presenting documentation that they are ADA-paratransit eligible in their home jurisdiction will be treated as eligible, and no further documentation may be required before paratransit service is provided. Visitors who do not have any certification of eligibility because they live in areas without public transit service may be asked to provide documentation regarding their health condition or disability that 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 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 change in disability. 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.

Appeals Process

1. Appeals must be filed within 60 days of the notice of suspension,
2. Appeals must be submitted to the Executive Director.
3. Williamsburg Area Transit Authority will present the individual and/or his or her representative an opportunity to be heard to present information and arguments.
4. Based on the information available, a decision will be made by the Executive Director.
5. The individual will be provided with written notification of the decision and the reasons for it.
6. Williamsburg Area Transit Authority is not required to provide ADA paratransit service pending determination. However, if a decision has not been made within 30 days of completion of the appeal process, service must be provided from that time unless the appeal is denied.

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

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the maximum fare that can be charged for complementary paratransit service is twice the normal one-way fare for a fixed-route trip. The one-way 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.

A book of tickets may be purchased at the WATA offices at 7239 Pocahontas Trail., Williamsburg, Virginia, from 8 am to 5pm, Monday through Saturday. A book of 10 is \$30.

Scheduling Rides on Paratransit

When to Schedule a Ride

You can reserve a Paratransit trip 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 5:00 p.m., and a dispatcher is available on the weekends from 8:00 am. to 5:00 pm. The number to call is (757) 920-5800.

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 (757) 920-5800 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 require changing the trip details such as time, locations, etc. Reserving rides and cancelling them can affect the timeliness of other customers trips and can significantly increase the cost of the 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 phone lines are generally open.

How to Schedule a Ride

To request a trip, call the WATA Customer Service Office at 757-920-5800.

The Transit Assistant will guide you through the process of scheduling your ride. Please have 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 the building number and 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 number 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, or scooter, or if you will need to use the wheelchair lift.
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 serve you safely and comfortably.

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 will be done.
- If you are not ready within 5 minutes of the bus arriving, 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 picked up from work until 5:15 p.m.), tell the Transit Assistant when scheduling the trip.
- If you can be flexible about your travel times, let the Transit Assistant know this.
- If you know that another Paratransit customer who lives near you will be traveling to the same place at the same time, and you would like to travel with them, mention this when you call to request your ride. The Transit Assistant can check to see if your rides can be combined (although this may not always be possible).

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**, 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 15 minutes before your pick-up time, and up to 15 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. 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 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 number 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. 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 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 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 757-920-5800 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 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, please let us know and if the passenger would or would not like a return ride.

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 at a different entrance. ***The vehicle may arrive up to 15 minutes before your request and up to 15 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. Please wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the driver will be able to see you. The driver is not permitted to honk the horn to let you know the vehicle has arrived and drivers cannot search facilities to locate someone who is not visible at the 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 an origin-to-destination 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, or with seat belts. Please bring only what you can carry on or off in one trip. Drivers do not provide assistance loading or unloading groceries or other packages.

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. Please provide exact fare or a ticket.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone the passenger needs to bring to assist with life sustaining activities. 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 place(s) and time(s) as you.

Guests/Companions

A guest/companion is someone the passenger wants to bring along to share the trip. Guests/companions must pay a regular fare when accompanying the passenger and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place(s) and time(s) as the passenger.

The passenger will need to tell the Transit Assistant when scheduling a trip 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 reservation.

If the 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. 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 80 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. 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 a 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.

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 service animal. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Please 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 way and ensuring they are not aggressive toward anyone.

Safety Belts

For your safety and security, WATA requires use of the safety belts and requires passengers to remain seated 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, this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Shopping carts are not permitted on vehicles, but personal collapsible carts are permitted if they can be secured.

Emergency Procedures

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 the 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 no one is 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 and required to pick up the rider or to make other transportation arrangements. If we are unable to contact the guardian or caregiver, WATA will attempt to contact an individual listed on the Emergency Contact list on file before contacting authorities.

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).

PARATRANSIT RIDERS GUIDE

- 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 or 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 or 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 persons uninvolved with the initial decision to suspend service. Prior to passenger hearings, WATA will investigate the rider's appeal using onboard video and GPS vehicle tracking technologies to assist in determining the validity of challenges to no shows or other behavior.