

WILLIAMSBURG AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY
**ADA Complementary Paratransit
Service 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 a 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 their trips on fixed-route buses, WATA offers a, origin-to-destination service called *Paratransit*, for our service area. The Paratransit shared-ride service is provided as part of our efforts to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA). The service is provided with lift-equipped accessible vehicles, scheduled through WATA's office. This service operates in the same areas (within 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 15 minutes prior to, or up to 15 minutes late as we add other customers on our vehicles to ride together. Please be ready at least 15 minutes in advance of your pickup time.

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

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 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 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 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.

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. The individual will be provided with written notification of the decision and the reasons for it.
5. 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.-9:00p.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 at the WATA Main Office Transportation Center at 7239 Pocahontas Trail., Williamsburg, VA. 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 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 5:00 p.m., and a dispatcher is available on the weekends from 8:00 am. to 5:00 pm. The number to call (757) 220-5493.

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) 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 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 phone lines are generally open.

How to Schedule a Ride

To request a trip, call the WATA Customer Service Office at (757) 220-5493.

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 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.
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'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 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**, 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 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 does 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. 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.

We strive to help as many customers on the phone as possible.

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 can 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 (757) 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 later. 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.

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. Early cancellations also allow other customers to use that time on the bus.

ADA Cancellation Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA) paratransit services (PTS), provided in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), operate efficiently and effectively while respecting the rights of all passengers. WATA PTS passengers who establish a pattern or practice of excessive “no-shows” or late cancellations may be subject to suspension of PTS. This policy is necessary to emphasize the negative impact of late cancellations and no-shows, and it outlines the procedures and expectations regarding passenger cancellations of scheduled PTS rides.

2. Definitions

A. Cancellation: A cancellation is when a passenger withdraws a request for a paratransit ride that was previously scheduled by contacting WATA directly by phone.

1) Standard Cancellation: A standard (timely) cancellation is when a passenger notifies WATA at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. This can be done by phone.

2) Late Cancellation: A late cancellation is when a passenger notifies WATA less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

B. No-show: A no-show occurs when a passenger does not appear for a scheduled ride within five (5) minutes of the PTS vehicle arriving within the scheduled pick-up window without previously canceling the ride. (The pick-up window is 30 minutes in duration, extending from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.)

C. Violation: A late cancellation and a no-show each constitute a violation.

3. Passenger Responsibilities

Passengers are responsible for informing WATA of cancellations as soon as possible, but **no less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time**. No-shows and late cancellations can affect the availability of services for other passengers as well as disrupt the schedules of the drivers.

If a passenger’s plans change and he/she no longer needs the ride, the passenger should cancel the ride to avoid inconveniencing other passengers and penalties in accordance with this policy.

4. Penalties and Exceptions

A. Penalties:

1) Excessive violations may result in penalties, such as a warning notice or suspension of PTS service. WATA will follow a progressive disciplinary approach, beginning with a warning and followed by potential service suspensions.

2) Four (4) or more violations in a one-month period, or six (6) within a two-month period will be considered excessive and subject to penalties in accordance with this policy. Passengers with excessive violations may be subject to PTS suspension as described below.

3) **Warning:** In the first instance of excessive violations, WATA ADA/PTS Supervisor will issue a warning to the passenger.

4) **Suspension of PTS:** The WATA Director of Operations may suspend PTS if the passenger accrues additional violations within a 12-month period of a warning. Duration of the suspension will depend on the number and frequency of violations and may range from one week to one year.

B. Exceptions:

1) The WATA ADA Supervisor will consider exceptions to violations in cases of emergency, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances. Passengers are encouraged to provide documentation if available to support an exception.

2) WATA will also consider exceptions for PTS scheduling errors and similar circumstances out of the passenger's control.

5. Violation and Penalty Notification Process

A. The WATA ADA/PTS Supervisor or designee will contact passengers on each occasion of a no-show or late cancellation to determine if an exception applies. (This is not necessary if the passenger provides the Supervisor with a reason when cancelling.) If no exception applies, the ADA/PTS Supervisor will record the incident. This direct and immediate communication is necessary to correct possible misunderstandings/miscommunications and to achieve early resolutions to problems.

B. Upon the first accumulation of excessive violations, the ADA/PTS Supervisor will notify the passenger in writing and by phone of the violations and as a warning of possible PTS suspension for future violations.

C. If violations continue to accrue after a warning, the ADA/PTS Supervisor will inform the passenger that WATA is considering PTS suspension and that the passenger may present information to the WATA Director of Operations for consideration within five (5) working days (Monday-Friday, except Federal holidays) of notification.

D. No less than ten (10) days after notification of consideration for suspension, the Director of Operations will notify the passenger of his/her decision in writing and by phone. Until this notification, the passenger may continue to receive PTS and WATA will honor any PTS scheduled rides for two weeks if made prior to notification.

E. All correspondence will cite specific trips and dates of the violations.

F. If WATA is aware that a passenger receiving a warning or suspension obtains ADA/PTS passes from a supporting agency (e.g., William & Mary, a municipality social services, or a

human services-providing non-profit organization), WATA will inform the agency.

6. Appeals Process

Passengers who believe they have been unfairly penalized or wish to contest a violation record may appeal to the WATA Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the appeal and decide within 15 working days, notifying the passenger in writing and by phone. During this period, the suspension will be stayed pending the outcome of the appeal.

7. Contact Information

For questions regarding this policy or to appeal a decision, passengers may contact WATA at:

- **Phone:** (757) 220-5493
- **Email:** info@gowata.org

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with ADA regulations and to incorporate feedback from passengers and staff.

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 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. 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 the vehicles arrive, if 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. 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. 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.

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 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.

Wheelchair 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 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. 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' pathway and ensuring they are not aggressive toward anyone.

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.

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- 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 another 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 always kept inside the bus.
- 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.

“WATA is aware that certain disabilities may result in the involuntary violation of our Code of Conduct and therefor will evaluate each potential breach on a case-by-case basis”.

Riders, 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 reasonable suspension** from Paratransit service. They may also be subject to possible criminal prosecution, including fines. If a PCA or companion engages in prohibited behavior, that person can be suspended but not the paratransit rider.

Riders, 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 the suspension.