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RIDER'S INFORMATION GUIDE TO ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE

WELCOME

ADA Para transit service is door-to-door or curb-to-curb as needed, shared-ride transportation for individuals whose disabilities or health conditions prevent them from using Lafayette Transit (LTS) bus system (also referred to as fixed route). This guide is designed to help you understand the service and your responsibilities while using it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires all public transportation agencies like LTS to provide specialized transportation that is comparable to the public transit bus service for individuals who do not have the functional ability to ride public transit.

ADA Para transit service in Lafayette is provided through a cooperative agreement between LTS and Acadiana Transit, and is available on a prearranged basis for any trip purpose within the corporate limits of Lafayette. If you interested in using ADA Para transit service, you must apply and be found eligible for the service according to ADA guidelines.

Accessible Formats

This Rider's Guide is available in large print, Braille, and on audiotape, by calling (337)235-8968.

Service Area

The service area for Acadiana Transit will be the corporate limits of Lafayette.

Service Days and Hours

Para-Transit rides are available **Monday thru Friday** 6:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m., First Pick-up 6:45 a.m., Last Pick-up 11:00 p.m. **Saturdays** 6:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m., First Pick-up 6:45 a.m., Last Pick-up 10:00 p.m. Service

hours and days are with the exception of holidays observed by Lafayette Consolidated Government.

Certification Process

To apply, complete and mail back an application provided by Acadiana Transit. When Acadiana Transit receives your completed application, it will be evaluated by LTS Personnel and Acadiana Transit Personnel to determine how your disability or health-related condition affects your ability to ride the regular LTS fixed-route system. Only those persons whose disabilities **prevent** them from using regular bus service, all of the time or some of the time, are eligible under the ADA. The number to call to obtain an application for ADA Para-transit service is (337)235-8968 or 1-800-242-0093. Within 21 days of Acadiana Transit's receipt of your completed application, you will be notified by letter as to your eligibility status.

Applicants who are denied eligibility may appeal to the City / Parish Transit Manager (337)291-8570. Applicants who are not satisfied with the determination of Transit Manger may appeal to the Traffic and Transportation Director.

*** ALL PASSENGERS ARE SUBJECT TO RECERTIFICATION**

Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges

Acadiana Transit will honor certifications from other systems. An individual from out-of-town requesting service must present proof of their certification. A letter or an identification card will be used as proof.

If an individual does not have proof but claims to be ADA para-transit eligible, the provider will request proof of permanent residency and if a disability is not readily apparent or obvious, medical documentation of the disability is required. The person may use the service for twenty-one (21) calendar days. If more than twenty-one (21) calendar days is needed, then the City / Parish will request that the applicant make a request for ADA para-transit eligibility. All rules must be observed by visitors.

Making a Ride Reservation

Numbers to call

(337)235-8968 or 1-800-242-0093

LA Relay 1-800-846-5277

Reservation – Taking Hours

Monday – Friday	8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
Saturday	8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. **Cancellations Only**
Sunday	8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. **Cancellations Only**

(EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ride requests may be made one (1) to fourteen (14) days in advance, but not later than 4:30 p.m. one day before your ride date. Acadiana Transit will attempt to provide same day service, schedule permitting.

When you call, the reservation taker will “negotiate your trip” by searching for available space up to one hour on either side of the pick-up time you request. If space exists, you will be offered a “ready time” and trip confirmation. Ask the reservationist to read back your trip request to ensure every detail is correct.

When you call please have a paper, pencil, and the following information available:

- Your first and last name.
- The date of your requested trip.
- Your preferred pick-up and return times.
- Your origin and destination addresses and phone numbers at those locations (including building name, specific drop-off and pick-up information. If a medical appointment, include the name of the doctor and the suite number.)
- If you will be traveling with an attendant, companion (including children), or service animal.
- If you or anyone accompanying you will traveling using a wheelchair, scooter, or other equipment.
- Any other information the driver should know to help you travel.

If your trip is for a medical appointment you may ask for will-call. Upon completion of your medical appointment contact Acadiana Transit to advise of your request for return trip, the next available bus will arrive for your return trip.

Since this is a shared-ride service, the driver may make other stops on the way to your drop-off point, so it's best to allow plenty of time to get to and from your destination. If you are unsure of how much time you should allot for your trip, please ask the reservation taker for suggestions when scheduling your pickup.

Subscription Rides

Subscription reservations are offered on a limited basis for trips that recur weekly at the same time to and from the same addresses. Subscription riders will only count for 10% of total qualified riders. Subscription waiting lists exist and are reviewed periodically to see if additions will create increased ride-sharing opportunities. Therefore, scheduling for subscription service is based on time, geography, and direction of the trip – not on a first-come, first-served basis. With this understanding, you are welcome to place a subscription request.

Personal Attendants

A personal attendant assists the passenger with daily life functions and may provide assistance during the ride or at the destination. If you need assistance to travel, riding with a personal attendant is strongly encouraged. Personal attendants are not required to pay fares and must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the passenger. A passenger's need for a personal attendant must be registered with Acadiana Transit.

Companions

A companion is someone without an ID card who rides with a registered passenger, but not as a personal attendant. You may arrange to bring one companion along on each ride, in addition to a personal attendant. Companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same addresses. Additional companions may be scheduled if space is available. Companions pay the same fare as the registered passenger.

Vehicles and Drivers

Acadiana Transit para-transit service is provided by using a variety of vehicles. You must ride in the vehicle that is sent to you. Special requests for specific vehicles and drivers cannot be honored.

Boarding Time

When you call to reserve your ride, you will be given a “30 minute pickup window” in which the vehicle will arrive. You’ll need to be ready at the beginning of your pickup window. For example, if you negotiated “ready time” are 8 am, your 30-minute pickup window is 7:45 am to 8:15 am. You’ll need to be ready to board at 7:45 am. Upon arrival of vehicle within your pick up window, the vehicle will wait 5 minutes prior to leaving and you will be recorded as a no-show. By being ready when the para-transit vehicle arrives, you help keep everyone’s trip on schedule.

How Long Will the Para-Transit Vehicle Wait?

When the vehicle arrives within the pickup window, the driver will wait no more than 5 minutes. If the vehicle arrives before your pickup window starts, you may leave if you are ready. If you not ready, the driver will wait until your pickup window starts and then an additional 5 minutes.

What If My Ride Is Late?

If your ride has not arrived within 30 minutes after your “ready time” call (337)235-8968 a dispatcher will update you on the status of your ride.

Canceling a Trip

Cancellations should be made no less than 24 hours prior to scheduled pick-up time, except for an emergency. Cancellations can be made by calling (337) 235-8968.

Preventing No-Shows

It is the goal of Acadiana Transit to always connect with passengers and provide their scheduled ride. When riders do not cancel at least 24 hours in advance or are not available to board within 5 minutes, it is considered a “no-show.”

Riders can prevent no-show situations when they:

- Review dates, times and addresses with the reservationist to be sure information is correct.
- Call Acadiana Transit and cancel rides as soon as the ride is no longer needed.
- Cancel at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled pick up time.
- Are prepared to board at the starting time of the pickup window and within 5 minutes after the vehicle arrives.

When there are circumstances outside the rider’s control, it is not considered a no-show.

Wheelchair Lift Policy:

The wheelchair lifts/ramps on paratransit vehicles will be utilized in the same manner as the fixed route system.

Vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts/ramps will be dispatched based on the rider's medical needs. These medical needs are determined by a physician, indicated on the rider's paratransit application. Otherwise, if the paratransit vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair lift/ramp and the rider requests to board the vehicle using the lift/ramp, the driver will comply with the rider's request.

Trip Fares

- Fares are fifty cents (.50) per one-way trip.

Drivers must collect fares upon boarding, so please have the exact fare ready, as they cannot give change.

Boarding With A Mobility Device

Acadiana Transit vehicles are lift-equipped and will accommodate mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers, providing the devices fit within the ADA-specified boarding envelope. This includes all 30" wide by 48" long mobility devices when measured starting from two inches above the ground and that do not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Larger devices may not qualify.

- All drivers are trained to operate the lift and will secure you after boarding.
- Boarding while standing on the lift is allowed, but not encouraged.

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and / or other life-support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials.

Transporting Children

Children traveling as companions or personal attendants, who are under the age of six or weigh less than 60 pounds, are required by law to use a child safety belt, a booster seat, or other safety restraint system. You are responsible for providing such safety equipment and for securing it and the child in Para-Transit vehicles.

Transporting Animals

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog . Please tell the reservations taker when you book trips that you will be traveling with a service animal.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Acadiana Transit has a short list of common-sense responsibilities designed to ensure safety and comfort for all riders and drivers.

Passengers have a responsibility to:

- Read all sections of the Rider’s Information Guide carefully.
- Make reservations at least one day in advance.
- Be at designated pick-up locations.
- Board the vehicle as soon as it arrives.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived with your 30-minute “pickup window”
- Call to cancel rides that are not needed.
- Pay the correct fare upon boarding.
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- Bring a personal travel attendant if needed.
- Refrain from eating, drinking, or smoking on the vehicles.

BAGS POLICY:

Operator will assist with 3 large or 6 small bags per trip, per passenger. Assistance with bags would be given upon request of the passenger. A bag would be defined as 1 large paper or plastic sack (weight not to exceed 10 lbs) or 2 small plastic bags (weight not to exceed 5 lbs each). (Any item meeting the preceding requirements may be substituted for a “bag”.) Any passenger violating this policy will be given one (1) letter of warning. A second occurrence will result in denial of transportation.

Operators will assist with 1 basket of laundry. Laundry must be completely covered.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Acadiana Transit drivers will treat you with courtesy and dignity as they escort you to and from the main door or curb of your pick-up locations and help you get on and off the vehicle. They can stow small personal belongings, but if you need other types of help, like filling prescriptions, managing several packages, etc., please bring along a personal attendant.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Transfer passengers from wheelchairs to vehicle seats.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Carry riders or wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Secure child safety systems in the vehicle or children into such systems.
- Not permitted to carry packages.

SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

1. Suspension of Untimely Cancellation Notice, “No-Shows” and Lateness. Any trip scheduled but not taken due to passenger error, a suspension will be imposed as described below.

A. No Show:

- 2 no-shows in a calendar month: Written warning via letter
 - More than 2 no-shows in a calendar month will result in 3 days suspension
- 2 no-shows in the next calendar month: 15 day suspension
- 2 no-shows in the next calendar month: 30 day suspension
- 2 no-shows in the next calendar month: 60 day suspension
- Any further no-shows will result in loss of eligibility

B. Cancellations:

- 10 Cancels in calendar month---Written Warning via letter
- 11 Cancels in calendar month---14 day suspension
- 12 Cancels in calendar month---30 day suspension

NOTE: For the purpose of tracking no-shows and cancellations "calendar month" will begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of each month.

2. **Service Suspension for Abusive or Disruptive Behavior.** Service will immediately be denied on a long-term basis to passengers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct directed at other riders or Acadiana Transit staff. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: threats or fear of physical or verbal abuse; unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations; unauthorized use of equipment on the vehicle; voluntarily and repeatedly violating vehicle-riding rules, including smoking in the vehicle, eating or drinking without medical indication, or defacing equipment.

Suspensions will not be imposed for circumstances that are beyond your control. Examples of situations not within your control are:

- A sudden personal emergency
- Sudden or worsening illness.
- Inability to get through on Acadiana Transit phone lines.
- Late arrival of the vehicle.
- Disruptive behavior caused by a disability.

Suspension for No Tolerance Policy:

- 1st Occurrence – Transit employee fills out an incident report, Patron receives a written warning
- 2nd Occurrence – Transit employee fills out an incident report, Patron is suspended for 30 days.

3. **Steps of the Suspension Process.** You will be provided an opportunity to explain the reason for each occurrence. Prior to a suspension for incidents other than for abusive or seriously disruptive behavior, you will receive a written warning of the proposed suspension period and the reason(s) for the suspension. You will also receive written instructions for appealing your suspension, should you wish to appeal the decision to suspend you.

KEEPING ELIGIBILITY AND INFORMATION UP TO DATE

Please call Acadiana Transit at (337)-235-8968 if there is a change in the following:

- Your address or telephone number.
- Your emergency contact's name or telephone number.
- The type of mobility device you are using.

When a person is registered as eligible for ADA Para-Transit service and does not use the service for 12 consecutive months, he or she is considered an "inactive" customer and the file is "archived." If a reservationist informs you that you are an inactive customer, you will be asked to verify basic information in your file. Acadiana Transit will reactivate your records and provide you with service, provided your eligibility has not expired.

PARA-TRANSIT CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

Acadiana Transit staff care what you think and welcome your compliments, complaints and suggestions. Write or call Acadiana Transit at (337)235-8968 as soon as a good or bad deed has occurred and let them know: Who? What? Where? When? Why? The mailing address for Acadiana Transit is 930 Center Street Lafayette, LA 70501. Acadiana Transit staff will work diligently to resolve rider concerns and provide positive results.