

NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION ADA PARATRANSIT PROGRAM

FOREWORD

As equal opportunity, full participation, and independence are the underlying tenets of the ADA, the law intends for persons with disabilities to have access to facilities and to be able to fully and equally participate in programs and services. NROUTE offers full access to the fixed route system, comprised of accessible, wheelchair lift equipped vehicles on each route and a survey of accessible bus stops or necessary changes in progress.

PURPOSE OF PARATRANSIT PROGRAM

While access to fixed route systems is continuing to be a primary focus, the Paratransit Program is designed to serve those persons with disabilities whose needs cannot be met by the fixed route service. The Paratransit Program is designed to complement accessible fixed route service, thereby broadening the scope of mobility and increasing the independence of our mobility impaired citizens.

The Paratransit Program consists of wheelchair lift equipped vehicles, operating on a call responsive basis. Next day service and subscription rides are available Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm to those persons certified ADA Paratransit eligible.

ELIGIBILITY

ADA regulations establishes three categories of eligibility:

1. Any person with a disability who can use an accessible vehicle but for whom any desired trip cannot be made because the fixed route service is not accessible.
2. Individuals who because of the nature of their disabilities cannot navigate even a transit system that is other wise accessible.

3. **Individuals who have impairment-related conditions that prevent them from getting to or from a boarding or disembarking location.**

Eligibility is based upon functional considerations, relating the disability of the customer to the capacities and operation of the services provided. Paratransit eligibility may be determined on a trip-by-trip basis if necessary. Eligibility certification is not restricted by an applicant's place of residence, as designated pick-up locations within the service area may be negotiated with an outlying area commuter.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

NROUTE utilizes a self-certification procedure of a person's functional abilities supplemented by additional documentation as needed from a physician or alternative professional sources, such as physical therapists, rehabilitation counselors, etc.

"Request for certification of ADA Paratransit Eligibility," to be completed by the applicant or authorized representative may be obtained by contacting the NROUTE office at 601-636-1053 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Applications will be mailed, or appointments made to visit the office. Paratransit service will be provided for this purpose if possible eligibility is determined through initial telephone contact. Applications will be distributed to agencies or facilities with disabled patrons upon request, but telephone contact with the NROUTE office could expedite immediate determination of eligibility.

NROUTE will initiate additional verification from the applicant's physician or alternative source, if deemed necessary after the initial review. All information received will be treated with confidentiality and used only by NROUTE to determine eligibility. (Copies of forms attached).

The certification process must be concluded within twenty-one days of the submission of a properly completed application or the individual granted presumptive eligibility. Persons determined eligible will receive a letter with pertinent information

which may be used to establish visitor eligibility status on other Paratransit systems. Paratransit I.D. cards are in use at this time.

Recertification is not required for permanent conditions unless a person's functional abilities are likely to improve or the disability is temporary. Both cases will be recertified on a reasonable basis with the requested expiration date stated on the eligibility letter and I.D. card.

If an individual is denied ADA Paratransit eligibility, a notice of denial will be sent in a format accessible to the individual stating the reason for denial and a description of the Appeals Process. An appeal must be granted if requested within sixty days. No service will be provided while the appeal is in process, but if a decision has not been reached within thirty days, presumptive eligibility applies until a final decision is reached. An appeal will be heard by two members of the NRoute Board of Commissioners after the initial determination is made by NRoute employees. The individual has the right to be heard in person and to have necessary support.

Subsequent new request for eligibility determination will be considered at any time following a denial, since the functional impairments associated with an individual's disability may change over time.

SERVICE DENIAL

An individual, otherwise eligible for ADA Paratransit service, may be denied service if their behavior threatens or has threatened the safety of personnel or other customers. Additionally, persons who demonstrate a pattern of missing scheduled Paratransit trips, "no shows", may lose their eligibility for a reasonable, specific period of time. Such temporary suspensions may be appealed through the above mentioned process.

VISITORS POLICY

Eligibility must be presumed and reciprocally provided if an individual presents certification from another transit system for a period of twenty-one days. Local verification and certification will then be required.

GUEST TRAVELING WITH AN ELIGIBLE CUSTOMER

A Personal Care Attendant is a "mobility aid" to an eligible individual and the need should be requested at the time of certification and documented on the Certification Letter and I.D. card (Medical verification required). However, even if a P.C.A. is recommended and certification based upon this, a trip cannot be denied if the individual chooses to travel alone. However, if functioning ability and/or safety is in question, the driver should notify NROUTE staff for instructions prior to departure. There is no fare charge for a required Personal Care Attendant.

Companions/additional guest may accompany the certified individual on a space available basis. The same ADA fare applies to all companions and the pickup and return location must be the same as the eligible individuals. Children under twelve years old pay one-half of the Paratransit fare.

SERVICE AREA

The ADA Paratransit call responsive service expanded operations from the 3/4-mile corridor limit to city wide service effective April 2006.

RESPONSE TIME

Next day service is provided on the Paratransit call responsive service. All service requests will be accommodated when made during administrative business hours on the preceding day, (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday). Voicemail is available for trip requests, changes, or cancellations when the office is unoccupied or closed. Same day service is being provided upon request.

Trip requests will be accepted up to 14 days in advance or reservations accepted further in advance for such trips as subscription work trips, regular therapy, or doctor's appointments, etc.

Trips must be scheduled within one hour of an individual's desired pick-up time request and negotiation of desired arrival and departure times should be done in advance to avoid lengthy delays.

FARES

Fares charged for complementary Paratransit service can not exceed twice the full fare for a comparable fixed route trip.

Paratransit service is curb to curb service on a call responsive basis. The present fare is \$4.00 per one way trip. Companions accompanying certified riders pay \$4.00 per one way trip. There is no charge for a required Personal Care Attendant.

TRIP PURPOSE

There is no restriction of trip purpose. Service may not be denied or prioritized based on purpose in the ADA Paratransit Program.

HOURS AND DAYS OF SERVICE

Paratransit service will operate on the same days and hours as the fixed route system. The same holidays will be observed.

CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS

There are no capacity constraints in the NROUTE Paratransit Program.

NO SHOW POLICY

Paratransit riders, whether using subscription service or the next/same day call responsive program, should call the NROUTE office within 2 hours of the scheduled trip time to cancel a trip. If reasons are justified for calling after hours, cancellation calls left on the voicemail will be accepted. NROUTE has the authority to temporarily suspend service for a reasonable period of time if a pattern of "no-shows" is established by a rider. Efforts will be made to correct the problem prior to suspension if at all possible.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

The practice of providing repetitive trips over an extended period of time without requiring daily scheduling is available for work trips, education, regularly scheduled appointments, etc. Cancellation notification should be made to the NROUTE office.

MAINTENANCE

The proper maintenance of access-related equipment is an important aspect of NROUTE's total operation. All drivers will test lifts and inspect securement systems as part of their daily check. Lift failures should be reported as soon as possible.

When transporting users of three-wheeled wheelchairs or other mobility devices that pose a securement problem, drivers may request that the rider transfer to a seat but cannot require a person to do so nor deny the trip.

A person who cannot enter the vehicle using the stairs, although standing, must be allowed to use the lift.

MOBILITY AIDS AND LIFE SUPPORT

ADA Paratransit eligible riders are permitted to travel with service dogs, i.e. hearing, visual, or mobility impaired persons if the animal is trained to assist them. Service animals include dogs used by persons with vision or hearing impairments and dogs and **OTHER ANIMALS** that provide aid to persons with mobility impairments.

Persons must be permitted to travel with respirators, portable oxygen, and other life support equipment. Travel with this equipment can only be questioned or denied if it would violate the rules of transportation of hazardous material (49CFR Parts 100-199).

COMMUNICATION AND MATERIAL ACCESSIBILITY

American Sign Language interpreter services will be available upon prior request at Public Hearings or other applicable events for hearing impaired persons.

All materials available to the public will be provided in an accessible alternative format upon request, i.e. large print (size 14 type or larger) or audio taped material. All materials posted on buses will be large print and/or drivers will offer to read material to anyone requesting.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO NROUTE OFFICES

The NRoute Transit Commission's office is located at 2501 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180.

**NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICES**

The information obtained in this certification process will only be used by the NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION for the provision of transportation services. Information will only be shared with other transit providers to facilitate travel in those areas. The information will not be provided to any other person or agency.

1. NAME _____

2. ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

3. TELEPHONE NUMBER (HOME) _____ (WORK) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____

5. WHAT IS THE DISABILITY WHICH PREVENTS YOU FROM USING OUR FIXED ROUTE SERVICE?

IS THE CONDITION TEMPORARY? ____ IF YES, EXPECTED DURATION UNTIL ____/____/____

6. HOW DOES THIS DISABILITY PREVENT YOU FROM USING THE FIXED ROUTE SERVICES? PLEASE EXPLAIN COMPLETELY. USE ADDITIONAL SHEET IF NEEDED.

7. ARE THERE ANY OTHER EFFECTS OF YOUR DISABILITY OF WHICH WE NEED TO BE AWARE?

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO ENSURE THAT AN APPROPRIATE VEHICLE IS UTILIZED TO PROVIDE YOUR TRANSPORTATION AND THAT AN ACCURATE ANALYSIS OF YOUR TRIP REQUESTS CAN BE MADE BY THE NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION

8. Do you use any of the following aids to mobility? (Check all that apply) Manual Wheelchair ____ Electric Wheelchair ____
Powered scooter ____ Cane ____ Crutches ____ Personal care attendant ____
Guide dog ____ Walker ____

9. Do you require a Personal Care Attendant when you travel using transit? Yes ____ No ____

10. Please answer the following questions:

Can you travel 200 feet without the assistance of another person? Yes ____ No ____ Sometimes _____

Can you travel 1/4 mile without the assistance of another person? Yes ____ No ____ Sometimes _____

Can you climb three 12-inch steps without assistance? Yes ____ No ____ Sometimes _____

Can you wait outside without support for ten minutes? Yes ____ No ____ Sometimes _____

11. I hereby certify that the information given above is correct.

Signed _____ Date ____/____/____

12. If this application has been completed by someone other than the person requesting certification, that person must complete the following:

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

Signed _____ Date ____/____/____

In order to allow the NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION to evaluate your request, it may be necessary to contact a physician or other professional to confirm the information you have provided. Please complete the following information and authorization form.

The following physician _____ Health Care Professional _____ Rehabilitation Professional ____ (check one) is familiar with my disability and is authorized to provide information to the NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION required to complete this certification.

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Print Name _____

Signed _____ Date ____/____/____

**Please return completed application to:
NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION
2501 Halls Ferry Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180**

Dear _____:

The attached authorization form has been submitted by _____, who has indicated that you can provide information regarding his/her disability and its impact upon his/her ability to utilize our transit services. Federal law requires that NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION provide Paratransit services to persons who cannot utilize available fixed route services. The information you provide will allow us to make an appropriate evaluation of this request and its application to specific trip requests. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Capacity in which you know the applicant:

Medical Diagnosis of condition causing disability:

is the condition temporary? No ____ Yes ____

Expected duration until ____/____/____

If the person has a visual impairment:

Visual Acuity with Best Correction:

Right Eye _____ Left Eye _____ Both Eyes _____

Visual Fields:

Right Eye _____ Left Eye _____ Both Eyes _____

If the person has a cognitive disability:

Is the person able to:

Give addresses and telephone numbers upon request?

Yes ____ No ____

Recognize a destination or landmark?

Yes ____ No ____

Deal with unexpected situations or unexpected change in routine?

Yes ____ No ____

Ask for, understand and follow directions?

Yes ____ No ____

Safely and effectively travel through crowded and/or complex facilities?

Yes ____ No ____

Is there any other effect of the disability of which the NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION should be aware? Please describe._____

Your Name:

Office Address:

Office Phone Number:

Signature:

NROUTE TRANSIT COMMISSION DRIVERS GUIDELINES

- 1. The operation of wheelchair lifts and securement systems should be checked daily on all buses.**
- 2. Report lifts failures as soon as possible.**
- 3. Persons having difficulty entering a vehicle using the stairs, but not using a wheelchair, should be allowed to stand on the lift. (Equipment complying with Part 38 of Regulations only.)**
- 4. Drivers should not attempt to lift an occupied wheelchair. If difficulty arises in properly positioning an occupied wheelchair, the driver should have the person transfer to the nearest seat, if possible.**
- 5. Properly secure all mobility aids; i.e. walkers, unoccupied wheelchairs, three wheeled scooters, etc.**
- 6. ADA eligible riders should be allowed to travel with service animals trained to assist them.**
- 7. Drivers should not push wheelchairs across grass lawns, gravel, or up and down stairs.**
- 8. Wheelchair users should be transported in a forward-facing or rear-facing position. (Exceptions are permitted on equipment prior to Part 38 only.)**
- 9. Major intersections, transfer points, and destinations should be announced for visually impaired persons upon request.**
- 10. Advise visually impaired passengers of any obstruction or uneven pavement surfaces.**
- 11. If a visually impaired person requests assistance when boarding or leaving the bus, let the person grasp your arm and lead them. Do not grasp the person's arm and attempt to guide them.**
- 12. When communicating with a passenger with a hearing impairment, speak slowly and look directly at the person**

- when you speak. Be prepared to communicate in writing if necessary.
13. If there is a need to get the attention of a hearing-impaired person, gently touch their arm.
 14. Persons must be permitted to travel with respirators, portable oxygen and other life support equipment. All portable life support equipment should be secured for the safety of other passengers.
 15. Do not assume that elderly or disabled passengers need your assistance. Always ask before providing help.
 16. Paratransit service is curb to curb and passengers should be offered the level of assistance applicable to their condition and the situation.
 17. When necessary, on Paratransit trips, walk alongside persons using mobility aids, such as canes and walkers, to ensure their safety.
 18. Priority seating with easy access is intended for elderly and disabled passengers on all buses. If boarding a crowded bus, politely ask other riders to relocate if necessary.
 19. If behavioral problems are encountered, handle the situation in a calm manner, using your best judgement, and report the incident to the NROUTE office staff as soon as possible.
 20. Please refer to the NROUTE Paratransit Program Policies and Procedures for further information.

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