



PARATRANSIT FUNDAMENTALS & COVID -19 RESPONSES

Welcome to CATS HOST WEEK

Eno Max



WHAT IS CATS PARATRANSIT?

- Shared ride service with pre-scheduled pick up/drop off appointments
- Origin to destination service for persons with certified disabilities
- Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and companions are permitted
- Trip reservations must be made at least one day in advance

PARATRANSIT OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Protects against discrimination, based on disability

Requires comparable paratransit services by entities that provide fixed route service

STS provides service within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of local fixed bus routes

Certification process is required

Service Challenges Due to COVID-19

Operating with limited vehicle capacity

Providing a safe working environment

Decreased Ridership

Operations with decreased staffing availability (emergency leave etc.)

Changes to fixed route service affected paratransit operations



RESPONSES TO COVID-19

Potential Permanent Changes

- ❖ Curb to Curb service
- ❖ Continuation of PPE - staff and clients
- ❖ Seating barriers on paratransit fleet



RESPONSES TO COVID- 19

Temporary Changes

- ❖ Free fare to customers - initial 5 months
- ❖ Hazard pay for frontline staff
- ❖ Free masks provided to all customers
- ❖ Mid-trip cleanings for all revenue vehicles

COVID-19 VACCINE DIRECT RIDE PROGRAM

CATS Informational Release to the Public CATS to Provide Direct Service for Vaccine Appointments at Bojangles Coliseum

Charlotte, N.C. – Starting Wednesday, February 3, Charlotte Area Transit “Paratransit” will provide direct bus service to Bojangles Coliseum for community members to access their scheduled COVID-19 vaccine appointments. CATS will provide two direct bus routes; one from the Charlotte Transportation Center (CTC) and one from Eastland Community Transit Center.

Service will operate Monday through Saturday starting at 7:30 p.m. Each day, the last direct trip to Bojangles Coliseum will depart the transit centers at 4:30 p.m.



PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Certification

Application Submission
Functional Assessment

Eligibility

- Unconditional Eligibility
- Conditional Eligibility
- Temporary Eligibility
- Ineligibility

Transportation


- **FREE** Transportation to Assessment Upon Request



SCENARIO ONE - Part 1

CUSTOMER DEMAND & AGENCY OBLIGATION

A caregiver schedules a reservation for a client in addition to requesting the client be seated in a specific seat on the left side of the vehicle.



Question – What is the reservationist's obligation to the customer based on your agency's policy?

SCENARIO ONE Part 2

CUSTOMER DEMAND & AGENCY OBLIGATION

The operator arrives at the pickup location and the dispatcher notes indicate a specific seating request; however, there are no available seats on the left side of the vehicle.



Question – What is the paratransit agency's obligation based on ADA regulations?

SCENARIO ONE RESPONSE

- Part One
- CATS reservationists are trained to acknowledge a client's request and enter instructions into the scheduling software system for dispatch and operator situational awareness.
- Part Two
- According to ADA regulations, personal preference accommodations are not an ADA requirement.
- <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-reasonable-transport-mods>

SCENARIO TWO

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY & MANAGING CHANGE

A client was temporarily certified for Paratransit service following a surgery that required the use of a wheelchair. The client fully recovered and no longer requires a wheelchair.

Question – What steps should the agency take in response to the client's change in status?



SCENARIO TWO RESPONSE

- Operators are responsible for notifying **dispatch** of the significant change, discontinued use of a wheelchair. Dispatch will notify the eligibility and certification staff that the customer may require a reassessment.

- Response
 - When significant changes in capabilities are noted, an agency may seek new verification from the appropriate medical professional who provided the initial verification.

 - The agency must engage the client and verify the medical professional's contact information.

- FTA recommends that transit systems should contact applicants and/or professionals when apparent inconsistencies or unclear information is identified.
 - <https://dredf.org/ADAtg/elig.pdf>

SCENARIO THREE

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY & ADA SERVICE AREA

It's determined that an applicant for paratransit service resides outside of the ADA service area. The applicant states they regularly see paratransit vehicles in their area.



Question – What is the agency's response to the applicant?

SCENARIO THREE RESPONSE



- CATS Paratransit operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of all fixed route service and is compliant with ADA/FTA guidelines.
- For applicants residing outside of the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area, CATS assists by identifying alternate locations within the service area for pick-up and drop-off.

➤ Importance -

FTA Sec. 37.131 Service criteria for complementary paratransit.

The following service criteria apply to complementary paratransit required by Sec. 37.121 of this part.

(a) Service Area--

(1) Bus (i) The entity shall provide complementary paratransit service to origins and destinations within corridors with a width of three-fourths of a mile on each side of each fixed route. The corridor shall include an area with a three-fourths of a mile radius at the ends of each fixed route.

REFERENCES

- Civil Rights/ADA | FTA. (2021). Retrieved 9 July 2021, from <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/civil-rightsada>
- Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR). (2021). Retrieved 9 July 2021, from <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=d315855e2f2c9f940970f4c191349c12&rgn=div5&view=text&node=49:1.0.1.1.27&idno=49>
- FTA / U.S DOT (Office of Grants Management). (1993). *ADA Paratransit Eligibility Manual* (pp. 42-43). Washington DC.
- Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund. (Retrieved 9 July 2021). Topic Guides on ADA Transportation (June 2010) from <https://dredf.org/ADAtg/elig.pdf>