

WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE

Our priorities are:

- Safety
- Customer Service
- Effective scheduling

**City of Winchester
Department of Public Transportation**

301 East Cork Street
Winchester, VA 22601
(540)662-3982

WHAT IS ADA PARATANSIT SERVICE? The Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into Federal law in 1990. This is a civil rights law that requires all public entities operating fixed route transit to provide complementary paratransit to persons with disabilities. Eligibility is to be strictly limited to individuals:

Any person with a disability who is unable to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle without the assistance of another person (except for the operator of a lift or other boarding device).

Any person with a disability who could ride an accessible vehicle, but the route is not accessible.

Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a boarding/disembarking location.

WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT GUIDELINES: Our services are designed for the rider. We use special equipped vehicles and skilled drivers and dispatchers to provide the safest and quickest transportation possible. Our guidelines incorporate the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and many Federal, State, and City requirements.

Paratransit passengers are welcome to use the fixed route bus for any of their trips.

WHAT IS FIXED ROUTE SERVICE? Fixed route buses provide service within the City of Winchester. Service is at designated bus stops on set schedules along specific routes. Fixed route buses have features to make riding easier, including wheelchair lifts, kneeling features, low floor buses and automated stop announcement systems.

WHAT IS WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT? Paratransit service is a public transportation service that operates within the City of Winchester for people whose disability prevents them from riding fixed route transit some or all of the time. Paratransit is a curb to curb, shared ride public transportation service. Wheelchair accessible vans and buses serve the patron. You must call at least a

day in advance to make an appointment. Drivers are not allowed to enter homes or assist passengers with packages. Assistance from the vehicle to the first doorway or from the doorway to the vehicle, for customers who need additional assistance to complete the trip is available.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE? Any person living in or visiting the City of Winchester who has a disability preventing them from using the fixed route transit, who is certified eligible for Paratransit Service. An application must be filled out and completed by a doctor.

TYPE OF ELIGIBILITY:

- Unconditional eligibility- persons whose disability prevents them from using fixed route service in all situations. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).
- Conditional eligibility- person who can use fixed route service in certain conditions but requires Paratransit service for some trips. Conditions may include extreme weather, an inaccessible bus stop, temporary construction projects, steep terrain, or distance from bus stop to the trip origin or destination. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).
- Temporary eligibility- persons, who have recently undergone surgery or other medical treatment, has a medical condition such as a broken leg or someone with a cognitive disability expected to be resolved over time with medication or therapy. If a temporary disability is indicated, the certification will be for the expected duration of the condition (as indicated by doctor). Can be extended by a physician.
- Visitors- Individuals who reside outside of the City of Winchester. Winchester Transit provides a complementary paratransit service to individuals with disabilities who are visiting. Visitors are eligible for 21 days of service in a 365-day period beginning on the first day the service is used by the visitor. For individuals who reside outside of the City of Winchester service jurisdiction, the City of Winchester shall certify an individual with a disability as a visitor when providing documentation of

residence and a statement indicating that because of their disability they are unable to access the fixed route.

HOW TO APPLY: Applicants will complete an application for ADA Paratransit Certification form. Simply call (540)662-3982 for an application to be mailed. For individuals with vision-impairments or developmental disabilities, information will be sent, at their request, to a third party for assistance. Application instructions will be given within the application. Applications are also available online at www.winchesterva.gov/transit.

COST:

- \$1.50 per one-way trip for adults
- Personal Care Attendants (PCA) who assist at home and at the destination ride at no charge.
- A companion may travel for the normal fare if a seat is available. Additional riders will be allowed on a space available basis if notice is given when the reservation is made.
- You must have the **exact** fare; drivers are unable to make change.

HOURS OF SERVICE: Paratransit hours are the same as WinReady on demand buses and are in service one hour before and one hour after the fixed route loop bus.

Monday-Friday: 6:00AM - 8:00PM

Saturday: 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Winchester Transit is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Winchester Transit is closed on Friday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, Winchester Transit is closed on Monday.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRIP: Once you have been certified eligible for ADA Paratransit service, you should become familiar with how to arrange a trip.

- When calling dispatch for a trip, be sure to state that paratransit service is being requested.
- Trips must be scheduled at least the day before service is requested. Eligible riders may request service by calling (540) 662-3982. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8AM to 5PM. There will not be a dispatcher available after hours or on Sundays. Therefore, please leave a message on the voicemail system. In order to leave a voicemail message, simply remain on the line and you will be automatically transferred to the voicemail system. This message should contain the same information that you would give the dispatcher if calling at any other time. Riders will receive a call to confirm their trip request. Trips are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and are not based on priority.
- All trips, except medical “will call” trips, must be scheduled as a “to” and “from” trip. We will not schedule “wait” trips; all return trips must be scheduled at the same time the original trip is scheduled. A “will call” is when the rider is ready to be picked up from a medical trip. They must call the Transit Dept. at (540) 662-3982 and they will be accommodated as soon as time permits in the schedule. Please note that if the van is in an area when a will-call occurs, the van will pick up the will-call while in that area. This may result in a short delay in arrival time to and from a destination.
- For time sensitive appointments, please let the scheduler know the time you need to arrive by. Allow yourself time to exit the bus and make your way inside the destination.
- If you must cancel a scheduled trip, please call the dispatcher as soon as possible. Failure to complete a requested trip without notifying the dispatcher prior to the scheduled pickup time will be recorded as a “no show” (please see the no-show policy below). Waiving of the “no show” will be considered for those individuals who were unable to make the scheduled trip due to an unexpected hospitalization or illness and errors made by a third party in appointment scheduling. Other extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order to cancel a trip scheduled for a time when the dispatcher is not in the office, you must call and leave a message on the voicemail system indicating

your desire to cancel a scheduled trip. The City of Winchester reserves the right to temporarily suspend a person's eligibility for service if an excessive number of no shows are recorded for that person.

- Be ready and waiting for the paratransit vehicle. The driver is not required to wait longer than five minutes past the specified appointment time.
- Trips may be scheduled up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Since scheduling is done on a first-come, first-served basis, some adjusting of times may be required in order to accommodate all riders. The cooperation of each patron is essential in enabling us to provide efficient transportation for all riders.

There are several pieces of information that we will need from you when scheduling your trips:

1. Name, address and telephone number to verify that we have your correct information.
2. The day and time of your scheduled appointment.
3. Where you are going. This will require the name of the location as well as the address. If you are going to a doctor's office, we will require the name of the doctor, the name of the practice the doctor is associated with and the address of the doctor's office (including suite number).
4. If you will be a will call (for medical appointments only) or if you will require a return trip.
5. The purpose of your trip (i.e., medical, recreation, shopping, etc.)
6. Whether a personal care assistant or companion will accompany you.
7. Whether you will be using a walker, wheelchair or other mobility device.

SERVICE AREA: Paratransit operates in the city limits of Winchester and to destinations that are $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from any fixed route bus stop sign.

NO SHOW POLICY: A "no-show" is when a rider fails to notify the transit office of a cancellation and the van arrives to pick them up. It is also considered a "no-show" when the rider is not ready to board the van at the scheduled pick-up time and the driver must leave in order to continue on schedule (the driver will wait a maximum of 5 minutes).

Riders with a pattern or practice of no shows may be suspended. No-shows will be considered excessive if the person's travel history indicates a percentage of no-shows that exceeds two times the system average. When no-shows occur, and before they become excessive, the dispatcher will contact the rider by phone. The person will be advised of the no-show policy. If no-shows continue, a letter will be sent to notify the person that their eligibility will be temporarily suspended. Eligibility will be suspended for one week for a first violation and one month for a second or subsequent violation. The suspension of service will become effective 30 days from the date of the letter of notification, in order to allow the individual to appeal the suspension.

If you feel you have been considered a “no- show” in error, you may contact the Transit Office at (540)662-3982 to contest your “no-show.”

If your rider privileges are suspended, you may contact the Transit Office at (540) 662-3982 or at Winchester Transit, Attn: Renee Wells, 301 E. Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601, to exercise your right to appeal.

APPLICATION APPEALS PROCESS: Should an applicant wish to appeal a decision regarding paratransit eligibility, Winchester Transit will provide an applicant with an appeals application. The applicant is not required to fill out the appeals application prior to having the opportunity to be heard; however, the intent to appeal must be filed by phone or by application within 60-days of the denial being issued.

All appeals will be heard and decided on within 30-days from the date of the notification from the applicant.

To exercise your right to appeal, please contact Perry Eisenach at (540) 667-1815 or at City of Winchester, Attn: Perry Eisenach, 15 N. Cameron Street, Winchester, VA 22601.

PASSENGER SAFETY: The safety of our customers and drivers is our primary responsibility as a transit provider. Bus transportation, like all automotive transportation, involves frequent changes of speed, merging, lane changes, some sharp turns, and unexpected stops. These characteristics create potential risks of injury for passengers traveling in unsecured mobility devices as they

have the potential to tip over, causing injury to themselves or other passengers. Additionally, many scooter manufacturers explicitly advise that remaining seated on a scooter while in a moving vehicle may result in personal injury and or property damage. It is the responsibility of the passenger to make sure their mobility device is in good working condition (brakes tight & frames secure). All mobility devices must have a safety belt and it is the responsibility of the driver to keep it fastened while riding the bus. All mobility devices (scooters, wheelchairs, etc.) will be secured to the vehicle using the installed security system.

MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT POLICY: All mobility devices will be properly secured to the vehicle using the installed securement system (4-point tie down). Winchester Transit drivers will decline transport to a passenger that refuses to have their mobility device properly secured as defined in 49 CFR 37.165 (c) (2) (3). Passengers using a mobility device will be requested to wear a seat belt. Those able to do so will be requested to move to a seat and use the vehicle seat belt system if vehicle is so designed.

Please note: Drivers have a choice to wear protective gloving when handling a mobility device for their safety and for the safety of the passenger.

OTHER:

- Smoking, drinking, eating, and foul language is prohibited while on the bus.
- Fares must be paid when boarding the bus. Remember, your bus driver cannot make change.
- Our buses are not equipped with storage areas for bags. Passengers are only permitted to bring as many bags as they can carry in one trip. We ask that passengers not occupy an empty seat with bags as we may be picking up additional passengers who will need to occupy the empty seat. If planning a large shopping trip, make arrangements to have an alternative ride home or bring along a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).
- Service animals are welcome. Pets are only permitted in approved pet carriers.

**WINCHESTER TRANSIT SYSTEM
PARATRANSIT SYSTEM
RIDER'S GUIDE CERTIFICATION**

I _____, have received and reviewed the Winchester Paratransit rider's guide and understand the terms and conditions. Further, I understand that failure to comply with the outlined guidelines may result in my riding privileges being suspended.

Date

Signature

Please return to: Winchester Transit System
301 East Cork Street
Winchester, VA 22601