

ADA Requirements and Metro Paratransit Service

This is no substitute for the legal requirements as set out in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the U.S. Department of Transportation's implementing regulations at 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, 38, and 39.

ADA Eligibility

ADA paratransit eligibility is limited to individuals who cannot use fixed route bus service due to a disability. This includes individuals who cannot navigate the bus system or cannot get to or from a bus route. The key here is that the disability prevents use of the bus as opposed to making it more difficult or inconvenient to use. Eligibility may apply unconditionally or only when specific conditions are present such as snow and ice. Eligibility can be temporary in nature (i.e. during recovery following hip surgery), intermittent (i.e. during exacerbations of a health condition), or permanent.

Over & Above - ADA allows transit systems to determine winter trip eligibility for Category II riders on a trip-by-trip basis. Madison Metro allows Category II eligible riders to determine for themselves on a trip-by-trip basis during the winter months.

ADA Service Criteria

Hours and Days of Service

The hours and days of service for paratransit must mirror the fixed route service under the ADA requirements. If a person can travel to a location using fixed route service at a particular time of day, an ADA paratransit eligible person must be able to use paratransit service to get to that same location at that time of day. The paratransit service area may, however, expand and contract as individual bus routes begin and end operation each day. And finally, if fixed route service is provided on weekends and holidays, ADA paratransit service must be provided as well.

Service Area

ADA paratransit service must be provided in the area within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of fixed routes. Any small areas that are not within these defined service corridors but are surrounded by the corridors are also required to be served by paratransit. This constitutes the core service area for paratransit. Paratransit service areas beyond this core service area may likely experience an expansion or contraction of service during the course of a day as the fixed routes begin and end operations. The ADA required paratransit service does not, however, include service along commuter routes.

Over & Above - ADA exempts transit systems from providing paratransit service along commuter routes. Madison Metro provides paratransit service along portions of commuter routes where corresponding fixed route supplements the commuter route during off peak times.

Trip Reservations and Response Time

ADA paratransit service is required to be scheduled and provided in response to service requests made on the previous day. Such next day service requests must be taken during reservation hours that reflect normal business hours on each day prior to a service day. Each ride request can be negotiated with the eligible rider up to one hour before or after the desired ride time. While same day trip requests are not required, Metro does make same day trip modifications to scheduled rides on a space and time available basis.

Over & Above - ADA does not require transit systems to make same day trip request modifications. Madison Metro does make same day trip modifications on a space available basis.

Over & Above - ADA only requires transit systems to provide curb-to-curb paratransit service. Madison offers door-to-door service.

Over & Above - ADA requires transit systems to accommodate common wheelchair dimensions as defined in the Act. Madison Metro accommodates wheelchairs in excess of common wheelchair dimensions on a space available basis (less than 1% of trips).

Fares

The fare for a paratransit trip to an ADA eligible rider must not be more than twice the adult cash fare (non-discounted) on fixed route service. The Metro adult cash fare is currently \$2.00 which would allow for up to a \$4.00 paratransit fare. No fare may be charged for a personal care attendant who accompanies an ADA paratransit rider on the paratransit service. The fare for others accompanying the eligible paratransit rider however is the same fare charged to the eligible rider. And finally, the ADA allows for the establishment of negotiated fares with social service agencies to secure guaranteed service to the organization for their clientele (Agency fares).

Over & Above - ADA allows transit systems to charge up to two (2) times the fixed route fare for paratransit service. Madison Metro charges \$1.25 over the fixed route fare (\$2.00) for paratransit service.

Over & Above - Under ADA, customers are responsible for paying their fare at the time of boarding. Madison Metro does not collect a fare for trips that are part of negotiated service agreements with human service agencies that pay for all or

part of the cost of the paratransit trip. Current cost of a Metro paratransit trip is about \$34.00.

Over & Above - ADA allows one person (a Personal Care Attendant, PCA) to travel with an eligible customer at no charge so that the customer may travel independently. Madison Metro, at customer's request, designates specific customer as Leave Attended, meaning that the driver will make sure that a responsible person will meet the customer at the destination in order for the customer to travel independently (currently 28% of trips).

Trip Purpose

The ADA requirements do not allow restrictions on paratransit rides based on the trip purpose. In addition, trips may not be prioritized based on the trip purpose. For example, a trip to work cannot have priority in scheduling over a shopping trip. Trip purpose restrictions, however, may apply to service features such as subscription service that exceed the ADA requirements. The Metro transit paratransit service does offer subscription service although trip purpose restrictions do not apply.

Capacity Constraints

Limitations on ADA paratransit service to eligible individuals are not allowed. This includes restrictions on the number of trips provided to an individual or the establishment of waiting lists for service. Operational practices that could limit service are also not allowed. This could include substantial numbers of untimely pickups for rides, trip denials or missed trips, or trips with excessive trip lengths. This requirement for no patterns or practices of capacity constraints can be one of the most challenging of the ADA requirements and needs ongoing monitoring.

Over & Above - ADA allows transit systems to limit subscription trip requests and establish subscription waiting lists in order to avoid demand-response denials. Madison Metro does not limit subscription trip requests. Madison Metro does not deny trip requests.