



***RIDER'S  
INFORMATION GUIDE  
TO PARA-TRANSIT  
SERVICE***



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# ***RIDER'S INFORMATION GUIDE TO ADA PARA-TRANSIT 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.

## **I. 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 trip purposes within the corporate limits of Lafayette. If you are 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 is the corporate limits of Lafayette.

### **Service Days and Hours**

Para-transit pick-ups commence Monday thru Friday at 5:45 a.m. and ending at 10:00 p.m. Para-Transit scheduled pick-ups on Saturday begin at 5:45 a.m. and end at 10:00 p.m. Service hours and days exclude holidays observed by Lafayette Consolidated Government.

### **Certification Process**

To apply, complete and mail back the application provided by Lafayette Consolidated Government's Transit Division. When your completed application is received, it will be evaluated by Lafayette Transit System personnel to determine how your disability or health related condition

affects your ability to ride the Lafayette Transit System fixed-route bus 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 Lafayette Consolidated Government's receipt of your completed application, you will be notified by letter from the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Transit Supervisor as to your eligibility determination/status.

Applicants who are denied eligibility may first appeal to the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Transit Manager at (337) 291-8570. Applicants who are not satisfied with the determination of the Transit Manager may then appeal to the Public Works Director. Applicants who are not satisfied with the determination of the Public Works Director may then appeal to the Chief Administrative Officer. The decision by the Chief Administrative Officer shall be the final determination by Lafayette Consolidated Government.

Recertification after the Para-Transit rider's initial application certification is not required. However, should the rider have no use of the system for three consecutive years, the original certification will be invalidated and the rider would then be required to resubmit their application for Para-Transit services.

### **Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges**

Acadiana Transit will honor certifications from other transit/Para-transit 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 adequate verification.

If an individual does not have verification, but claims to be ADA Para-transit eligible, Acadiana Transit will request proof of permanent residency and if a disability is not readily apparent or obvious, medical documentation of the disability is required. The "out of area visitor" may use the service for twenty-one (21) calendar days. If more than twenty-one (21) calendar days is needed, the individual must make a request to Lafayette Consolidated Government for determination of ADA Para-transit eligibility. Guidelines identified within this document must be observed by "out of town visitors."

## **Making a Ride Reservation**

### **Numbers to call**

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

LA Relay 1 (800)846-5277

**Reservations may be made or cancelled during the following times (excluding holidays):**

<b>Days of Service</b>	<b>Cancellations</b>	<b>Reservations</b>
Monday-Friday	3:45 am - 10:30 pm	3:45 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday	3:45 am - 4:00 pm	6:00 am - 10:00 am
Sunday	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Holidays w/ next day service	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Ride requests may be made up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Acadiana Transit will attempt to provide same day service if the current vehicles can accommodate the trip without impacting others.

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 number. 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 for those locations (including building name, specific drop-off, pick-up information, and doctor’s name and suite number if applicable).
- If you will be traveling with an attendant, companion (including children), or service animal.
- If you or anyone accompanying you will be traveling using a wheelchair, scooter, or other equipment.
- Any additional information the driver may need to help you travel.

If your trip is for a medical appointment you may ask for “will-call” type of trip. Upon completion of your medical appointment contact Acadiana

Transit to notify 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; therefore, it's best to allow plenty of time to transport you to and from your destination. If you are unsure of how much time you should allow 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 50% of total qualified riders. Subscription waiting lists exist and are reviewed periodically to see if additions will create increased ridesharing 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 travelling, 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.

### **Destination Notification**

Paratransit riders can request to have calls made to destination sites to notify of their pending arrival. This notification shall be made from either an on-board cell phone or through notification to the vendor central dispatch office via two-way radio, which would have personnel available to make the notification call.

## **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 pick you up. Special requests by passengers for specific vehicles and drivers will not 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 your negotiated “ready time” is at 8 am, your 30-minute pickup window is from 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. If you fail to board the vehicle within the 5 minutes, 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 are not ready, the driver will wait until your pickup window starts and then an additional 5 minutes before departing.

## **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 later than two (2) hours before the Para-transit passenger’s scheduled trip as noted under Reservation / Cancellations on page 4 of this guide. 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 passengers do not cancel in accordance with Reservations/Cancellations on page 4 of this guide, or are not available to board within 5 minutes, it is considered a “no-show” on the part of the passenger.

Passengers 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 in accordance with Reservations/Cancellations on page 4 of this guide.
- Are prepared to board at the starting time of the pickup window and within 5 minutes after the vehicle arrives.

Circumstances outside passenger's control, as determined solely by the Transit Supervisor, will not be considered as a no-show.

Examples of circumstances may include, depending on the details and circumstances:

- 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.

### **Wheelchair Lift Policy:**

The wheelchair lifts/ramps on Para-transit vehicles will be utilized in the same manner as on 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 and indicated on the rider's Para-transit application. Otherwise, if the Para-transit 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 One Dollar & Fifty Cents (\$1.50) per one-way trip.

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

### **Boarding With a Mobility Device**

Acadiana Transit vehicles are lift-equipped and will accommodate mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers.

- Drivers are trained to operate the lift and will secure you after boarding.
- Boarding while standing on the lift is allowed.

### **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.

## **II. PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

### **Passenger responsibilities include:**

- Read all sections of the Rider's Information Guide to ADA Para-Transit service 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.
- Eating, drinking, or smoking within the vehicle is prohibited.

### **III. CARRYON BAG POLICY:**

Operator will assist with three (3) large or six (6) small bags per trip, per passenger. Assistance with bags would be given upon request of the passenger. A bag would be defined as (one) 1 large paper or plastic sack (weight not to exceed 10 lbs) or two (2) small plastic bags (weight not to exceed five (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 up to seven (7) days.

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

### **IV. 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, such as 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 and/or wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Secure child safety systems in the vehicle or children into such systems.
- Not permitted to carry packages.

### **V. SUSPENSION OF SERVICE**

Suspension of rider eligibility will occur due repeated error by the passenger resulting in scheduled trips not being taken. The “no-show” policy will consider and take into account the passenger’s frequency of use prior to suspension of service. Suspension of services will be imposed when a clear, true pattern of practice of missing scheduled trips is not by

Lafayette Transit Staff. These types of errors include no-shows (including instances of lateness), untimely cancellations, and abusive or disruptive behavior.

**A. Suspension of Service for No-Shows:**

<b>Number of "No-Shows"</b>	<b>Calendar Day of Service</b>	<b>Results / Action</b>
5% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Will result in a warning letter
8% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Will result in a letter indicating a suspension of service for three (3) calendar days
12% of scheduled trips	within 60 Calendar days	Will result in a letter indicating a suspension of service for seven (7) calendar days
15% of scheduled trips	within 60 Calendar days	Will result in a letter indicating a suspension of service for fourteen (14) calendar days
Any further no-shows		Will result in a letter indicating loss of eligibility

**B. Suspension of Service for Cancellations:**

<b>Scheduled Trips</b>	<b>Cancellations within</b>	<b>Results / Action</b>
8% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Will result in a warning letter
12% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Suspension of service for seven (7) consecutive days
15% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Suspension of service for fourteen (14) consecutive days
20% of scheduled trips	within 30 Calendar days	Suspension of service for twenty-one (21) consecutive days

**C. Service Suspension for Abusive or Disruptive Behavior:**

Passengers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct directed at other riders or Acadiana Transit staff will be subject to suspension of service for up to thirty (30) days. 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, eating or drinking in the vehicle, or defacing equipment.

Suspension for abusive or disruptive behaviors which violates the no tolerance policy of Lafayette Consolidated Government will occur as follows:

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

The only exceptions to the service suspension policy will be made due to situations beyond control of the passenger as determined solely by the Transit Supervisor.

Suspension may not be imposed for circumstances, depending on the specific details, for following:

- 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.

### **Steps of the Suspension Process**

If you receive a proposed suspension of service letter, you will be provided an opportunity to explain the reason for each occurrence. **Prior** to suspension for incidents other than for abusive or seriously disruptive behavior, you will receive a **written warning** of the proposed suspension period citing the reason. **You will also receive written directions to appeal your proposed suspension.**

### **Steps of the Appeal Process**

Applicants who receive a Letter of Suspension or are denied eligibility may first appeal, in writing, to:

Lafayette Consolidated Government  
Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 4017-C  
Lafayette, LA 70502-4017

The Transit and Parking Manager shall respond within ten (10) calendar days to an appeal. Applicants who are not satisfied with the determination of Transit Manager may then appeal, in writing to:

Lafayette Consolidated Government  
Public Works Department  
P.O. Box 4017-C  
Lafayette, LA 70502-4017

The Director shall respond within ten (10) calendar days to an appeal. Applicants who are not satisfied with the determination of the Public Works Director may then appeal, in writing, to:

Lafayette Consolidated Government  
Chief Administrative Officer  
P.O. Box 4017-C  
Lafayette, LA 70502-4017

The decision by the Chief Administrative Officer shall be the final determination by Lafayette Consolidated Government.

## **VI. KEEPING ELIGIBILITY AND INFORMATION UP TO DATE**

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

- 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" passenger, and the passenger's file is "archived." If a reservationist indicates you that you are an inactive passenger, you will be asked to verify basic information in your file. Acadiana Transit will reactivate your records and provide you with service.

## **VII. PARA-TRANSIT CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE**

Acadiana Transit staff cares 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?

Alternately, you may write to:

Acadiana Transit  
930 Center Street  
Lafayette, LA 70501

## **VIII. TITLE VI OF THE 1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

### ***Title VI***

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

### ***Applicability***

Title VI covers all agencies receiving federal funds. Some examples include student aid, employee training, grants, loans, property, loans of personnel, tax incentives, and technical assistance.

Title VI applies to discrimination throughout an agency, not just actions involving federally assisted programs.

### ***Filing a complaint***

Lafayette Consolidated Government, in its administration of government functions, actively ensures nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI states "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." If you have any questions or comments related to Title VI call 337-291-8410.

**IX. CONTACT INFORMATION AS OF February 3, 2016  
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE):**

**Acadiana Transit Contact List:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail Address</b>
Director	(337)235-8976	<a href="mailto:Director@acadianatransit.com">Director@acadianatransit.com</a>
Office Manager	(337)235-8976	<a href="mailto:officemanager@acadianatransit.com">officemanager@acadianatransit.com</a>
Operations Supervisor	(337)235-8976	<a href="mailto:opsupervisor@acadianatransit.com">opsupervisor@acadianatransit.com</a>
Dispatch	(337)235-8976	<a href="mailto:dispatch@acadianatransit.com">dispatch@acadianatransit.com</a>

**Lafayette Consolidated Government Contact List:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail Address</b>
Transit Supervisor	(337)291-8571	<a href="mailto:transitsupervisor@lafayettela.gov">transitsupervisor@lafayettela.gov</a>
Transit & Parking Manager	(337)291-7030	<a href="mailto:transitparkingmanager@lafayettela.gov">transitparkingmanager@lafayettela.gov</a>
Public Works Director	(337)291-8502	
Chief Administrative Officer	(337)291-8311	