

## What Is Paratransit?

Complementary Paratransit is a specialized, door-to-door transport service for people who are not able to ride the fixed-route transit system because of a disability. This may be due to an inability to:

- board, ride or disembark independently from any readily accessible vehicle on the regular fixed-route system
- use a particular route or stop because it is not 100% accessible.
- get to or from bus stops on the fixed route system.

The goal of the paratransit program is to ensure that all Americans have access to transit to meet basic mobility needs. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 recognized that people with disabilities have the same rights as other citizens to access services and facilities that are available to the public, including transportation. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for the enforcement of ADA's transportation requirements.

## Eligibility Requirements

ADA Paratransit requires eligibility certification from TCAT. Please contact the ADA office at 277-9388 x420 for an application. In order to be eligible an individual must be able to meet one of the following three eligibility requirements:

**Category 1:** Individuals who are unable to board, ride or disembark from a

lift-equipped transit vehicle on the regular fixed-route system without the assistance of another person. Among others, this category includes people with physical or cognitive impairments who are prevented by their disability from learning to navigate the system.

**Category 2:** Individuals who are able to board, ride or disembark from a lift-equipped transit vehicle, but the fixed route on which they want to travel is not 100% accessible, for example, the vehicle's lift or boarding device cannot be deployed at the stop they want to use.

**Category 3:** Individuals with a specific impairment-related condition that prevents them from getting to or from a bus stop location. Significant inconvenience, discomfort, or difficulty does not form a basis for eligibility under this section. Further, barriers not under control of the public entity providing the fixed-route service (such as distance or weather) do not by themselves form a basis for eligibility under this section. These situations are resolved on a case-by-case basis, determined by evaluating the interaction between the impairment-related condition and the barrier in question.

## Service Area

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Paratransit serves the areas of Tompkins County currently receiving public transit through Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT).

The ADA Paratransit eligible region is defined as a three quarter mile wide corridor on either side of the fixed bus route. The origination and destination of the requested trip must be within these parameters.

## Times of Service

TCAT has a contract with Gadabout Transportation Services to operate the ADA Paratransit during daytime, evenings, and weekends. The ADA Paratransit parallels the hours of the public bus system. Contact Gadabout (273-1878) for schedule information.

## Companion Riders

- A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may accompany the ADA passenger at no charge provided that the rider has been approved for a personal care attendant at the time of application. When making a reservation, be sure to indicate that you will be accompanied by a PCA to allow for adequate space on the bus.
- One guest is allowed to ride with an eligible ADA passenger. When you are making a reservation, please indicate that you will be accompanied by a companion. The companion must pay the appropriate fare. Additional guests may also ride on a space-available basis and must also pay the appropriate fare. Space for additional guests cannot be confirmed until the day of the trip.

## Reservations

- ADA Paratransit requires advance reservation which can be set up by calling the Gadabout scheduling office at 273-1878. Placing your reservation two business days in advance is preferred and may provide a pick up closer to the requested time. Reservations can be placed no later than 3:00pm on the business day prior to the requested trip.
- ADA Trips may not be prioritized based on purpose.
- Because this is a public transit service, the fare for a one-way trip is \$2.00 within TCAT's Zone One. This includes Pyramid Mall, BOCES, the Cayuga Medical Center, and the Tompkins County Airport. The fare for rural routes, or TCAT's Zone Two including Trumansburg, Caroline, Dryden, Newfield, or Danby is \$3.00 for a one way trip. Please contact the Gadabout scheduling office (273-1878) for additional information.

## Pick-up Times

You must call Gadabout (273-1878) between 2:00-4:30 pm the afternoon before or on the morning of your scheduled trip to get your exact pick-up time. Pick-up times will be within one hour of requested time. **You should be ready to be picked up at least fifteen minutes before that time. The bus will wait no longer than five minutes past your pick-up time before leaving without you.**

*(Pick-up Times continued on back)*

*(Pick-up Times continued)*

If the bus has not arrived by fifteen minutes past your pick-up time, please give Gadabout (273-1878) a call to check on the status of the bus. The bus is considered to be “on-time” as long as it arrives not earlier than fifteen minutes before the scheduled time or later than fifteen minutes past the scheduled time.

Drivers will wait five minutes after your scheduled pick-up time, even if they arrive early. Drivers arriving after your scheduled pick-up time must also wait five minutes before leaving. If you do not show up or if you are not ready, the driver will leave and it will be considered a no-show.

### **Cancellations & No-shows**

Cancellations must be made at least one hour prior to a scheduled trip by calling the Gadabout office at 273-1878. Cancellations made less than one hour before a scheduled trip will be considered non-notification. If you are calling before or after office hours you must leave a message on the answering machine. If you need to cancel on short notice or after hours you should also call the Gadabout driver on the cell phone (279-6425 or 280-0478), but they may not be available, so please always contact the Gadabout office.

**If the driver must leave because a rider is not ready to travel at their scheduled pick-up time, it will be considered a no-show.**

You will be sent a notification letter if you miss a ride. Under current ADA policy, 3 instances of no-show or non-notification for scheduled trips within a rolling six month period will result in a six-month suspension of ADA ridership rights or a \$45 fine. No-shows are a disservice to other patrons and should be strictly avoided.

### **Conduct**

Service can be suspended if a passenger engages in “violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct”.

### **Safety**

- Drivers may help passengers board and exit the bus and assist them to their door. Passengers are limited to six packages of groceries each. Passengers may bring a reasonable amount of luggage on the bus. Drivers will not enter any buildings. Drivers will assist persons using wheelchairs but will not assist wheelchairs over curbs, stairs, or other large obstacles. Drivers are required to help passengers secure wheelchairs and fasten seat belts.
- Traffic conditions may require the vehicle operator to make sudden stops, turns, or maneuvers. Fastening your seat-belt ensures a safer ride. You must fasten your seat-belt prior to the Gadabout vehicle’s movement. Drivers will assist in fastening and unfastening seat-belts upon request. This includes fastening the seat-belt/

shoulder harness for those using wheelchairs/scooters. Customers who refuse to wear seat-belts or seat-belt / shoulder harnesses will not be transported. However, an exception may be made for customers whose disability prohibits them from wearing seat-belts.

### **Right to Appeal**

If you disagree with a suspension of service, denial of eligibility, or with the conditions placed on your eligibility you have the right to appeal. Appeals must be filed in writing with the TCAT office within 60 days of the receipt of the original determination or suspension letter. For more information please contact TCAT ADA, at 607-277-9388 x420.

### **Subscription Service**

This service is offered to any customer who travels from the same location to the same destination at the same time of day for each trip, at least one day a week. These trips are prescheduled. You need to call if you wish to change, cancel or put trips on hold.

**To obtain an application for ADA paratransit or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Jenn Jennings at TCAT at 277-9388 ext. 420 or call Gadabout directly at 273-1878.**



277-RIDE (7433)  
www.tcatbus.com  
**TTY: 277-9766**



# **Complementary Paratransit Information Guide**

