



**ADA PARATRANSIT
SERVICES
GUIDE**



**Under the Americans
With Disabilities Act of
1990 (ADA)
July 2018 update April 2022**

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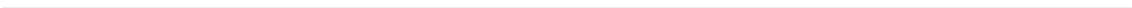


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PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY ADA Paratransit Services Guide

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) provides a shared-ride origin to destination Paratransit service in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Transportation is provided utilizing lift-equipped vans and a small number of ambulatory vehicles. Paratransit service is for individuals with disabilities which prevent them from riding the fixed route bus service. Customers who are unable to climb steps can enter vehicles utilizing the lift.

SERVICE AREA

PVRTA services 24 member communities. Under the ADA, transit systems are required to provide service within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route. A fixed route is defined as a specific route with timed stops. The PVRTA currently goes above and beyond this ADA requirement and provides paratransit services for all individuals residing within the geographic boundaries of the member community AND have been approved to utilize the service. If a fixed route enters an adjoining town that is not a member community, the paratransit vehicles will serve individuals who are $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the fixed route in that town.

PVRTA Member Communities:

Agawam, Amherst, Belchertown, Chicopee, E. Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, Palmer, Pelham, South Hadley, Springfield, Sunderland, Ware, W. Springfield, Westfield, Wilbraham, Williamsburg

ADA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

How to Apply for ADA Paratransit Services

1. Call (413) 732-6248 ext 2237 or toll free at 1-800-752-1638 ext. 2237, to schedule an appointment for an in-person interview to complete the application.

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
ATTN: ADA Coordinator
2808 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01107

Application Process

ADA Paratransit eligible individuals are:

- (1) Individuals who cannot independently board, ride, or disembark a fixed route accessible (lift-equipped) vehicle. This includes persons who cannot determine where to get on or off a fixed route.
- (2) Individuals with a specific impairment related condition which prevents them from getting to or from a boarding location or disembarking from such location.

PVTA determines eligibility for paratransit services utilizing the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Eligibility determinations will be made on an individual basis. There are three types of eligibility:

1. *Unconditional eligibility* – an individual is eligible for all trips on Paratransit service.

2. *Conditional eligibility* – an individual may be eligible for certain trips on Paratransit service.
3. *Temporary eligibility* – an individual is eligible for Paratransit service on a temporary basis. The length of time varies depending on medical necessity.

Applicants will be notified of their eligibility determinations within 21 days of receipt of the completed application, which includes a medical professional verification. Temporary eligibility will be given if the process exceeds 21 days. If you have any questions, call PVRTA at (413) 732-6248 ext. 2214.

Re-certification Process

All customers, regardless of eligibility type, will need to re-apply for Paratransit service on or before the expiration date on their eligibility approval letter. Three to four weeks prior to the expiration date, PVRTA will notify customers via U.S. Postal Mail of their recertification appointment. This letter will include the date, time, location and current certification expiration date. You may schedule a ride for this appointment, free of charge, by calling 413-739-7436, and please inform them that your appointment will run for about 45 minutes.

It is the customer's responsibility to notify PVRTA (413-732-6248 ext. 2214) when their condition changes. Often an individual's condition worsens and mobility aids are needed that were not needed when they were first certified for services.

The general rule is that an individual is certified for a period of three (3) years for unconditional and conditional eligibility, and less time for temporary eligibility.

Failure to come in for your appointment will result in the termination of your services upon your certification expiration date including any standing order you may have with the van service. PVRTA will allow for one extension for your eligibility of services if you are unable to attend your initial recertification appointment. However, this will only apply for individuals who re-schedule their recertification in advance (minimum of one day before appointment). If the individual no-shows the recertification appointment a letter requesting an extension of services must be provided for consideration by the PVRTA, otherwise your eligibility for the services will be terminated. These individuals will need to re-apply for paratransit services.

HOURS OF ADA PARATRANSIT OPERATION

PVRTA's paratransit program is required by ADA to operate the same days and hours as fixed route bus service. Days and hours of service vary community to community. Call the Call Center toll-free at 1-866277-7741 or (413) 739-7436 to inquire about hours of service for communities you may need to travel to/from. You can also find hours of service by community by visiting www.PVRTA.com. You can find the hours of service under the "ADA Mobility Impaired" link under the "Getting Around" header. If you are traveling from two separate areas, your travel time is also determined by availability of fixed route services in both communities. Not all PVRTA member communities have the fixed route span of services.

Holidays

No Service is provided on the following holidays:

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

Subscription Service/Standing Orders trips are not provided on holidays; therefore you are responsible for reserving your trips on those days. For more information on subscription trips/standing order please see the scheduling options section. The following holidays you need to book your trips if you have a standing order:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day and Veteran's Day

HOURS OF SENIOR VAN SERVICE

Senior Service (60 years old+) trips are provided 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Monday - Friday, on a space available basis with priority given to certified ADA passengers in accordance with federal law.

SCHEDULING ADA AND SENIOR VAN SERVICE

Reservations

ADA Reservations can be made between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM seven (7) days a week. Reservations may be made up to seven (7) days in advance, but no later than the previous day before 4:30 PM. Senior van service can be reserved Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. **If you are traveling to an appointment, be sure to tell the Reservation Staff what time you must arrive at your destination.** Then a correct pick-up time can be

determined. All service is “shared-ride”; your total travel time can allow for others to board and ride in the same vehicle. Your paratransit ride can at times take approximately the same amount of time a similar trip on the fixed route bus would take, and may not follow a direct route between your pick up and drop off location.

If you have multiple trips on the same day, they need to be scheduled at least sixty (60) minutes apart. This will allow for travel time and the utilization of the 20-minute window. This policy is in place to prevent the return trip from arriving before the original trip has been completed.

1 Hour Negotiation Rule

Occasionally we may need to ask a customer to change the requested pick-up time in order to accommodate their request for a reservation. The ADA allows PVRTA to negotiate a pick-up with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pick-up time. Customers can request their estimated pickup or drop off times at the time of reservation. These times may change slightly during the auto scheduling performed at the end of the day.

Example: If you request a pick-up time of 9:00 AM, the negotiated time could be one hour before or after that time. Negotiating pick-up times with customers gives a better estimated arrival time.

20-Minute Window

You will receive a phone call the night before your trip that will provide a 20-minute pick-up window. Customers should expect the vehicle to arrive within the pick-up window. Customers are expected to be ready at the beginning of the pick-up window; drivers will only wait five (5) minutes.

5 Minute Rule

Be Ready! Drivers are allowed to wait only five (5) minutes for the customer to board the service vehicle, so it is very important for the customer to be ready and waiting at the beginning of the pick-up window. It is your responsibility to be ready to take your trip. If you cannot be located or choose not to start boarding within five (5) minutes, the driver may leave and continue to the next pick-up. The 5 Minute Rule doesn't start until the beginning of your pick-up window.

Early Pick-ups

Sometimes your vehicle will arrive before the beginning of the window because of a cancellation or light traffic. If your vehicle arrives before the 20-minute pick-up window, you may wait to get on the vehicle until the start of your confirmed pick-up window, or you may get into the vehicle and leave right away. It's your choice. The 5 Minute Rule doesn't start until the beginning of your pick-up window.

Shared-Ride Service

All service is "shared-ride"; your total travel time will allow time for other passengers to board and ride in the same vehicle. Your paratransit ride may take approximately the same amount of time a similar trip on the fixed route bus would take, and may not follow a direct route between your pick up and drop off location.

Trip Cancellations

Trip cancellations are required no later than 1 hour before the start of the pick-up window. Trip changes are considered cancellations. Failure to cancel trips at least 1 hour before the scheduled pick-up will result in a late cancel (see No Shows).

Senior Service

In addition to the federally required ADA paratransit service, the PVRTA also provides Senior Service. Anyone 60 Years of age or older can call the reservation number, Toll Free at 1-866-277-7741 or (413) 739-7436 at least one day in advance to schedule a ride. Let the Reservation staff know you are calling for the Senior Service; they will take your trip information to schedule the ride.

**Senior Service is available within the PVRTA service area,
Monday thru Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

Helpful Suggestions When Making Reservations

When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- Your first and last name
 - Date when you want to travel
 - Telephone number
 - Pick-up address: number, street, suite number, city, zip, and entry code for any security entrances
 - Be specific about pick-up directions (Example: North Entrance, South Entrance, etc.)
 - Please make sure the location requested is accessible to lift vehicles, to ensure lift vehicles can enter and exit without backing
 - The house, apartment or mobile home number must be visible
- * Reminder: it is not possible for our vehicles to be parked for long periods of time at the entrance. Our vehicles cannot block any other vehicle or customer traffic. If you are waiting for a vehicle at

an entrance, be sure you are ready and waiting at the beginning of your pick-up window

- Your requested pick-up or requested drop-off time
- Your requested return time if you want a round trip
- Where you want to go; number, street, suite number, city, zip, etc.
- If you will be using a wheelchair or other mobility device
- If you will be accompanied by a personal care assistant (PCA) and/or companion (including children), and if they use a mobility device
- Any other information the paratransit driver should know to help you travel
- Ask the reservationist to read back the information back to you

When you call to schedule your trip, keep a record of the Reservation Staff person you spoke with, along with the date and time.

Calls May Be Monitored for Quality Assurance

Scheduling Options

When you call to schedule a ride please be aware of the following scheduling options as they may improve your control over your pick-up window.

A. Appointment

An appointment trip can be adjusted up to 1 hour of the desired appointment time in addition to the 20-minute pick up window. Trips with this scheduling option will not allow the trip to be adjusted that would result in arriving late to an appointment.

B. Return

Trips can be adjusted up to 1 hour of the desired departure time in addition to the 20-minute pick up window. Trips with this scheduling option will not allow the trip to be adjusted that would result in the van arriving before the desired departure time.

C. No Earlier Than and No Later Than

No Earlier Than and No Later Than are alternative scheduling options offered by PVRTA that allow customers to have more control over the one hour scheduling window. This is a service that PVRTA provides that is not required under the ADA.

- No earlier than – trip is reserved for riders who cannot or do not want to arrive to a destination before a specific time, this scheduling option could result in arriving late to a scheduled appointment time.

Example: If the passenger cannot arrive before 8AM because the building is not open than they would request a drop off time "no earlier than 8AM." This will push the drop off time between 8AM and 9AM.

- No later than – trip is reserved for riders who cannot or do not want to be picked up after a specific time, this scheduling option can result in passengers having to leave an appointment, work, etc. earlier than expected.

Example: If the passenger cannot leave after 5PM because the building closes, then they would request a pick up time "no later than 5PM." This will push the pick-up time between 4PM and 5PM.

D. Standing Orders/Subscription Services

Standing Orders/Subscription service is for PVRTA customers who make the reservationist to request that these trips be automatically scheduled, which eliminates the need to call individually for each trip. This is a service that PVRTA provides that is not required under the ADA. Subscription service is subject to availability. Multiple no shows or late cancels may result in termination of the standing order.

PVRTA CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER

PVRTA welcomes your compliments, complaints, and suggestions. We are committed to using customer input as a tool to improve service quality. All comments may be submitted by mail, phone, fax, or through the PVRTA website.

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
ATTN: Customer Service Manager
Union Station, 55 Frank B. Murray St.
Springfield, MA 01103

Local: (413) 781-7882
Toll Free: 1-877-779-7882
TTY English: 1-877-752-2388
TTY Spanish: 1-866-930-9252
Fax: (413) 788-7272

www.PVRTA.com

Service Complaints

If you experienced a problem with a specific ride, you may wish to file a formal service complaint. All formal complaints are investigated and receive responses.

To file a formal service complaint, customers can contact the Customer Service Office or online at www.pvta.com. Please provide the following information:

- Rider's name, address, and telephone number
- Date and time of the incident
- Details of the incident

PVTA is committed to protecting the confidentiality of its riders. Anonymous service complaints, however, cannot receive responses.

When a customer submits a complaint via email, the PVTA Customer Service Manager reviews the complaint and sends the customer a response within 24 hours of receiving the complaint. This indicates receipt of the complaint.

The contractor of the paratransit service is provided 6 calendar days to review the complaint and provide any supplementary information to determine the validity of the complaint.

Feedback that is escalated due to severity of complaint or security issues will be sent to PVTA for review. PVTA will provide a custom letter to the individual and state any service changes or scheduling arrangements made in response to the incident. Complaints of this magnitude must also be reviewed within 6 calendar days.

RIDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Door-to-Door Service

Drivers will assist customers upon request with boarding and exiting the vehicle and/or to and from the ground level exterior door of the building. Riders who require door to door assistance must call only once to notify them that they are requesting the assistance which will be added to their client file. Drivers cannot escort customers past the ground floor of any building and are not allowed to enter residences

Customers who cannot travel independently or enter/exit a facility should be accompanied by a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). This service is not provided by PVTa and is the responsibility of the customer. PCAs travel free with the customer but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the customer. If the customer intends to have a PCA accompany them, they must inform the Customer Service Representative when the transportation is scheduled to guarantee space on the vehicle.

Wheelchairs/Mobility Aid

More than 95% of the paratransit fleet is lift equipped. Individuals requiring a lift for their trip are assigned vehicles with the appropriate equipment. If an individual would like to use the lift they ask the driver.

The driver must be able to safely secure the mobility device. Customers who use a 3-wheeled scooter may be asked to transfer to a regular seat. These types of chairs are difficult to secure. However, the choice to transfer to a regular seat is the discretion of the customer.

The American Safety Council recommends that customers in wheelchairs board by backing onto the lift for safety purposes.

Use of Lift and Ramps by passengers

Any individual can request use of the lift or the ramp. An individual does not need to have a mobility device or mobility impairment to utilize that equipment.

Transporting Individuals using Oxygen, Respirators and concentrators with Oxygen

Any individual who needs to use oxygen, respirators or concentrators with Oxygen are welcome to bring those devices on both paratransit and fixed route vehicles.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

PVTA has established an administrative process through which individuals who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct can be suspended or prohibited from using PVTA service. Please see the PVTA Code of Conduct in Appendix 1: Passenger Code of Conduct, or at: pvta.com/codeConduct.php

Transporting Children

- ADA eligible children must pay the full fare and must be accompanied by an adult.
- Children, age 5 and over, traveling as companions must also pay the full fare.
- Children under 5 years old or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be secured in an approved child safety seat provided by the customer.
- Strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the customer. Non-collapsible strollers are prohibited.
- Children capable of sitting on their own must sit in a seat.

Transporting Animals

Service Animals are allowed on all PVRTA vehicles.

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Transportation regulations, "service animal" is defined as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders and sounds, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

Your service animal or service animal in training is welcome on PVRTA vehicles and at PVRTA facilities. You may be asked to confirm that your animal is a service animal. You are expected to comply with these policies:

- Service animals must be under your control. Threatening or aggressive behaviors will not be tolerated. (Exception: when seizure alert animal is trained to alert by jumping up and pushing owner down.)
- Do not ask PVRTA personnel or other riders to hold or control your animal.
- Service animals must not block the vehicle aisle or path of travel.
- Service animals must not occupy passenger seating.
- Animals must be insect-free.
- Service animals that appear abused or mistreated may be reported to the appropriate organizations.

An animal which solely provides emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship is not a service animal. These "companion animals" are considered pets and pets are allowed aboard PVRTA vehicles and facilities only in secured and fully enclosed carriers. Pets are subject to the rules above regarding service animals.

Inclement Weather

In the event of severe weather, including snow, ice, flooding, etc., the ability to provide transportation may be hampered. If you do not need to travel on those days, please call the reservation office to cancel your trips in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to provide transportation but safety considerations may prevent trips being provided.

No Show Policy

It is the responsibility of the customer to utilize Paratransit service in a responsible manner. Customers not using the service responsibly will be subject to suspension from Paratransit service. If the customer receives a valid no-show at their pick up location, we will document the trip as a no show; any remaining trips scheduled for that service day will remain. We will attempt to contact the individual to verify if the remaining trips are needed. If we are unable to contact the customer please be aware that multiple no shows may occur.

Following is a list of incidents that would result in a no-show being charged. No-shows that are documented to be beyond the control of the customer will not be counted against them.

No-Show

A customer who is not at the scheduled point of pick-up during the 20-minute window in order to board within five minutes of the vehicle arriving.

Cancel at Door

A customer who cancels at the door or “waves” away the driver who has arrived at the scheduled pick-up time and location. This is considered a no-show as the vehicle arrived at the scheduled pick-up.

Late Cancel

When the customer calls to cancel a previously scheduled trip less than one (1) hour prior to their scheduled pick-up. This is considered a no-show as the vehicle is already in route for the pick-up. The only exception to this rule is for trips that are scheduled prior to 9:00 a.m. when there is no staff to receive the cancellation.

No Show Suspension Policy

All passengers who have 20 or more trips in a calendar month and no show more than 15% of those trips during that month will be subject to a warning or suspension. The average no show rate for PVRTA paratransit customers is 4.4%. The PVRTA will use 15% as the threshold for assessing this penalty to avoid penalizing the average PVRTA paratransit rider. *For Example: If a passenger takes 30 trips in one month and no shows 5 of them, they will be in violation. As no showing 5 trips out of 30 would result in no showing 16.67% of their total trips.*

Notification Process and Suspensions

Each passenger no show occurrence will be reviewed at the end of each calendar month for excessive no show policy violations. Warning or suspension letters will be sent to all passengers in violation of the policy. Each letter will identify the dates of each violation from the previous month as well as the dates when the passenger's service will be suspended. If notification must be made in an alternative accessible format, please contact our office (413-732-6248 ext. 2214). Warning letters and an appeal form with instructions will be mailed to the customers using the following timelines:

Letter #1

A warning letter is sent when a passenger violated the no show policy for the first time in a calendar year. The mailing will include a copy of the no show policy, with reference to potential suspension if behavior continues.

Letter #2

Sent certified when a passenger violated the no show policy for a second time within the calendar year. The individual will be suspended from service for a period of 7 Days.

Letter #3

Sent certified when a passenger violated the no show policy for a third time within the calendar year. The individual will be suspended from service for a period of 14 Days.

Letter #4

Sent certified when a passenger violated the no show policy for a fourth time within the calendar year. The individual will be suspended from service for a period of 21 Days.

Letter #5

Sent certified when a passenger violated the no show policy for a fifth (and subsequent violations during the calendar year) time within the calendar year. The individual will be suspended from service for a period of 28 Days.

Customer Responsibilities

The PVRTA realizes there may be times when a no-show is charged in error. We need your help to ensure these charges do not become part of your permanent ridership history. You can help by following the procedures listed below:

- It is the responsibility of the customer to cancel all rides not needed within one (1) hour of the scheduled pick-up window by calling Dispatch at 413-739-7436.
- When the customer is a “No-Show” at their home on the first pick-up of their trip, the return trip will be cancelled. However, if the customer uses alternative transportation to go on to their appointment, the return trip can be provided if they call 413-739-7436 within one (1) hour of the no-show.
- It is also the responsibility of the rider to inform the PVRTA at 413-732-6248 Ext 214 of address changes, changes in emergency phone numbers or any other information regarding accessibility needs or changes.

By following the above listed guidelines, customers can maintain a good ridership history. We all share the responsibility to help improve the service.

Customers can help ensure their trip runs smoothly by being ready and waiting for each scheduled trip for the entire 20-minute window. A service vehicle is only allowed to wait five (5) minutes and the customer must be ready to board the vehicle as soon as the driver arrives within the window.

No Show Appeal Process

Customers have ten (10) calendar days from the date the letter is mailed to address any no-show they feel was charged in error. Customers must address no-shows in a timely manner. After the ten (10) days have elapsed without request for an appeal, the no-show(s) in question will become part of the customer's permanent ridership history and cannot be appealed at a later date

Excessively Long Trip

A PVRTA paratransit passenger trip is considered to be excessively long if the trip length is longer than the comparable fixed route time, to include time it takes to walk to a bus stop, transfers and walk to one's destination. PVRTA compares all trips greater than one hour in duration each month to the time it would take the individual to use a fixed route vehicle using the parameters above.

Missed Trip

A missed trip is when a vehicle arrives outside the pickup window and the Rider does not take the trip. This also includes trips never served due to transit agency miscommunications or reservations/scheduling errors.

Passenger Code of Conduct

All riders are subject to complying with the Passenger Code of Conduct, found at pvta.com/codeConduct.php. You can also find the Code of Conduct in Appendix 1: Passenger Code of Conduct.

PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER ACCOMMODATIONS

Personal Care Attendants (PCA)

PCAs traveling with a customer must be able to provide assistance to the customer. PCAs must be picked up and dropped off at the same location

as the customer. In most cases, those individuals listed below will not be considered a PCA:

- Children under the age of 6 are not considered a PCA, as children under the age of 6 must be accompanied on the fixed route bus.

When it is noted that a customer cannot be left alone, PVRTA will contact the customer (or caregiver) to determine what difficulties they may be experiencing. If suitable arrangements cannot be made to ensure the customer will have a caregiver waiting at the drop-off location, the customer will be notified PVRTA will be unable to transport them without the assistance of a PCA. Service could be suspended for those customers who have been notified of the need to travel with a PCA and continue to try to travel without a PCA present. The major concern is the well-being of the customer having difficulty after the driver leaves which could create a safety hazard for them. PVRTA is committed to providing our customers with the safest transportation possible.

Companions

Customers may have one (1) companion accompany them. If you will be traveling with a companion, you must notify the reservationist at the time you schedule your ride. Companions are charged the same fare as the customer and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location. Additional companions can travel with a Paratransit customer on a “space available” basis and will pay the same fare as the customer.

Visitors

Any visitor who presents ADA eligibility documentation from another jurisdiction will be provided service. We will accept a certification by the visitor that he or she is unable to use fixed route transit. The visitor will be provided 21 days of service within a 365-day period.

Any restrictions on their ADA eligibility in their residence city will be enforced here. For example, if the individual's eligibility states they can use the service only in winter months, they would not be eligible here for service during summer months.

Any visitor who does not have ADA eligibility from another transit agency may be asked to provide proof of non-residence outside of the PVRTA service area. Any visitor without an apparent disability (e.g. cognitive impairment) may be asked to provide proof of disability, such as a letter from a medical professional or another agency that has already established disability for the visitor.

If a visitor needs services beyond the 21 days in a 365 day period, the individual will be required to apply for Paratransit eligibility locally.

Parcels & Packages

Passengers are limited to what they can carry themselves on and off the vehicle in one trip, or they may request assistance.

Riders who require assistance with their bags/parcels must call only once to notify them that they are requesting the assistance which will be added to their client file. Drivers are only required to assist with up to 3 standard size carry-on bags with a combined weight not to exceed 25 lbs.

TRAVEL TRAINING

PVRTA offers Travel Training for seniors and people with mobility impairments who are motivated to learn how to safely and independently use the fixed route system.

Travel Trainers provide personalized, one-on-one instruction which takes each trainee's unique needs and abilities into account. Sessions

are primarily field-based and can focus on destination travel (how to get to a specific destination and back) or general orientation (how to use fixed-route buses). Trainees select their travel destinations which typically include: work, medical appointments, schools, shopping malls, and other recreation sites.

Travel Training is self-paced and is conducted in a series of steps from initial one-on-one instruction to the gradual fading of trainer assistance leading to independent travel. An instructor will stay with participants until they feel comfortable and confident riding the bus.

Travel Skills: Trainees who successfully complete one-on-one training will be able to travel to and from their destination and do the following:

- Arrive on time and safely at their bus stop
- Pay fares, via cash or pass, and request a transfer (if applicable)
- Identify, board, and disembark from the bus
- Use ID card appropriately
- Understand how to gather information
- Manage an unexpected situation
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior and bus etiquette
- Cross streets independently and safely
- Be aware of how to interact with strangers

Costs: Travel Training is provided free-of-charge except for the trainee's bus fare while training is taking place.

Benefits of Travel Training:

- Enhances freedom, mobility and independence

- Provides access to safe and low-cost transportation
- Increases self-confidence
- Promotes healthy living by helping people stay active in the community

Eligibility – participants must:

- Have a residence and destination on or near a PVTA bus route
- Be able to get to and from a bus stop
- Be 13 years-of-age or older
- Meet agency admission criteria
- Successfully complete a pre-mobility training assessment

Contact Us: For further information please contact PVTA’s Mobility Services Coordinator at (413) 732-6248 ext. 2235.

CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES

PVTA realizes there may be times when a no-show is charged in error. We need your help to ensure these charges do not become part of your permanent ridership history. You can help by following the procedures listed below:

- Inform PVTA of address changes, changes in emergency phone numbers or any other information regarding accessibility needs or changes.
- Read all sections of the Information Brochure carefully.
- Make reservations at least one day in advance.
- Be at pick-up locations on time.

- Provide entry if the pick-up address is located inside a gated community or other place with special access. If a vehicle is unable to enter the pick-up area and the rider fails to meet the vehicle, the rider will be considered a “no show” for the trip.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the “20-minute window”.
- Call to cancel unneeded rides to avoid “no shows”.
- Pay the correct fare in cash or tickets (drivers do not make change).
 - * You will not be transported if the fare is not paid prior to leaving your pick-up location.
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or other inappropriate behavior that would negatively impact other passengers.
- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in a safe condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.
- Expect “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after, or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- Follow these common rules of courtesy
 - No eating, drinking or smoking on board.
 - No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
 - No littering in the vehicle.
 - No physical abuse of another customer or driver.

- No operating or tampering with any equipment on the Paratransit vehicle.
- No radio or other sound generating equipment is to be played aboard the vehicles without the use of a headset.
- No willful destruction of vehicles.

Customers who violate these rules of conduct are subject to penalties up to and including suspension of service.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of the riders.
- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Wear a uniform and an ID badge.
- Provide door-to-door service.
- Operate the vehicle and lift in a safe manner and safely secure wheelchairs on the vehicle.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle if riders are aboard.
- Collect the fare listed on their schedule.
- Go only to the destinations listed on the manifest or as notified by the dispatcher.
- Offer assistance to riders

Assistance includes:

- Get out of the vehicle and let you know they have arrived.

- Offering ambulatory passengers a steadying arm or other appropriate guidance or assistance while getting into the vehicle.
- Helping individuals in wheelchairs to maneuver onto the lift.
- Ensuring all riders are appropriately secured.

Drivers are not allowed to:

- Enter the rider's residence or go past the lobby of a public building.
- Leave passengers in the vehicle unattended.
- Perform any personal care assistance such as assisting riders to dress.
- Smoke, eat, or drink in the vehicle.
- Use a cell phone for personal calls, play loud music, or wear headphones.
- Be rude or harassing to passengers.
- Take information from the rider about cancellations or changes in reservations.
- Accept tips, lift or carry riders, or carry wheelchairs up and down steps.

All drivers are trained in first aid but they are not medical technicians. If there is a medical or health emergency on-board, such as a rider having a seizure or a dialysis patient bleeding, the driver will pull over, call 911, and wait for trained help.

CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITY

Some riders are mentally or cognitively impaired or have severe memory problems such that they cannot be safely left on their own at either the pick-up point or the drop-off point. It is the responsibility of the rider's caregiver or family to clearly identify these riders to PVRTA so that PVRTA can inform the driver and take appropriate precautions. However, the driver cannot act as an attendant for these riders. Cognitively impaired riders will be allowed to travel without an attendant only as long as they exhibit safe behavior in the vehicle.

An attendant or caregiver must be present at the pick-up point and at the drop-off point for riders who cannot be left alone. If a responsible attendant or caregiver is not present when the driver attempts to pick-up or drop-off these riders, it can seriously disrupt the driver's schedule. If PVRTA paratransit encounters absences of an attendant or caregiver, service to the rider may be suspended and the situation reported to adult protective services.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

Accessible Format

PVRTA is required to make their communications and information available to people with disabilities through the use of accessible formats and technology (e.g., braille, large print, audio tape, computer disk, email, TDD/TTYs etc.) to enable customers and potential customers to obtain adequate information about transportation services and to schedule them.

- Schedule and route information must be made available in a format a customer can use to access the bus system.

- Phone lines and hold times are measured for capacity constraints
- All materials associated with the ADA complementary paratransit process (e.g., public information brochure, cover letter, application form, eligibility determination letter etc.) must be available in alternative formats so that eligible and potentially eligible customers can effectively apply for and use ADA complementary paratransit

Language Assistance at Public Meetings

All meeting notices will have information on how to request translation services or listening devices. The PVRTA requires that you make this request a minimum of 72 hours in advance. Please contact the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission:

- Phone: 413-781-6045
- Email: delving@pvpc.org
- Mail:
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
ATTN: David Elvin
60 Congress Street
Springfield, MA 01104

DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

PVRTA uses a few different methods for distributing media. Using a variety of methods ensures delivery of information to people in a form that is accessible to them.

E-Mail

PVTA maintains an email database for the distribution of meeting announcements. This list includes riders who have provided their email address at previous PVTA van riders meeting. The email list also contains human service agencies, Councils on Aging, and other stakeholders. This list will also be used in the future to disseminate other policy and service changes.

Seat Drops

PVTA provides seat drops to van riders to announce upcoming meeting announcements. The driver will hand a meeting notice to each of the passengers for at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The notices are also posted during this time.

Mailing

Upon successful completion of the application process, PVTA van riders are sent a packet of information including:

Floodgate Message (AKA Robo call)

PVTA will utilize the floodgate message system to make riders aware of upcoming public meetings, policy changes and service disruptions due to inclement weather.

WHERE IS INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED?

PVTA Website

Full PVTA website: <http://www.PVTA.com>

ADA information: <http://pvta.com/mobilityImpaired.php>

DAR information: <http://pvta.com/seniors.php>

Customer Information Centers

For printed material please visit the following locations:

PVTA Customer Service Office: Union Station, 55 Frank B. Murray Street, Springfield, MA 01103

Holyoke Transportation Center: 206 Maple Street, Holyoke, MA 01040

HOW OFTEN IS INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED?

Policies

Policies are updated as needed and approved by the PVTA Advisory Board. PVTA will disseminate this information using email, floodgate message and public meetings when appropriate.

Service Hours/Days:

Service hours and days are updated as fixed route schedules change. The service hours are typically updated 4 times a year. This information is provided on the PVTA website, PVTA will also use the email system and floodgate message system to make customers aware.

Winter (December)

Spring (March)

Summer (May)

Fall (late August or early September)

TELEPHONE NUMBERS & ADDRESSES

PARATRANSIT FARE INFORMATION

Fares

\$3.00, \$3.50, \$4.00, or \$5.00 depending on your pick-up and drop-off location. Please ask about your fare when reserving your ride.

- Trip within town: \$3.00
- Trip to a surrounding town: \$3.50
- Trip within PVRTA's service area: \$4.00
- Trip with pick up or drop off beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route: \$5.00

Tickets are available in \$0.50 or \$3.00 denominations.

Companion: Same fare as Rider

Children (5 and under): No Charge

PCA*: No Charge

*Customer eligibility file must designate that the customer requires a PCA.

Coupon Books

Coupon books for Paratransit customers are available. They come in books of 20 coupons for \$57.00 each (\$3.00 value per coupon, 1 free). We also have .50 cent coupons available, a book of 10 coupons for \$4.75 each (\$0.50 value per coupon). They can be purchased in person or by mail at the address listed below.

To Purchase Coupon Book(s) by mail, send a check or money order
to:

PVTA Customer Service Office
Union Station
55 Frank B. Murray Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Tickets can also be purchased in person at other locations in the PVTA service area. Please contact **Customer Service Office** for locations in your area **1-877-779-7882**.

PayPal

PVTA customers may also use PayPal to purchase tickets online. Please visit the [PVTA.com](https://www.pvta.com) to purchase tickets using this method. PayPal enables you to send payments quickly and securely online using a credit card or bank account. When you select the "Buy Now" button, you will go to a PayPal payment request link for you to make your payment on PayPal's website. If you want to add additional tickets or passes, you may "Continue Shopping" at which time you will be redirected back to the PVTA website. Passes are not valid for paratransit service.

If you do not have a PayPal account yet, you can sign up for an account. If you will be shipping your tickets or passes to an address that is different from your billing account, the PVTA will contact you to verify the information.

PVTA will process your order within two business days and send your tickets or passes via standard USPS mail. If you do not receive your passes or tickets within five business days, please [contact PVTA](#) to open an inquiry on your order.

Refunds

PVTA does **not issue refunds for monthly passes or van tickets.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who do I call if I leave something on the vehicle?

A: Contact the Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741 and they will contact the appropriate driver.

Q: What if my ride is late?

A: You may contact the Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741 to check on rides that are not on time or have not arrived by the end of the 20-minute window. Be sure to wait until the end of the 20-minute window or the vehicle could arrive while you go inside to make the call; and you could be charged with a No Show.

Q: I am changing from using a walker to using a wheelchair, what should I do?

A: It is important for you to contact the Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741 and update the information on your mobility device. If you don't, a van could be dispatched which is not able to accommodate a wheelchair.

Q: Can a driver refuse to help me enter my destination?

A: Drivers will meet customers at the door of the pick-up or drop-off location. Drivers do not enter the home, or drop-off and pick-up locations. The driver must stay within sight of the vehicle; there are some situations when the driver cannot assist passengers to/from an entrance that is out of sight of the vehicle.

Q: May I take a friend with me on my shopping trip?

A: Yes, you may take a companion, who will pay the same fare as you. Companions are charged the same fare as the customer and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location. Additional companions may travel with on a space available basis. You will need to tell the Reservationist at the Call-Center whether you will have a companion with you in order to reserve space.

Q: Why does the driver ask me to back my wheelchair onto the lift, when it is easier for me to go on facing the vehicle?

A: The American Safety Council and the Passenger Assistance Training programs train drivers to board customers by backing onto the lift for safety reasons. There is less chance of an accident with this method.

Q: What if the driver shows up before the 20 minute pick-up window and I'm not ready?

A: Don't Rush! Drivers should not arrive early, but if they do they cannot leave until 5-minutes within the pick-up window have passed.

Q: Why won't the driver take a tip from me?

A: Drivers are not allowed to take tips.

Q: When I have had a good or bad trip and I want to comment, who do I call?

A: All comments may be submitted by mail, fax, phone or through the PVRTA website under the Customer Service link.

Appendix 1: Passenger Code of Conduct

As found at www.pvta.com/codeConduct.php.

Purpose

The purpose of this information is to establish the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) policy and procedures governing passenger conduct on PVTA vehicles and at PVTA Transit Centers as described herein.

Background

Proper passenger behavior on PVTA property is essential for providing quality service to the members of our community and for ensuring safety of all transit patrons and PVTA employees. Establishing a passenger code of conduct and an associated disciplinary process is a necessary component to maintain the existing high levels of service for all transit patrons.

Definitions

1. “PVTA property” means the vehicles, PVTA owned bus stops, PVTA owned shelters and other public transportation system facilities owned or operated by PVTA.
2. “PVTA employee” means all duly authorized PVTA staff members, including drivers, supervisors, managers and contracted employees.

Behavior Punishable By Suspension

Table 1 lists activities and descriptions of behaviors that are either expressly prohibited or allowed on PVTA property. Unless otherwise deemed a “Major Infraction” below, behavior will be considered a “Minor Infraction.”

Table 1. Behaviors Punishable by Suspension

Type of Conduct	Transit Vehicle	Transit Centers
Unless otherwise exempted in official guidance from the Governor or other appropriate authority. Passengers and others using any PVRTA facilities must wear masks or face coverings that cover the nose and mouth at all times. PVRTA facilities include bus stops, shelters, vehicles etc.	Prohibited	Prohibited
Displaying or offering for sale, selling, or distributing goods or services.	Prohibited	Prohibited, except by written agreement
Distributing literature.	Prohibited	Prohibited, except by written agreement
Posting or affixing leaflets or signs to transit property.	Prohibited	Prohibited
Transporting animals.	Prohibited, except in a secure carrier, or a service animal as defined in 49 CFR Section 37.3	Prohibited, except in a secure carrier, or a service animal as defined in 49 CFR Section 37.3
Skateboarding, roller skating, bicycle riding, or rollerblading in a system facility, vehicle, or parking structure[1].	Prohibited	Prohibited

Drinking beverages or eating.	Prohibited, except for passengers experiencing a medical emergency	Allowed
Selling, using, or possessing illegal drugs or containers of open alcohol. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Willfully blocking the free movement of another person in or on PVTA property,	Prohibited, except at driver's discretion if space allows;	N/A

including placing objects that block aisles, stairways or seats[2].	strollers and shopping carts must be folded prior to boarding	
Loitering or storing personal property[3].	Prohibited	Prohibited
Extending anything out windows or doors of moving bus.	Prohibited	N/A
Hanging off or swinging from bars or stanchions (except when standing-only conditions apply).	Prohibited	Prohibited
Smoking, chewing and other tobacco or marijuana use, including use of all e-cigarettes, vapors, or any other delivery devices.	Prohibited	Prohibited
Weapons including but not limited to, guns, knives, switchblades, bow and arrows. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited, except for those lawfully licensed to carry pursuant to Massachusetts Law	Prohibited, except for those lawfully licensed to carry pursuant to Massachusetts Law
Using sound-producing equipment including inconsiderate cell phone use (use of headphones is permissible if others cannot hear the output).	Prohibited	Prohibited

Spitting, urinating or defecating; or creating unsanitary conditions through presence of blood, urine, feces, vomit, or other bodily fluids or obnoxious odors. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Carrying an explosive or acid, flammable liquid, toxic or hazardous material in or on PVRTA property. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited, except for respirators and portable oxygen supply as defined in 49 CFR Section 37.167	Prohibited, except for respirators and portable oxygen supply as defined in 49 CFR Section 37.167
Interfering with the provision of transportation services (i.e., failure to properly board or alight, blocking progress of transit vehicles, disturbing the driver, crossing the yellow line, improper use of priority seating, etc.).	Prohibited	Prohibited
Willfully disturbing others in or on PVRTA property by engaging in boisterous, unruly or threatening behavior. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Defacing, destroying or otherwise vandalizing transit property including any technology, sign, notices or advertisements thereon. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited

Throwing objects at PVRTA property or at persons in or on transit property. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Failure to pay the appropriate fare or present a valid pass, or failure to surrender an invalid pass if requested by an authorized PVRTA employee, or sharing or reselling passes from one person to another. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Misrepresenting oneself as eligible for reduced fare[4]. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited
Failure to follow reasonable direction from a PVRTA employee.	Prohibited	Prohibited
Sexually, verbally, or physically harassing, intimidating, or threatening others: this includes, but is not limited to, behavior such as stalking, staring, or lurking with intent to annoy, offensive touching, obscene acts, and indecent exposure. This also may include, but is not limited to, the use of obscene, abusive or racist language or gestures. (MAJOR INFRACTION)	Prohibited	Prohibited

Consequences of Violating Code of Conduct

In addition to the types of behavior which could result in suspension described above, criminal conduct, including but not limited to, assault, disorderly conduct, and illegal drug use, are prohibited on all PVRTA property. If any criminal conduct is observed, the PVRTA will contact the local law enforcement department within the jurisdiction in which the offense has occurred.

In addition to civil and criminal penalties, violators of the PVRTA Code of Conduct policies and/or any other applicable laws may be subject to immediate denial of PVRTA service and possible suspension of PVRTA service in the future as described in Table 2 below. Additionally, the PVRTA reserves the right to seek an immediate restraining order against accused violators deemed necessary by the Director of Operations and Planning who pose a legitimate threat to the safety or welfare of PVRTA staff or riders.

Immediate suspension of PVRTA service may be affected by a law enforcement officer or any authorized PVRTA employee. Failure to comply with denial of service or suspension of service shall be grounds for criminal trespass prosecution. For initial minor infractions, patrons of PVRTA service who have been denied service or suspended must petition (either verbally or in writing via PVRTA customer feedback) to the Director of Operations and Planning in order to resume transit service privileges. The Director of Operations and Planning will respond either verbally or in writing within five business days with details of when the date riding privileges will be reinstated.

For repeat or major offenders, the Director of Operations and Planning shall issue a written notice stating the cause and duration of the suspension and the process for requesting review. Suspension shall be in effect upon issuance of the notice and shall remain in effect during any review process.

Within ten business days after issuance of a service suspension notice, the offender may deliver to the PVRTA Administrator a verbal or written request for review of the suspension and an opportunity to present reasons for reconsideration of the suspension. All requests for review must be submitted via PVRTA Customer Feedback. Within ten business days after receiving a request for review, the PVRTA Administrator and/or designees shall set up a telephonic or in person hearing to review service suspension decision with the offender. The hearing shall be held within ten business days following the request for a hearing. The PVRTA Administrator and/or designees then shall decide to affirm or reverse the suspension within ten days following the hearing. The post-hearing decision shall be final.

Disciplinary Actions

Table 2. Disciplinary Actions		
Type	Disciplinary Action	Disciplinary Process
(1) 1st Infraction (Minor)	Immediate denial of service	Trip denied
(2) 2nd Infraction (Minor)	Same as (1), plus: possible suspension of service privileges for a period of not to exceed seven days	Petition Director of Operations and Planning
(3) 3rd Infraction (Minor) or 1st Infraction (Major)	Same as (1), plus: suspension of service privileges for no less than seven days and no longer than 30 days[5]	Hearing by PVTA Administrator and/or designees
(4) 4th or greater Infraction (Minor), 2nd or greater Infraction (Major), or criminal behavior	Same as (1), plus: suspension of service privileges for 180 calendar days	Hearing by PVTA Administrator and/or designees

[1] This paragraph does not apply to any activity that is necessary for utilization of the transit facility by a bicyclist, including but not limited to, an activity that is necessary for parking a bicycle or transporting a bicycle aboard a transit vehicle, if that activity is conducted with the permission of the PVTA in a manner that does not interfere with the safety of the bicyclist or other patrons of the transit facility.

[2] This paragraph shall not be interpreted to affect any lawful activities permitted for first amendment rights protected under the laws of this state or applicable federal law, including, but not limited to, laws related to collective bargaining, labor relations, or labor disputes.

[3] Loitering is defined as riding the same bus without a determined end destination or remaining on PVTA property for more than two successive hours.

[4] In the event that an eligible discount fare rider is not in possession of acceptable proof

at the time of request, any suspension of service shall be postponed for a period of 72 hours to allow the user to produce acceptable proof to the Director of Operations and Planning or Customer Service Manager. If the proof is provided, the suspension shall be voided. If the proof is not produced within that time period, the suspension will be enforced.

[5] PVRTA reserves the right to suspend a passenger for periods of time longer than those listed, up to and including permanently banning passengers from service, for any major infraction or repeated major infractions.



Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
Union Station, 55 Frank Murray Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Phone: 1-877-779-7882

Fax: (413) 788-7272

English TTY: 1-877-752-2388

Spanish TTY: 1-866-930-9252

Website: www.PVTA.com

