

City of Gatlinburg



GMT ADA Paratransit Plan

For Paratransit Services

Updated June 11, 2013

Rules for ADA Eligibility for Paratransit Services

ADA paratransit service must be provided to all passengers described as being ADA eligible. ADA eligibility includes the following:

1. Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including a visual impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle in the system. Included in this category are individuals with mental or visual impairments who cannot navigate the system.
2. Persons who cannot use vehicles without lifts or accommodations. These persons are eligible for paratransit service if accessible fixed-route vehicles are not available on the bus routes in which they need to travel, when they need to travel during operational hours of GMT Fixed Route.
3. Persons with specific impairment related conditions that cannot travel to a boarding location or from a disembarking location to their final destination. The condition must prevent the person from using the fixed-route system. Conditions that make getting to the fixed-route bus stop "more difficult" do not grant eligibility. Second, architectural barriers (such as no curb cuts) not under the control of GMT Fixed Route, and environmental barriers (such as distance, terrain, and weather) do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. If, however, travel to or from a boarding location is impossible when these factors are combined with the person's specific impairment-related condition, conditional paratransit service will be provided to eligible passengers.

How to Become Certified as ADA Eligible for Paratransit Service

Applications for certification as being ADA eligible for GMT paratransit service are available at the City of Gatlinburg City Hall, 1230 East Parkway, Gatlinburg, TN 37738, or a request for a copy to be mailed can be made by calling the (865) 436-1414.

Once the application is received, GMT will notify the applicant within twenty-one (21) days of his/her eligibility status. If a determination has not been made within 21 days of receiving the completed application, the applicant will be treated as eligible and will be provided service until or unless GMT denies the application. The applicant will receive a letter verifying whether eligible for service or not. If denied, GMT will state specifically the reason for the denial. For visually-impaired customers, a phone call will be made in addition to the letter.

Certification applications are available to anyone who requests them. Certifications are renewed every three (3) years.

Temporary Disability Eligibility for Paratransit Service

Any individual with a temporary disability, for the purpose of determining ADA eligibility will be subject to the same standards as those with permanent disabilities. Certification of eligibility in such cases will be subject to a specific expiration date.

Appeals Process for Denial of ADA Eligibility

GMT has established an administrative appeals process through which an individual who has been denied ADA paratransit eligibility can obtain review of the denial.

1. Appeal of the denial to certify an individual as ADA paratransit eligible must be filed within 60 days of written notification of the determination.
2. Upon issuance of the denial, GMT will provide the individual with the opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to an individual not involved with the initial decision to deny eligibility. GMT will again provide written determination as to the decision made upon completion of the appeals process and the reasons for it.
3. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the initial decision maker may appeal to the Transit Manager for GMT.
4. GMT will provide paratransit service to the applicant pending the final determination of the appeal.

ADA Eligible Visitors Policy

In accordance with the federal regulations published by the United States Department of Transportation, GMT will make paratransit service available to any individual with disabilities who does not reside in the jurisdiction served by GMT. GMT will treat as eligible all visitors who present documentation that they are ADA eligible under the ADA paratransit eligibility criteria in the jurisdiction in which they reside.

All visitors requesting paratransit service in the jurisdiction in which GMT provides service, who do not present such documentation, will be required by GMT to show documentation of the individual's place of residence and documentation of his or her disability. GMT shall accept certification from such an individual, that he or she is unable to utilize fixed-route transit service.

GMT will provide paratransit service to said visitor, who does not have documentation that he/she is ADA eligible, for no more than 21 days from the first day of service to such an individual. In order to receive service for the 21-day period, the visitor will be required by GMT to apply for eligibility under the process for determining ADA paratransit eligibility that it has established.

SERVICE AREA:

ADA paratransit service is provided to all origins and destinations within the service area defined as the City limits of Gatlinburg. For GMT, the basic service is centered on each fixed-route bus route and extending $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to either side of the fixed-route.

RESPONSE TIME:

As stated in the regulations, pick up times will be negotiated with ADA eligible passengers to make scheduling more efficient. As a ride-sharing service, GMT is allowed to negotiate within a one-hour window on either side of the requested pick up time. Any negotiation of time will be discussed with the passenger prior to pick up. The vehicle can arrive 1 hour within pickup time.

FARE STRUCTURE:

Fares charged for an ADA eligible paratransit trip to ADA eligible users will be the same amount of the base cash fare paid by passengers of the GMT fixed-route system. The fare for a one-way paratransit trip is \$1.00.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) traveling with the ADA eligible passengers will not be charged, as defined in the regulations. Passengers must be listed as having a PCA when filing the necessary application for ADA eligibility.

TRIP PURPOSES:

Requests for all types of ADA eligible trips will be accepted and provided within the service area.

HOURS AND DAYS OF SERVICE:

ADA paratransit service shall be offered during the same days and hours that GMT offers fixed-route bus service. It is important to remember that a passenger must be certified as being ADA eligible before the passenger can make a reservation request.

Requests for GMT paratransit service to certified ADA eligible users on a particular day will be accommodated as long as the reservation is made anytime during the previous day's business hours. Customers calling GMT requesting same day scheduling will be accommodated on a space available basis only if other providers cannot respond to the request and GMT is so notified. ADA complementary paratransit trips may be requested during the following times:

GMT office business hours: 8 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday

GMT uses an answering system after hours for cancelling trips or on Saturday and Sunday to schedule trips for Monday. Appointments can be made up to two weeks in advance. Service is on a first-come, first-served basis and is a ride-sharing arrangement. In order for staff to coordinate trips effectively, requests for a specific driver or vehicle are not accepted.

CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS:

GMT does not maintain waiting lists which would constrain demand on paratransit capacity.

GMT does not limit the number of ADA eligible paratransit trips to ADA eligible passengers of the public transportation system.

Since paratransit is a shared ride service, paratransit rides between Point A and Point B will usually take longer, and involve more intermediate stops, than a taxi ride between the same two points with one passenger in the vehicle. However, GMT does not intentionally schedule excessive trip lengths.

In the case of trips that GMT is unable to accommodate due to capacity restraints, GMT will work with all area providers of paratransit service to meet the excess demand.

Attendant Policy

Personal care attendants (PCA) will be permitted to accompany ADA eligible riders on ADA eligible trips at no charge. GMT will require that passengers state the need for a PCA when they request ADA eligibility certification. GMT does not provide PCA's.

One guest will be allowed to accompany an ADA eligible paratransit passenger on their ADA eligible paratransit trip. More than one guest will be allowed on a space available basis. The PCA is not considered to be a "guest". A guest is required to pay the applicable paratransit fare.

Trip Cancellation Policy For a Scheduled Trip

There is no penalty for a cancellation as long as notice is given at least one (1) hour in advance of the scheduled pick up time. Passengers are encouraged to give as much notice as possible if unable to make the appointment. We ask that passengers be cooperative in reducing cancellations. Cancellations are disruptive to the overall operation and the time could have been scheduled by another passenger. If a passenger cancels a trip less than an hour before the scheduled pick up time, it will be a late cancellation and treated the same as a No Show.

Passengers should call (865) 436-3897 as soon as known to cancel any trips. Cancellations can be made by leaving a message on the answering system 24 hours a day 7 days a week, but every effort should be made to call during business hours which are between 8 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

**Policy Relating to Suspension of Riding Privileges Due to Excessive No Shows or
Late Cancellations or Inappropriate Conduct**

GMT reserves the right to suspend service to an individual who, for reasons within his or her control, has a “pattern or practice” of missing scheduled trips. This provision does not apply to trips that are missed for reasons that are beyond the passenger’s control, (including trips which are missed due to GMT error). GMT also reserves the right to suspend service to an individual who engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct on a paratransit vehicle or to a paratransit driver. Before suspending service, GMT will take the following steps:

1. After an individual has missed three scheduled trips within 30 consecutive days for reasons within his/her control, GMT will notify the individual in writing of the proposal to suspend service and the proposed sanction.
2. Upon receipt of the suspension, GMT will provide the individual with the opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to an individual not involved with the initial decision to suspend service to the individual.
3. After giving the individual the opportunity to be heard and to provide information and arguments contrary to the proposal to suspend service, GMT will provide notification of the decision and the reasons for it.

Types Of Vehicles Used For Transportation

As listed in Appendix A. Vehicles subject to change.

Appendix A

Types Of Vehicles Used For Transportation

Type of Bus	No. Ambulatory Passengers	Wheelchair Capacity
Paratransit	14	2
Paratransit	19	2
Paratransit	19	2
Type of Bus	No. Ambulatory Passengers	Wheelchair Capacity
Fixed - Route	32	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	20	2
Fixed - Route	32	2
Fixed - Route	20	2
Fixed - Route	18	2
Fixed - Route	18	2
Fixed - Route	18	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	32	2
Fixed - Route	34	2
Fixed - Route	32	2
Fixed - Route	32	2

GMT ADA

Transportation Services for the Disabled

GMT ADA Paratransit is a service for the people with physical, cognitive or visual disabilities who are functionally unable to independently use the GMT fixed route bus service either all of the time, temporarily, or only under certain circumstances.

GMT fixed route bus service is wheelchair accessible with lift-equipped on buses. In addition, other accommodations such as stop announcements made by drivers and assisting passengers with disabilities make using the fixed route bus service possible for many people with disabilities. People who are able to use the fixed route bus service should do so whenever possible.

Disability alone does not determine paratransit eligibility; the decision is based on the applicant's functional ability to use the fixed route bus and is not solely based on a medical decision. At the same time, unavailability of fixed route service by itself does not constitute eligibility for a person who could otherwise take the same trip on the bus, were the service is available.

The GMT ADA Paratransit program is designed to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act service criteria established by the federal government. Service is provided only to individuals found eligible by the GMT transportation department and under the following ADA guidelines:

- Service is provided within three-quarters of a mile of a GMT fixed bus route bus stop. GMT ADA Paratransit vehicles can only make pick-ups and drop-offs at places that are within three-quarters of a mile of a GMT fixed route bus stop.
- Service is provided only during the hours and days when fixed route service operates.
- Rides must be pick-up within one hour of request time.
- ADA Paratransit fares are the cost of a full fare on a fixed route bus.
- Service is provided for all types of trips.
- Eligible individuals may have personal care attendant (PCA), or companion that rides free. Individual pays standard fixed route rate for any visitor.

Application Process:

ADA Paratransit is provided for customers whose disability or health condition may prevent them from using the GMT fixed route services for some or all of their travel. Individuals who are interested in using ADA Paratransit service must apply and be found eligible according to ADA guidelines. The GMT ADA Paratransit Certification Program determines an individual's functional abilities and limitations for using fixed route services.

To apply for GMT ADA Paratransit call (865) 436-1414 to request an application. Once you have completed the application, call (865) 436-1414 to schedule an in-person interview. Please bring the completed application and a photo ID with you to the interview.

During the interview, we will review your application form and if necessary, help you complete it. We will also discuss with you your travel abilities and limitations in more detail. You may be asked to take a "mock" bus trip. This will give us a better idea of your travel abilities and limitations.

A decision will be made on your application within 21 days of the completion of the interview and assessment. If a decision is not made within 21 days, we will provide you with ADA Paratransit service until a final decision is made. You will be notified of your eligibility by letter. Once approved to schedule a ride call (865) 436-3897.

Appeal Process:

If you are denied of GMT ADA paratransit fixed route bus trips, we will notify you of the exact reason(s) for this decision and tell you how to appeal the decision.

You can appeal any eligibility decision made by GMT that limits your ability to use ADA Paratransit service.

All requests for an appeal must be in writing and should be mailed to:

City of Gatlinburg Mass Transit
Paratransit Coordinator
P.O. Box 5
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

If you have any questions about the appeal process, call (865) 436-1414.