

# MTS Access and ADA Suburban

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Serving:

#### URBAN

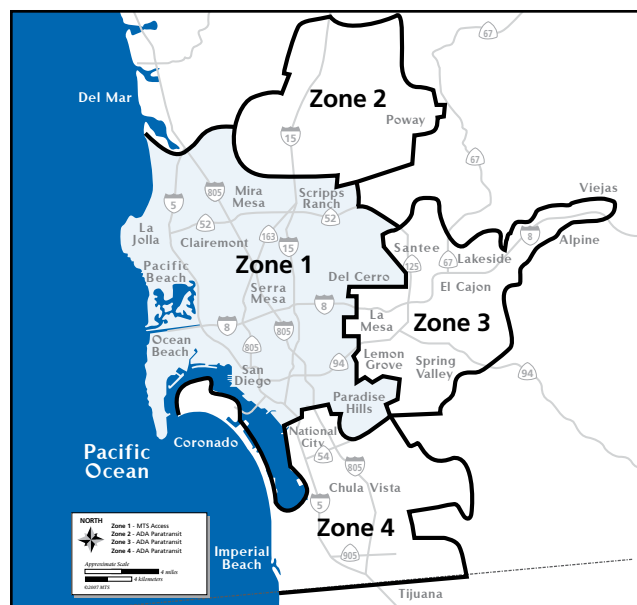
- Central San Diego – Zone 1

#### SUBURBAN

- Mid-City – Zone 2
- East County – Zone 3
- South Bay – Zone 4



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[www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com)

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) provides complementary paratransit service for trips with an origin and destination within a ¾ mile distance from our traditional fixed routes or trolley stations. The service operates in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and offers service during the same days and hours as our fixed route or trolley service in your area.

Our paratransit operation offers two different services that can be used independently or combined for interzonal trips. First Transit is hired by MTS to provide these essential services.

#### Zone 1 (City of San Diego)

This zone is served by MTS Access. All trips within this zone are provided by MTS Access. Trips originating in Zone 1 to other zones will require a transfer to our Suburban Paratransit operation.

#### Zone 2 (Mid County)

#### Zone 3 (East County)

#### Zone 4 (South Bay)

These zones are served by our MTS Suburban Paratransit service. Trips between zones will require a transfer.

### CHANGES TO THE ADA SERVICE AREA

We will provide ADA paratransit service for all areas served by non-commuter fixed route service corresponding with the days of operation and hours of operation of our trolley and traditional fixed route systems.

Our ADA service area may be modified as we adjust our fixed route and trolley operations and/or schedules. For example, the recently completed Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of our bus system has reduced our service area. In this case, we made the corresponding reductions to the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit service area.

The following list of frequently asked questions and corresponding answers will provide customers with a general understanding of the parameters of the ADA Paratransit System.

#### Question 1: Who is eligible to use MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit services?

**Answer:** In order to use MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit services, a passenger must: meet eligibility criteria, file an application for ADA certification and have that application reviewed and approved. All applications will be reviewed by ADARide, a third party ADA certification administrator, for service eligibility.

Applications should be forwarded to ADARide if:

- Your disability prevents you from boarding, riding, or exiting a fixed route bus, trolley, or train without the help of another person, other than the vehicle operator.
- You are unable to get to or from a bus stop or trolley station because of a specific impairment-related condition. (Lack of fixed-route service in your area, or physical barriers do not automatically make someone eligible for MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit.)

#### Question 2: What are the ADA paratransit service parameters?

**Answer:** To use MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit, a passenger must be ADA certified and be traveling within ¾ mile of an operating MTS fixed bus route or trolley station. You can call the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit service provider at 1-888-517-9627 to determine if you are within the ADA service area.

You may be certified to use MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit services even if you reside outside the ADA service area. Your service would be restricted to trip origins and destinations within our ADA service area. If your home address is outside the ADA service area, you may receive services by choosing a pickup or drop off location within our service area. In this scenario, the passenger will be required to transport themselves to/from this location within the service area.

MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit staff cannot recommend alternative suitable addresses for trip origin or destination.

Our ADA service parallels the fixed-route service system in your community. As the fixed route service goes out of service at various times in the day and evening so would the complementary ADA paratransit service in that area.

#### Question 3: How do I get ADA certified?

**Answer:** The current eligibility administrator for MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit certification is ADARide, which can be reached at 1-877-232-7433. New certifications and re-certifications can also be completed online at [www.ADARide.com](http://www.ADARide.com). The online process will consist of a series of questions to assess your functional ability to use fixed route transit services. Applications are also available in a hard copy format by calling ADARide at 1-877-232-7433.

#### Question 4: What is presumptive ADA eligibility?

**Answer:** Users may be “presumed” to have ADA eligibility if either of the two conditions listed below apply:

1. Visitors to the San Diego area may use the service for any combination of 21 days, during a 365 day period beginning with their first use, as a visitor pending verification that they are certified for complementary ADA paratransit in another community. If the certification documents are unavailable from the passenger’s home transit agency, then the passenger may demonstrate proof of their disability by providing a letter from their Doctor.
2. An ADA applicant may be considered presumptively eligible for services if we have not responded to their completed application after 21 calendar days.

#### Question 5: When can I call to make a reservation and when will my reservation be officially provided?

**Answer:** You may place your call to trip reservations between 8 AM and 5 PM, seven days a week, to make a reservation up to two days before you wish to travel. A reservations agent will process your request and, in most cases, will provide a scheduled pickup time while you are on the phone. Occasionally, trip times might not be immediately available. In these cases, you will receive a phone call by 5:00 PM the day prior to your ride to notify you of the scheduled pickup time.

Trip times are subject to change up to 5:00 PM the day prior to your ride. In these instances, you will receive a call from the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit provider by 5:00 PM the day prior to your ride to advise you of the adjusted time. If your trip time does not change from the original time, you will not be contacted.

You may always call the toll free number 1-877-232-7433 to check the status of your ride or to verify your confirmed pickup time. We advise that our highest call volume is between 8 AM and 9 AM. Calling during non-peak hours will usually result in a quicker response.

#### Question 6: What is the one-hour reservation window?

**Answer:** Trips can only be scheduled based on your desired pickup time and cannot be scheduled based on the arrival time at your destination. When you call and request a pickup time, you may be offered a scheduled pickup time one hour before or up to one hour after your original requested pickup time. If the scheduled pickup time offered does not meet your travel needs, you have the option of refusing the trip offered and requesting a different time.

A trip denial constitutes being offered a scheduled trip time more than one hour before or one hour after your requested pickup time. If this occurs, please ask to speak with the supervisor or manager on duty.

#### Question 7: Can the service provider prioritize trip purpose?

**Answer:** Trip prioritization by trip purpose is prohibited by the ADA. A service provider is not allowed to prioritize trips by trip purpose. All trips (medical appointment, school schedule, work schedule, hairstyle appointment, or shopping trip, etc.) have equal priority in the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit reservation systems.

#### Question 8: May I schedule a drop off time?

**Answer:** MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit can only process pickup times and can not book trips by drop off time. MTS cannot guarantee specific drop off times since drop off time is associated with trip length and passenger load and is subject to change due to traffic conditions and the distance of your trip.

#### Question 9: How long is the expected ride time?

**Answer:** MTS Access/ADA Suburban ride times will vary based on the distances traveled. Generally, our average trip is eight miles or less and should be completed within an hour. MTS Access trips with a distance between eight and ten miles can be 75 minutes, and trips 10 or more miles can be 90 minutes.

Our ADA paratransit service complements the fixed route service system within or between communities. Ride times should be less than twice the time it would take to travel using fixed-route transit services.

#### Question 10: How do I book a trip to be at a destination by a certain time?

**Answer:** All trips must be booked by the time you would like the vehicle to arrive at your pickup address. Please remember that trips may be scheduled up to one hour before and up to one hour after the requested pickup time. Depending on the length of the trip, you should not accept a scheduled time that is less than one hour prior to the time you need to be at your destination. For longer trip distances, you should not accept a scheduled time that is less than 90 minutes prior to the time you need to be at your destination. If you are offered a time that is later than those stated above, you may choose to refuse the trip offer and request a different pickup time.

**Question 11: Does MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit have a curb-to-curb or door-to-door standard?**

**Answer:** Both services adhere to the complementary ADA paratransit curbside standard where our drivers will provide assistance to passengers when boarding or exiting our vehicles.

Our curbside service complements our fixed route system, which utilizes curbside bus stops. Drivers will utilize the safest drop-off location and assist the client on or off the vehicle.

**Question 12: What if I need assistance beyond the vehicle?**

**Answer:** A passenger's certification can specify the need to travel with a personal care attendant (PCA) if it is determined that the passenger cannot travel alone. Passengers who are not able to be left unattended should not ride MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit without a PCA. We will provide free transportation to the PCA on our paratransit service.

**Question 13: What if a client cannot be left unattended?**

**Answer:** MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit is not designed to meet the transportation needs of passengers who cannot be left unattended, passengers that require a PCA but want to travel without a PCA, and/or passengers that require someone at home to accept them and no one is home when we arrive. The ultimate responsibility to accommodate a passenger who cannot be left unattended belongs to the caregiver, social worker, or care center.

MTS Access/ADA Suburban paratransit curbside policy requires that drivers assist passengers off the vehicle and then proceed. Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers beyond the vehicle or supervise a passenger's behavior once off the vehicle. Drivers are not able to stand-by to ensure passengers are safely received at their destination. Passengers whose inability to be left unattended is not obvious or known may be left by the driver unattended.

Passengers who appear or claim to be unable to care for themselves and do not have someone to receive them will be transported back to the origin of their trip, to the nearest medical facility, or to a police or sheriff's substation, at the discretion of the paratransit supervisor.

**Question 14: What is the MTS Access and ADA Suburban Paratransit fare?**

**Answer:** MTS Access and ADA Suburban Paratransit fares are double the prevailing fixed route transit fare. The current MTS Paratransit fare is \$4.50, which is twice the urban fixed route fare of \$2.25.

**Question 15: How are transfers handled between MTS Access, ADA Suburban Paratransit, and North County Transit District (NCTD) LIFT?**

**Answer:** Trips are independently booked by MTS Access (Zone 1), ADA Suburban Paratransit (Zones 2, 3, and 4), and NCTD

LIFT. Trips with origins and destinations in different service areas may require a transfer. Trips with origins and destinations across multiple service areas may experience more than one transfer.

Transfer points are accessible locations with telephones, rest rooms, and food and beverages.

**Question 16: Do children have to pay a fare on ADA service?**

**Answer:** On MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit, children 5 years old and younger may ride free with a fare paying adult. While a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may travel without paying a fare, one passenger must always pay a full fare. A fare must be paid when an adult or guardian is traveling as the non-paying child's Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Likewise, two passengers cannot claim each other as Personal Care Attendants to avoid fare payment.

**Question 17: May I schedule a standing ride or subscription so I don't have to call every day to book reservations?**

**Answer:** On MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit, subscription service is utilized for purposes of operational and cost efficiency. If subscriptions become an operational detriment, MTS could decide to eliminate all subscription service.

Subscriptions, if granted, may be placed on hold or temporary inactive status for a maximum of 60 days (vacations, school breaks, etc.). After 60 days, any subscription that has not been reactivated will be discontinued. Passengers who cancel or no-show for more than 50% of their subscription rides in any given month may have their subscription services discontinued.

At this time, the MTS paratransit contractor, First Transit, will review all subscription requests and they have the discretion to accept or reject any new subscription ride request based on the shared ride nature of this service. Changes to subscription rides may result in the discontinuation of the individual's subscription privilege.

**Question 18: If my appointment runs late and I miss my trip, may I have a same day replacement trip?**

**Answer:** While same day trips are not required by the ADA, we will attempt to offer you the best trip available. There is no guarantee on how quickly your same day replacement trip may be scheduled and it may be scheduled much later than is convenient for you.

**Question 19: What if I no-show for my ride?**

**Answer:** A no-show occurs when a trip reservation is made but the trip is not taken. Please be ready to board five minutes prior and up to ten minutes after your scheduled pickup time. If the passenger is not ready to travel, drivers are required to wait only three minutes after the scheduled pickup time.

No-shows can be avoided by calling to

cancel a ride by 5:00 PM the day prior to the scheduled ride. Excessive no-shows may result in suspension of services and the passenger will be required to pay the fare for their no-show trips prior to their next ride.

**Question 20: Do subscription rides occur on holidays?**

**Answer:** All subscription trips are automatically canceled on most holidays and days of reduced service that surround holidays. For a current list of days where subscription trips are canceled, please contact the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit customer service center. If you have a subscription and will still need your ride on a given holiday, you MUST contact the reservation office at least 3 business days prior to the holiday to ensure your ride is not canceled.

**Question 21: What is the on-time performance window?**

**Answer:** Drivers are provided a ten (10) minute window to arrive for a scheduled trip time and still be considered "on-time." This 10-minute window starts at the scheduled trip time and ends 10 minutes after the scheduled trip time. For example, if you are given a 7:30 AM pickup time, the vehicle may appear from 7:30 AM to 7:40 AM and this would be considered on time.

On occasion, a cancellation or lighter than average traffic may result in a driver arriving to pick you up earlier than your scheduled pickup time. As the passenger, you have the option to leave earlier or require the driver to wait until the scheduled time. It is your option and the driver cannot coerce you to leave earlier than you have scheduled.

**Question 22: What if my bus is late?**

**Answer:** If your ride is more than 10 minutes late, please call the MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit toll free number at 1-888-517-9627 to check on the status of your ride. Please inform the dispatcher that you are checking on the status of a scheduled ride and provide the passenger's name and pickup location.

**Question 23: Am I allowed to bring packages onboard?**

**Answer:** Packages are allowed but are limited to the number of packages that a passenger can transport on and off the vehicle without assistance from the driver. Drivers can not assist passengers with their luggage or personal packages. All packages must be able to be safely secured under the passenger's seat or in the passenger's lap.

**Question 24: Whom should I contact for customer service issues?**

**Answer:** For issues relating to your transportation, such as untimely service, customer service and/or vehicle cleanliness, you may contact our paratransit provider, First Transit at 1-888-517-9627.

For policy-related matters, you should call or write to the MTS

Paratransit Manager. Our phone number is (619) 235-2647 and our mailing address is MTS, Access Services, 100 16th Street, San Diego, CA 92101. Our email address is Access.Services@sdmts.com. We also invite our passengers to attend the regularly scheduled MTS Accessible Services Advisory Committee (ASAC) meetings.

**Question 25: What if I want to change my destination address while onboard the bus?**

**Answer:** Trip destinations can only be changed by calling the First Transit reservation office. Destination changes can only be authorized by the First Transit reservations and dispatch departments.

If a passenger while on-board the vehicle no longer wishes to travel to the originally booked destination and the new trip destination can not be accommodated or approved by dispatch, the driver will return the passenger to the place of their trip origin.

**Question 26: What if a passenger becomes violent or disruptive while using MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit?**

**Answer:** Passengers who become physically violent, disruptive, harassing or violate MTS passenger code may be suspended from the service. At the time of such event, the passenger will either be returned to the place of their trip origin or local law enforcement will be called to the scene at the discretion of the supervisor.

**Question 27: What is the capacity of the wheelchair lift on MTS Access/ADA Suburban Paratransit vehicles?**

**Answer:** The wheelchair lifts are designed to meet the needs of a common wheelchair, as defined, not to exceed a combined device and passenger weight of 600 pounds and not to exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length. Mobility aids that exceed the specifications listed above may not be transported. (49 CFR, Section 37.3)

**Question 28: Can the driver assist with passengers who need to take food, drink or medication while in transit?**

**Answer:** Drivers are not permitted to assist passengers with the consumption or transportation of food, drinks or medication.

If you have a question or concern that we have not addressed, please do not hesitate to contact us at MTS. We can be reached at (619) 235-2647. Our e-mail address is Access.Services@sdmts.com. MTS appreciates your patronage and support of transit.