

Welcome

Orange County Complementary ADA Paratransit (“ADA Paratransit”) is a shared-ride transportation service for people who are unable to independently use public transit because of a disability or disabling health condition. Since 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has required all public transit agencies to provide paratransit services to qualified disabled people. The law sets forth specific requirements for vehicle and facility accessibility and provision of service, including complementary paratransit service.

This document is intended to serve as a guidebook to help ADA Paratransit riders understand their rights as well as Orange County’s ADA Paratransit policies and procedures that guide the service operators.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION POLICY

Orange County strives to make our documents and web site content accessible to all. This means accommodating specific requirements or accessibility needs where feasible. If you are unable to access County documents or utilize our online services, please contact us and provide a description of your accessibility issue. We will provide you with an alternate means of access to the requested material (such as large print, Braille, text-only, etc.).

Orange County Department of Planning – Transit Division (845) 615-3850

What is ADA Paratransit?

Federal law requires that each public entity operating a fixed route system provide paratransit service to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system. The term "fixed route system" means a system of providing designated public transportation on which a vehicle is operated along a prescribed route according to a fixed schedule. ADA requirements for paratransit do not apply to commuter bus, commuter rail, or intercity bus or rail systems.

In practice, ADA Paratransit is a “safety net” for people with disabilities who are unable to make use of the fixed-route transit system (bus). It is not intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation that meets all of the travel needs of people with disabilities.

The phrase “complementary paratransit service” is sometimes used. This means that it is a complement to the fixed route service. This term is sometimes confused with the homonym *complimentary*, which means free; the complementary ADA paratransit service is not free.

What accessibility features are available?

Orange County ensures that all bus purchases include lifts and other accessibility features that meet or exceed Federal standards.

Paratransit Service Contractor for Newburgh, Middletown and Monroe Areas

Orange County contracts for paratransit service in the Newburgh, Middletown and Monroe areas. MTM Transit, LLC is the current contractor. This service operates within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile from the fixed route services during the hours of fixed route operations.

If you have any questions related to scheduling services, please contact MTM Transit in Newburgh at (845) 567-0013, Middletown at (845) 467-6641 or Monroe at (845) 395-3083.

Applying For Service

Who is eligible?

To be eligible to ride ADA Paratransit services, a person must be unable to use the local fixed route bus system due to a qualifying disability (physical, mental or visual). Any individual is eligible to submit an application for the ADA Paratransit service if he or she feels they qualify for the service. Please note, however, that service will only be provided within the 1 ½ mile corridor defined above.

Eligible applicants must be certified by Orange County as an ADA Paratransit rider. An Orange County ADA Paratransit application may be obtained by calling Orange County's Planning Department - Transit Division at (845) 615-3850 or by visiting the Transit Orange website at www.transitorange.info.

Orange County staff are responsible for processing all ADA applications. Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving a complete application the county will provide a written notice granting or denying eligibility. Usually eligibility is unconditional, however, depending on the circumstances, eligibility may be conditional or temporary.

Visitors

Out-of-town visitors are approved to use Orange County's ADA Paratransit service for up to twenty-one (21) days in a calendar year upon submission to the operator of proof of paratransit eligibility from another ADA Paratransit service. The visitor may also present a different form of proof if their disability is not apparent (i.e. letter from licensed physician). Information can be submitted via email to TransitOrange@orangecountygov.com or fax 845-291-2533 Attention: Paratransit Service. You can further follow up that your information was received by calling Transit Orange at 845-615-3850. Received documentation will be provided to MTM Transit the same day it is received. Visitors will be able to then call and make reservations on the same basis that Orange County residents do. For further information on how to make a reservation, please see 'Scheduling Rides' in the section below.

Planning Your Ride

Hours of Service

ADA Paratransit services are required by federal regulation to have the same service hours as the fixed route system for which they are a complement. The ADA Paratransit services contracted by Orange County are available during the following hours:

Newburgh Area:

- Monday through Friday, 6:50 AM to 7:00 PM (last scheduled ride 6:45 PM)
- Saturday 7:50 AM to 7:00 PM (last scheduled ride 6:45 PM)
- No Sunday Service (the fixed route service does not operate)

Middletown Area:

- Monday through Saturday 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM (last scheduled ride 5:15 PM)
- No Sunday Service (the fixed route service does not operate)

Monroe Area:

- Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM to 7:10 PM (last scheduled ride 6:55 PM)
- No Saturday Service
- Sunday 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM (last scheduled ride 6:15 PM)

Scheduling Rides

Eligible riders may call the paratransit service contractor to schedule rides in the Newburgh, Middletown, and Monroe service areas. Reservations must be made at least one day prior to the desired trip and may be scheduled a maximum of two (2) weeks prior to the desired trip. ADA Paratransit services must be provided to eligible persons when next day reservations are made. The 'next day' means any time during office hours the day before; that is, a rider could call Monday afternoon to schedule a trip on Tuesday morning. Nevertheless, both the county and the service contractor appreciate as much advance notice in scheduling as possible.

Please note that same day reservations will not be accepted.

To make reservations, please call paratransit service contractor MTM Transit during the office hours listed below:

- ❖ **Newburgh Area (845) 567-0013: Monday through Saturday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**
- ❖ **Middletown Area (845) 467-6641: Monday through Saturday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**
- ❖ **Monroe Area (845) 395-3083: Monday through Saturday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Sunday 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

Reservation requests may be left on voice mail when the MTM Transit administrative offices are closed, however, they obviously cannot be confirmed until the administrative offices reopen. If service is requested via voicemail, a representative from MTM Transit will call back when the administrative offices open again to confirm that the reservation has been made. Please note that a ride request left on voice mail after the close of business for a trip the following day cannot be accommodated.

When calling to schedule rides, please provide first and last name; the day, date and time of the trip or trips; the number of people traveling; the type of any mobility aids being used; and the origin and destination street addresses.

The ADA Paratransit Service contractor must coordinate, and schedule trips requested by many eligible riders. When making reservations, the exact appointment time that you would like may not be available. In such cases, federal regulations allow a two (2) hour window to accommodate reservation requests (from one hour before to one hour after the requested time). While the service contractor will make every effort to negotiate to

schedule trip requests as close to the desired time as possible, only when trips must be scheduled outside of this two (2) hour window do federal regulations term that a denial. The County and federal regulations require that such trip denials be recorded as such. The term 'denial' in this context has a very specific definition and does not mean that the ride was not scheduled as desired by the rider. For example, if a rider calls MTM Transit to request a 10:00AM pick up and the dispatcher responds that the rider could schedule the trip at 9:30 or 10:30, the rider has not been denied service.

The County's policy is that at least ninety-five (95%) of telephone calls should be answered by MTM Transit within three (3) minutes and ninety-nine percent (99%) should be answered within five (5) minutes. The current technology utilized by the paratransit operator allows callers to reach the reservation office by placing them in a queue with an option to leave a voicemail for a callback reservation. Callers should not receive a busy signal using this technology. Orange County coordinates extensively with MTM Transit to examine their call log histories to examine how calls were accepted, in particular during peak times.

There are no restrictions on the number of trips an eligible rider may reserve. Waiting lists are not used for non-subscription trips. Please see the definition of subscription trips on page 6.

Please note that requests for specific drivers will not be accommodated.

Pick-ups and Drop-offs

Orange County has established curb-to-curb service (with origin to destination as needed) as the basic mode of paratransit service. When needed, riders should request this additional origin to destination assistance when making reservations so that MTM Transit has an opportunity to evaluate how to meet the need. However, if advance notice is not provided, best efforts will still be made to provide the needed assistance.

Fares

The current paratransit one-way fare is seventy-five cents (**\$.75**) for each trip that is made. Fares must be paid to the driver upon boarding the vehicle. A visit to the grocery store involving one scheduled trip to the store and one scheduled return trip would therefore cost a total of one dollar and fifty cents ($2 \times \$.75 = \1.50).

While an official Personal Care Attendant (PCA) providing assistance to the paratransit rider does not pay a fare, companions are charged the same fare as the paratransit eligible individual they are accompanying. (*Please note the definitions of personal care attendants and companions below.*)

Cancellations / Modifications

No changes can be made to any trips on the day of the scheduled ride, including the time of travel or any changes to the addresses. Any changes to scheduled trips must be made in the standard reservation window for all trips (that is, no more than two weeks ahead and at least one day before the requested trip). A rider cancellation less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time is considered a "Late Cancellation". Paratransit privileges may be suspended if riders develop a pattern of excessive Late Cancellations (*See Rider Responsibilities below*).

Early Pick Up

Passengers who are at an appointment and are ready to be picked up earlier than scheduled may call MTM Transit to see if they can be picked up earlier. MTM Transit will make every effort to pick the passenger up as soon as is possible without affecting overall operations, however they are not required to pick up passengers early if not possible.

Delayed Pick Up

Passengers who are at an appointment that is running late and will not be ready for their scheduled pick up are asked to contact MTM Transit or have the office of their appointment contact MTM Transit as soon as possible. MTM Transit will arrange to pick up passengers as soon as possible past the previously scheduled pick up time. Riders should also advise MTM Transit if they instead would like to cancel the return trip because they have made other arrangements for their return trip or the trip to their next destination.

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and Companions

Service is provided to at least one other individual accompanying an eligible rider. If the eligible paratransit rider travels with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), service is provided to at least one other individual in addition to the PCA. A PCA may accompany a rider at no additional charge as long as the rider's ADA certification provides for a PCA. A PCA is someone whose purpose is to help meet the rider's disability-related personal needs. Riders should indicate they will be traveling with a PCA when applying for eligibility and when scheduling trips. The PCA must board and disembark the paratransit vehicle with the rider being assisted. A PCA is someone provided by the eligible rider; the paratransit service does not provide PCAs for riders. Drivers are not permitted to provide attendant-type services (for example, carrying personal packages or suitcases). However, driver assistance with boarding and disembarking will be provided upon request.

Travel Companions

One companion may travel with the eligible paratransit rider. Additional companions may ride on a space-available basis. Any companion(s) pay the standard paratransit fare and must board and disembark with the eligible rider. Riders should indicate that they will be traveling with a companion when scheduling trips.

Children as Riders and Companions

Children who are registered riders must pay the full fare of \$.75. All rules applying to adult riders also apply to children.

Children under twelve (12) years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Transporting Animals

Riders may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog. Please tell the reservation agent when requesting rides that travel will be with a service animal. A service animal is an animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. A service animal must be under the constant control of its owner or handler. Under context of the US DOT ADA regulations, emotional support or comfort animals do not fall under

the category of service animals. The operator can refuse the transportation of the service animal if it is deemed to pose a direct threat to the health and safety of drivers or other riders. Please note that other passengers' allergies or fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

Riders may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life-supporting equipment onto the paratransit bus. Such equipment must not violate laws or rules regarding transportation of hazardous materials. Equipment must be of an appropriate size to fit in the paratransit vehicles and be under the rider's or the attendant's continuous control.

Transporting Packages

Riders (and PCAs and companions) are permitted to carry only the number of bags or packages that they are able to manage independently without the assistance of the driver. Due to space limitations and the time it takes to board the vehicle, the number of shopping bags is restricted to those that can be easily handled by the rider and carried aboard without delaying the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to assist with packages. For safety reasons, explosives, acids, flammable liquids or other hazardous or illegal materials cannot be carried.

Trip Purposes

Requests for trips of any purpose will be accepted and provided within the service area. As a complement to the fixed route service, which is used for trips of any purpose such as going to work, a doctor's appointment, shopping or the movies, trips on the paratransit service may be scheduled for any purpose. Additionally, the paratransit service contractor is prohibited from prioritizing trips based on the trip purposes which may be described by the riders. In other words, a reservation for a medical appointment cannot be given preference to a trip to the movie theater.

Subscription Reservations

A "subscription reservation" is a reservation made for a recurring trip or set of trips. Subscription service is limited to riders traveling **between the same origin and destination** at the same time, on the same day(s) of the week, at least once weekly, for at least one month. Riders must call every thirty (30) days to confirm that their subscription trips are still needed and on the schedule.

Once subscription service is scheduled, riders must call when they wish to cancel the trip for a particular day(s). New requests for subscription service are not guaranteed. Subscriptions can be suspended after notice is given to the rider if subscription trips exceed 50% of overall trips during any 1-hour period. If suspended, riders would continue to be able to make individual reservations.

During The Ride

Where is My Ride?

Orange County ADA Paratransit operates with an on-time **pick-up window of 30-minutes**. In other words, riders must plan on potentially waiting up to 15 minutes on either side of the scheduled time for the paratransit vehicle to arrive. For example, while the service operator will make every attempt to arrive as close to the scheduled time as possible, a paratransit rider with a trip that is scheduled for a 2:00PM pickup should be ready for the paratransit vehicle to arrive beginning at 1:45PM and might have to wait until 2:15PM for the bus to arrive.

If you have any questions about the paratransit vehicle arrival time, please call MTM Transit in Newburgh at (845) 567-0013 in Middletown at (845) 467-6641 or in Monroe at (845) 395-3083.

Travel Time

The estimated travel time of an ADA Paratransit trip is expected to be similar to the same trip, including transfers and walking time, as if made using the fixed-route bus service.

Shared Rides

The ADA Paratransit service is a shared-ride system. Buses are dispatched to carry multiple riders, so riders may or may not go directly to their destination after being picked up; there may be one or more pick-ups and drop-offs of other riders along the way.

Unscheduled Stop Requests

Only scheduled stops will be made. Drivers are not permitted to make unauthorized stops.

Paratransit Vehicles

The County provides paratransit vehicles for the service, which are maintained by the contractor. As stated earlier, the County ensures that all bus purchases include lifts and other accessibility features that meet or exceed Federal standards. The paratransit vehicles use a 'Transit Orange' color theme with an orange roof which has the word "PARATRANSIT" on the sides. From time to time the contractor may also use a spare vehicle if necessary, which may look different.



Mobility Aids

All mobility aids and other equipment (for example, folding shopping carts) used by riders must be able to be safely secured inside the bus during travel in order to be permitted on the bus.

Lifts

Lift deployment is available at any scheduled boarding or disembarking location, provided that physical terrain and/or conditions allow. If the location does not allow for the safe deployment of the lift, the nearest safe and agreed upon location will be used to load and disembark the passenger. The lift is only to be occupied by one person at a time. For safety reasons, PCAs and/or companions are not permitted to be on the lift while an ADA rider is loading or unloading. There are no time constraints for passengers with disabilities to board or disembark a vehicle using the lift.

Paratransit Drivers

Passenger safety begins with qualified drivers. Each of MTM Transit's drivers are carefully screened before hiring, and their credentials are continually monitored for compliance throughout their employment. The screening process includes review of driver and criminal records, a thorough physical, substance abuse testing, and reference checks. All drivers must also be qualified according to Article 19-A of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. In addition, MTM Transit's drug and alcohol policy mandates that all drivers undergo substance abuse training, as well as pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, post-accident, and return-to-duty screenings.

Responsibilities

Below are common sense responsibilities designed to ensure safety and comfort for all passengers and drivers.

Rider's Responsibilities:

- Carefully review all Rider Guide materials.
- Make ride reservations at least one (1) day and up to fourteen (14) days in advance.
- Same day reservations will not be accepted.
- Be at the designated pickup location on time (within the pickup window – at least fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pickup time and stay to at least fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pickup time).
- Arrange entry for the vehicle if pickup or drop off location is inside a gated community or has special access requirements.
- If the ADA Paratransit vehicle has not arrived by the end of the on-time window (fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time) call MTM Transit in Newburgh at (845) 567-0013 in Middletown at (845) 467-6641 and in Monroe at (845) 395-3083.
- Pay the correct fare in cash using exact change.
- Call to cancel an unneeded ride as soon as possible to avoid a “late cancellation” or a “no-show” and help reduce any service disruption for other riders.
- Avoid distracting the driver or engaging other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in safe operating condition according to manufacturer's specifications.
- Expect “shared-ride” service on ADA Paratransit vehicles. Others may be picked up after you, and/or dropped off before you reach your destination.

- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene; please refrain from using scented products to accommodate riders with chemical sensitivities.

Courtesy Counts

Follow these common rules of courtesy:

- Be considerate of others.
- No eating, drinking, or smoking on board the vehicle.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering in the vehicle.
- No solicitation – distribution of advertising or material of any kind, including soliciting petition signatures, for a political candidate, religion, or any other cause, is prohibited.
- No radios, audible music players or other sound-generating equipment may be played aloud by passengers aboard the vehicle.
- Provide feedback if your service is unsatisfactory by calling MTM Transit in Newburgh at (845) 567-0013, in Middletown at (845) 467-6641 or Monroe at (845) 395-3083.

Driver's Responsibilities

Drivers Are Required to:

- Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of riders.
- Drive safely at all times.
- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Visibly display a proper ID badge.
- Perform a thorough pre-trip inspection on the vehicle, including cycling the lift, and immediately report any defects to the supervisor.
- For safety reasons, maintain “line of sight” of vehicle at all times.
- Keep to the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- Provide reasonable assistance to riders entering or leaving the vehicle.
- When requested, and if safe to do so:
 - Assist passengers to and from the main door of their origin and destination
 - Offer ambulatory passengers a steadying arm or other appropriate assistance when walking or using stairs.
 - Help persons in wheelchairs maneuver onto standard ramps and to and from the main door of their origin and destination.

Drivers Are Not Permitted to:

- Enter the residence of a rider.
- Perform any personal care assistance for any rider, such as assisting with dressing.
- Lift or carry a passenger.
- Wait for a passenger to make a stop to conduct business, such as at an ATM/Cash machine, pharmacy, or store.
- Escort a passenger beyond the ground floor lobby of a public building or beyond the front door of a private residence.
- Provide attendant-type services (for example, carrying personal packages or suitcases).

- Accept tips or any other gratuities.
- Perform errands for riders, such as picking up prescriptions or groceries.
- Operate the vehicle while distracted by personal cell phones, iPods or similar personal sound generating devices, computers or similar devices.

Missed Rides

Orange County has a fairly lenient policy for riders regarding missed trips and offers numerous opportunities for riders to understand how their actions impact operations. If a rider is demonstrating a pattern of no shows, the operator will send the rider a warning letter advising them of their actions and the potential repercussions.

- **Cancellation** - when a rider calls the office more than one (1) hour before their window start time. This is an acceptable action by passengers and is encouraged. Please note that one (1) hour before the window start time is one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pickup time. For example, a rider with a scheduled pickup time of 10:00 AM has a pickup window beginning at 9:45 AM such that a proper cancellation would be made by calling no later than 8:45 AM.
- **Late Cancellation** - when a rider calls less than one (1) hour before their scheduled window start time. This is an unacceptable action. "Late cancellations" are equivalent to a "no show".
- **No Show** - when a bus arrives at a pick-up location within the thirty (30) minute window time, waits five minutes within that window only to find that the rider has not shown up for the ride. This is a "no show" and is an unacceptable action.

Suspension Policy for a Pattern of Missed Trips, No Shows or Disruptive Behavior

Three "no shows" within a 30-day period will result in the rider being sent a warning letter and may lead to a temporary suspension of riding privileges. MTM Transit determines whether a rider has engaged in a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips by using the following policy:

- If a rider (or their PCA and/or companion(s)) violates any safety or conduct policy, has a medical problem affecting safety, or violates the no show/cancellation policy in a 30-day period, MTM Transit may suspend the rider (or the PCA and/or companion(s)) if it deems necessary. MTM Transit will notify the rider with the reasons for the suspension and the length of the suspension. Suspension time periods may be reduced or extended at the discretion of MTM Transit.
- If needed, first suspensions will generally be for one (1) week. This happens when twenty-five percent (25%) or more of a rider's scheduled trips are no-shows over a period of one month, which will result in suspension for a week. If the immediate suspension is based on the rider having a medical problem affecting safety, the suspension will continue until the medical problem affecting safety is remedied. For example, rider A (with no previous suspensions) requested 16 trips over a four-week period but was a no show for four of those trips (25 percent), could be suspended for one week.

- If, after a first suspension, a rider (or their PCA and/or companion(s)) again violates any safety or conduct policy, has a medical problem affecting safety, or violates the no show/cancellation policy with a pattern of 20 percent no shows over a period of one month, a second letter would be sent advising the rider of the second suspension and the length of the suspension. Typically, a second suspension will be for two (2) weeks. Following the end of their first suspension, Rider A who scheduled 10 trips over the next four-week period but was a no show for two of those trips (20 percent), could be suspended for two weeks.
- If, after a second suspension, a rider (or their PCA and/or companion(s)) again violates any safety or conduct policy, has a medical problem affecting safety, or violates the no show/cancellation policy with a pattern of 15 percent no shows over a period of one month, a third letter would be sent advising the rider of the second suspension and the length of the suspension. A third suspension cannot exceed three (3) weeks in duration. Additionally, the passenger must contact Orange County in writing to request re-instatement. The same rider A (from the example with two earlier suspensions) who requested 20 trips over the next four-week period and was a no show for three of those trips (15 percent), would be suspended for a period not exceeding three weeks.

Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control

For each no show, the paratransit operator contacts the rider to gather information on the circumstances surrounding the no show. Circumstances considered to be beyond the rider's control include:

- Family emergency
- Illness that precluded the rider from calling to cancel
- Personal attendant or another party who did not arrive on time to assist the rider
- Rider was inside calling to check the ride status and was on hold for extended time
- Rider's appointment ran long and did not provide opportunity to cancel in a timely way
- Another party cancelled rider's appointment
- Rider's mobility aid failed
- Sudden turn for the worse in someone with a variable condition
- Adverse weather impacted rider's travel plans

Such things precluding the rider from cancelling in a timely way will not be counted against the rider as a no show. This information is recorded in the operator's No-Show Log.

Rider Appeals Against Suspension

Riders are allowed to appeal suspensions through the County's appeals process. Orange County will consider revoking suspensions if the rider can demonstrate that the no shows were caused by circumstances beyond the rider's control.

Improving Service

Providing Input and Feedback About ADA Paratransit Service

Riders are encouraged to let MTM Transit know about the quality of service. When calling or writing to MTM Transit, please provide as much detail as possible. Information about the trip such as date, time of pickup or drop off, driver name, or vehicle number is helpful. This detailed information is especially helpful if the feedback is a complaint to be investigated. Riders may also contact the Orange County Department of Planning with feedback, including complaints, however for most operational issues the initial contact should be to MTM Transit.

MTM Transit and/or the Orange County Department of Planning are responsible for tracking, review and resolution of all complaints received. All received complaints are entered into a database for tracking. The database contains information such as name, address, phone number and details regarding the alleged complaint.

Please note that there are separate processes for different types of service feedback. To ensure that feedback response is handled most efficiently, please refer to the following table:

Complaint / Commendation Type	Submit to	Contact information	Phone / Email
Specific trip feedback (lateness, etc.)	Paratransit Contractor	MTM Transit, LLC	(845) 567-0013 / (845) 467-6641 / (845)395-3083 alucas@mtm-inc.net
Service Scheduling feedback (don't email to schedule trips)	Paratransit Contractor	MTM Transit, LLC	(845) 567-0013 / (845) 467-6641 / (845)395-3083 alucas@mtm-inc.net
General Service Guidelines / Requirements	Paratransit Contractor	MTM Transit, LLC	(845) 567-0013 / (845) 467-6641 / (845)395-3083 alucas@mtm-inc.net
Paratransit Service Policy	Sr. Planner	Orange County Planning Department – Transit Division	(845) 615-3850 / rparrington@orangecountygov.com
Paratransit Service Contractor Performance	Sr. Planner	Orange County Planning Department – Transit Division	(845) 615-3850 / rparrington@orangecountygov.com
Title VI Grievance (Discrimination or Harassment)	Please refer to the grievance section presented below		

Title VI Grievances

Orange County is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are able to take part in, and benefit from, transportation services offered. In addition, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires that public entities adopt and publish Title VI grievance procedures to assure the prompt and equitable resolution of civil rights matters. Orange County ADA Paratransit takes civil rights grievances seriously. Title VI grievances are considered serious legal infractions such as discrimination or harassment and require that the grievance process listed below is followed.

All written Title VI grievances must be filed within 180 days of the date of the alleged incident.

Within 60 days, Orange County is required to perform a formal investigation and report upon its findings and potential resolution of the grievance in writing to the complainant. The complainant shall be notified, in writing, of the findings and remedial action, if any, within a period not to exceed 60 days following receipt of the Title VI grievance.

Who may file a Title VI grievance?

A Title VI grievance may be filed by any person who believes himself, herself, or any specific class of persons to be subjected to discrimination, harassment or a legal infraction.

What should the Title VI grievance include?

You may file your grievance using the *Title VI Complaint Form* available on the County Planning website or one can be sent by calling the Planning Department. If you choose not to use the form, the following information can be submitted in writing:

- a. Complainant's name, address and telephone number
- b. Person(s) discriminated against (if someone other than the complainant)
- c. Description of the civil rights discrimination
- d. Date, Time and location of incident(s)
- e. Any additional helpful information about the civil rights grievance
- f. Signature of complainant or their legal representative

How is a Title VI discrimination grievance filed?

A Title VI grievance must be submitted to:

Commissioner
Orange County Department of Planning
124 Main Street
Goshen, New York 10924

A grievance also may be filed by sending the grievance via facsimile to the Commissioner of Planning at (845) 291-2533 or by electronic mail to transitorange@orangecountygov.com.

Reasonable Modifications

A reasonable modification for purposes of complementary ADA Paratransit is a modification to Orange County's complementary ADA Paratransit service policies or procedures that is requested by an eligible rider to ensure they are able to use the paratransit system. To request a reasonable modification to current policies, practices, or procedures, please submit the request to:

Artemus Lucas, General Manager
MTM Transit, LLC
1662 Route 300
Suite 121
Newburgh, NY 12553

Requests may also be emailed to ALucas@mtm-inc.net. If necessary, phone requests may also be made by speaking with Artemus Lucas in Newburgh at (845) 567-0013, Middletown at (845) 467-6641 or Monroe at (845) 395-3083.

Requests should be as specific as possible and include information on why the requested modification is needed in order to allow the individual to use Orange County's ADA Paratransit service.

Requests for reasonable modifications may be denied where:

- Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of Orange County's ADA Paratransit services;
- Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
- It is determined that the rider is able to fully use Orange County's ADA Paratransit service for their intended purpose without the requested modification;
- Granting the request would cause an unreasonable financial or administrative burden.

Reasonable Modification Complaints

For complaints regarding the determination of reasonable modification requests, please contact:

Robert Parrington, Sr. Planner
Orange County Planning Department – Transit Division
124 Main Street
Goshen, NY 10924
(845) 615-3850
rparrington@orangecountygov.com

Each complaint that is filed regarding reasonable modification determinations will be reviewed and responses made within 30 business days.

Other Operator Policies

Mobility Equipment Policy

Orange County is the primary purchaser of transit vehicles and ensures that all bus purchases include lifts and other accessibility features that meet or exceed Federal requirements. All mobility aids and other equipment used by riders must be able to be safely secured inside the bus during travel in order to be permitted on the bus. In accordance with Federal regulations, mobility devices may not exceed the design load (rider's weight plus mobility device's weight) of the vehicle's lift.

Lift deployment is available at any pickup or drop-off location requested by passengers provided the physical terrain and/or conditions allow. If the location does not allow for the safe deployment of the lift the nearest safe and agreed upon location will be used to pick up or drop off the rider.

There are no restrictions on persons using respirators for portable oxygen on vehicles.

Operations Policies When Accessibility Features Are Inoperative

Orange County's operating agreement ensures that vehicles with inoperative lifts and ramps are not put into service. Orange County staff examine pre- and post-trip vehicle inspection sheets during operator oversight visits for confirmation of compliance. Vehicles are taken immediately out of service for prompt repair and a spare vehicle with operational lifts and other ADA accessibility features is put into operational service within a 30-minute window. Drivers are responsible for documenting and notifying their supervisor immediately of the failure of any ADA accessibility feature during pre-trip, while in service, or during post-trip inspection.

Orange County requests the operator to repair ADA accessibility features within the timeframe prescribed according to DOT guidance. Within the Operator Oversight Program, Orange County Planning staff review maintenance records to verify that repair of ADA accessibility features was done in a timely manner. If the repair of ADA accessibility features to vehicles extends beyond the timeframe prescribed by DOT, Orange County and its operator ensure that spare vehicles are available to cover the service while the inoperable vehicle is out of service.

System Performance / Compliance

The Orange County Planning Department does not directly operate any transit services. The County selects the ADA Paratransit provider through a competitive bidding process. Orange County staff are responsible for ensuring compliance to ADA regulations and processing applications.

County Monitoring of Operator Services

An automated service monitoring tool provided by the ADA Paratransit service contractor is used by the paratransit operator to schedule trips and all trip requests and actual trip information is catalogued within a database. Periodic reviews are performed to confirm the operational data for accuracy checks.

The County reviews maintenance records, pre- and post-trip inspections and accessibility features (e.g. Braun lift operation) during onsite visits as part of the Operator Oversight Program.

Orange County defines the following service characteristics for monitoring purposes:

Trip Denials

A trip denial occurs when a one-way trip cannot be scheduled within a two-hour window of the requested trip time (one hour before to one hour after the requested trip time). All reservation requests that cannot be accepted will be negotiated prior to being denied.

On-time Performance

On-time performance is a metric used to calculate the variance between scheduled and actual trip times. Orange County defines a trip as “on-time” when a pick-up and/or drop off time occurs within a thirty-minute window (fifteen minutes before to fifteen minutes after) of the scheduled trip time.

Missed Trips

A missed trip is a trip that has been scheduled and confirmed with a passenger but is not completed at all by the operator.

Excessively Long Trips

Excessively long trips for complementary ADA Paratransit service are those trips that exceed the time it would take the rider to make the same trip on the fixed route bus, including travel time to get to the bus stop and travel time from the bus stop to the final destination.