

*The Tri-State Transit Authority*

*Dial-A-Ride*

*Handbook*



Revised (01/2018)



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## **I. Introduction**

Welcome to The Tri-State Transit Authority's (TTA) Dial-A-Ride Customer Guide. In this guide you will learn about Dial-A-Ride, how to use it, who is eligible, how to apply for eligibility, and how best to use this service to meet your transportation needs. Please feel free to contact our office **Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm** at **(304) 529-7700**.

## **II. What is Dial-A-Ride?**

Dial-A-Ride is a curb-to-curb service in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We provide accessible transportation services known as "paratransit," for individuals who are unable to travel on the fixed route. Advanced Reservation Transportation is offered to riders who are certified with our system. The service area is the same as The Tri-State Transit Authority (TTA), which includes Huntington, Ceredo, Kenova, Barboursville, Milton and Culloden. This service area is broken down into three zones. Zone 1 includes the city of Huntington and Ohio from Burlington Wal-Mart to Rome. Zone 2 begins at K-Mart on Route 60 and Little Seven Mile on Route 2. Zone 3 begins at the Milton Flea Market and continues on to Culloden. Paratransit **CURB SERVICE** is provided in a service area that is no more than 3/4 of a mile on either side of any TTA regular fixed bus route.

## **III. Do Our Vehicles Better Serve You?**

Dial-A-Ride operates lift-equipped vans for general paratransit service. Accessible vehicles are used to transport customers who use wheelchairs. All Dial-A-Ride vans are equipped with lifts that meet ADA specifications. Dial-A-Ride vans will accommodate wheelchairs and their users. Wheelchairs are defined to include three-wheeled and four-wheeled mobility aids. Three-wheeled scooters and other non-traditional designs will be transported if they can be safely secured. Mobility aids that exceed these standards may not be transportable.

If you need assistance to board the vehicle, the driver will assist you. All drivers are trained to operate the lift. Also if you need, you may board the vehicle using the lift, while standing.

## **IV. How Do I Board The Van?**

When the Dial-A-Ride van arrives, please wait approximately five feet or a reasonable safe distance away from the door so that the lift can be deployed. When the lift is fully deployed, move your wheelchair onto the platform so that nothing is touching the yellow areas and lock your brakes. If you are using a motorized wheelchair, **SHUT OFF THE POWER TO THE CONTROL**. When the lift platform is level with the van floor, proceed onto the van. The driver will help you to a vacant tie-down location if you are using a wheelchair. If you are standing the driver may assist in steadying your arm when walking to your seat.

## **V. How Is My Wheelchair Secured To The Floor?**

The Dial-A-Ride driver will assist you in securing your wheelchair or other conveyance. The tie-down consists of four straps and one belt: 2 straps to secure the rear wheels of the wheelchair, 2 straps to secure the front of the wheelchair, and one belt which functions as a seatbelt/shoulder harness to be fastened around you and your wheelchair or other conveyance. All Dial-A-Ride drivers have been through an ADA required class to teach them the proper procedure. When you have reached your destination the Dial-A-Ride driver will release the seat belt and the tie down straps. Move to the door where the lift is located. Wait until the lift platform is level with the van floor. Move forward on the platform. When all the wheels or other conveyance are on the platform, **LOCK YOUR BRAKES. IF YOU ARE USING A MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR, SHUT OFF THE POWER TO THE CONTROL.** When the platform has reached the ground and the end safety gate has dropped, release your brakes and move off of the platform. If you are using a motorized wheelchair, reengage your clutch and turn your power on. For your safety, please be sure that your wheelchair or other mobility device is maintained according to manufacturer's specifications. No time limit is currently established for boarding and alighting persons with disabilities. Dial-A-Ride simply requests of its able and disabled customers alike to board and alight as promptly as possible in consideration of the customers already on the van and the customers waiting for the van down the road.

## **VI. Will Dial-A-Ride Accommodate Other Mobility Devices And Life Support Equipment?**

In accordance with ADA regulations, all customers will be permitted to travel with service animals trained to assist them. Service animals include guide dogs and other animals that provide aid to persons with mobility impairments. Persons will also be permitted to travel with respirators, portable oxygen and other life support equipment. Travel with this equipment will only be restricted if it violates laws directed to the transportation of hazardous materials. In general, the transport of common types of portable life support equipment is NOT prohibited. Cylinders of oxygen used by customers for health reasons, for example, are not subject to the Hazardous Materials Regulations.

## **VII. Is Dial-A-Ride Equipment Safe?**

The maintenance of Dial-A-Ride equipment is a top priority at TTA. The mechanics are thoroughly trained on the maintenance of all features before the vans are put into service. As part of the overall maintenance program, procedures have been established to ensure the proper operating conditions of all equipment. These procedures are used to ensure that the lifts and other features are in proper working order. In addition, the drivers go through a pre-trip inspection every day before their shift to make certain everything is in working order before they leave the garage. TTA also keeps a spare Dial-A-Ride van on hand to put into service in the event that

another van became unavailable for use. Finally, spare repair parts are maintained in inventory to aid in the timely repair of the Dial-A-Ride equipment.

## **VIII. Who Is Eligible?**

In order to use Dial-A-Ride, you must be certified as ADA- eligible for paratransit service.

- **Full Eligibility**

Full eligibility would correspond to persons whose permanent physical or mental disability prevents them from using public transportation in all situations.

- **Riding Temporarily**

Persons who are temporarily disabled may be eligible for service only during the period of their disability. In addition, persons visiting from out of town, if certified with another (ADA) jurisdiction, may use Dial-A-Ride while they are here.

- **Ineligible**

If the applicant's disability does not prohibit him/her from using the fixed route buses, then he/she would be ineligible to use the Dial-A-Ride service. If a person can ride the bus, though it may be more difficult because of his/her disability, then he/she may not be eligible for this specialized service. You will receive a denial letter if you are found ineligible.

- **Appeals Process**

An individual whose application has been denied or suspended has the right to appeal that decision within a period of sixty (60) days from the date his/her application is denied. An appeal board composed of the Chief Executive Officer, Assistant General Manager, and Dial-A-Ride Supervisor of TTA will conduct an appeals hearing. The appellant may present information, arguments and/or an advocate to the appeals board. The appeals process and decision will be completed within thirty (30) days of receipt of an appeal request. If the process is not completed within this time limit, then the applicant will be provided service until such time the decision is rendered. At the request of the appellant, all documents relating to the eligibility process will be prepared in the accessible format requested by the appellant to include computer disks, Braille, audio cassettes, and large print.

## **IX. How Do I Apply For This Service?**

To determine if you are eligible to use Dial-A-Ride, you must complete an application and have it certified by a health care professional. To receive an application please come to the Dial-A-Ride office located at 1120 Virginia Avenue West between the hours of 9:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday. If you are

unable to come to our office, then a ride may be provided for you. Call (304) 529-7700 between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm and our Dial-A-Ride supervisor will help you. The application must be completed in full and returned to our office before you can schedule a ride. You can personally deliver the completed application to our office or you can mail it to:

The Tri-State Transit Authority (TTA)  
Attn: Dial-A-Ride Certification  
P.O. Box 7965  
Huntington, WV 25779

You will receive an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Eligibility Card if you are determined to be eligible for our service. The Card will indicate whether your certification is permanent or temporary. If your certification is temporary, then your Card will have an expiration date.

You will be free to reserve a ride with Dial-A-Ride after all these steps have been taken.

**X. Recertification**

The recertification process allows Dial-A-Ride to better serve you. This process allows us up-to-date information about your abilities and limitations. Periodically you will receive recertification papers in the mail. These papers must be completed and returned in the time allotted. If your condition improves or declines since your certification was completed, then your status may change accordingly.

**XI. What Days And Hours Do We Operate?**

<b>Monday - Saturday</b>	
<b>First Pickup</b>	<b>Last Drop Off</b>
<b>5:30 am</b>	<b>11:00 pm</b>

Dial-A-Ride operates in accordance with our fixed route system. The last drop off times coincide with the last time the buses run through these areas. Please ask the Dial-A-Ride supervisor for a full explanation of these times.

**XII. How Much Do I Pay?**

Dial-A-Ride fares are based on the **zones** in which you travel (refer to *II. What is Dial-A-Ride?*). The base fare amount is \$2.00. This is the amount that you will pay if your trip is within only one of the zones. There is an additional charge of 50¢ for each additional zone through which you travel. The maximum amount that you would pay for your trip would be \$3.00.

You may pay your fare with cash or by using a value card. Value cards are sold in \$5

and \$10 increments, and they may be purchased at the TTA Center located on Fourth Avenue and Thirteenth Street. **Exact fare is required when riding; drivers do not carry any change.** Tipping the drivers is not permitted.

### **XIII. How Do I Schedule Trips?**

Eligible riders may schedule all of their trips by calling the Dial-A-Ride office at (304) 529-7700 between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm on Monday through Friday. Reservations can be made Saturday by calling the Bus Dispatch office at (304) 529-7433. On Sundays, you can call the Dial-A-Ride office at (304) 529-7700 and leave a message on the answering machine. The Dial-A-Ride supervisor will check the machine on Monday morning.

Dial-A-Ride customers **MUST** call by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to schedule a trip. Unfortunately, Dial-A-Ride cannot make same day reservations. Trips may be reserved up to a maximum of 14 days in advance. Because of the high volume of riders, it is best to call as soon as you can within the 14-day period. If we cannot provide a trip at your requested travel time, then the Dial-A-Ride supervisor will work with you to select another time within a one-hour span of your original requested time.

Return trips must be scheduled when the “going” trip is scheduled. Only medical trips may have unscheduled returns. All trips with unscheduled returns will be completed as soon as the schedule permits once Dial-A-Ride has been notified that the customer is ready for the return trip. If you need a return ride and it is after 5:00 pm, then please call the Bus Dispatcher office at (304) 529-7433 and the bus dispatcher will be able to help you.

When you request a trip over the phone, be prepared to provide the supervisor with the exact addresses of your pick-up and destination points. If your pick-up is at a building with more than one entrance, then please specify the entrance where you will be.

Grouping passengers on the vehicle is attempted whenever possible. Pick-up times will reflect the most efficient and effective routing schedules. Dial-A-Ride will provide curb service within one hour before or after your preferred pickup time. For example, if you ask for a 10 am pickup, then your ride will be scheduled to arrive between 9 am to 11 am. The driver may have to pick up more riders before dropping you off at your destination. If you have an appointment or need to be somewhere at a particular time, then you will need to notify the Dial-A-Ride supervisor to ensure you make your appointment. The cooperation of each passenger is essential in enabling Dial-A-Ride to provide the most service to all its passengers.



#### **XIV. Changing or Canceling My Trip(s)**

TTA understands that because Dial-A-Ride requires trips to be scheduled in advance, riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. TTA also understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. There is no penalty for a cancellation as long as notice is given two (2) hours in advance of the scheduled pick up time. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. Paratransit customers who repeatedly fail to appear for their prearranged rides can have a detrimental effect on operational efficiency, cost, and the quality of the service for other riders.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) allows transit providers to suspend Paratransit service to those persons who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips resulting as No Shows, Cancel at Doors and Late Cancellations. Service is able to be suspended for a reasonable period of time. Allowance must be made for missed trips that are beyond the control of the individual. Before service will be suspended, individuals will be provided with an opportunity to appeal the suspension.

#### **XV. No Show Policy**

TTA's purpose of this policy is to gain customer cooperation through education. Disciplinary measures are used only as a secondary deterrent and only when:

- Educational efforts have failed to gain the needed cooperation, and
- There is a sufficient pattern and practice of missed trips.

#### **Definitions**

- No-show: TTA defines a **No Show** as occurring when all (5) five of the following circumstances have occurred:
- The passenger (or the passenger's representative) has scheduled Dial-A-Ride service AND
- The Dial-A-Ride vehicle has arrived at the scheduled pickup point within the specified (30) thirty-minute pickup window AND
- The driver has waited at least (5) five full minutes beyond the beginning of the (30) thirty-minute pickup window AND
- The driver (while keeping the vehicle in line of sight) cannot reasonably locate the customer AND
- The driver has contacted dispatch to verify the pickup address and a courtesy call to the customer is placed. If the customer cannot be contacted by Dispatch, the customer will be charged with a No Show after five minutes.

**NOTE: Each No Show is counted as one (1) penalty point.**

If a customer is a No Show for the first half of a trip, he or she is responsible for calling and canceling the return trip if they will not need it. Otherwise, he or she will be charged with a second No Show if the customer does not cancel the return trip and is not available for pick-up on the return trip.

Late Cancellation: TTA defines a Late Cancellation as occurring when the customer (or the customer's representative) cancels less than two hours **before** the beginning of the pick-up window. The number to call for advance trip cancellations and same day trip cancellations is (304) 529-7433.

**NOTE: Each Late Cancellation is counted as one (1) penalty point.**

Cancel at Door: TTA defines a **Cancel at Door** as occurring when the Dial-A-Ride vehicle arrives on time within the (30) thirty-minute pickup window and a customer (or the customer's representative) cancels a scheduled trip during the pick-up window.

**NOTE: Each Cancel at Door is counted as one (1) penalty point.**

If a driver arrives to pick up a customer before the start of the customer's (30) thirty-minute pick-up window and the customer is not ready to be transported, the customer is not required to board the vehicle. The customer may board if they are ready and does not oppose departing early. The customer will not be charged a No Show (or cancel at door) should they decide not to board the vehicle early.

Pickup Window: The **Pickup Window** is defined as from 15 minutes before the scheduled pickup time to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Riders should be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pickup window. The driver will wait for a maximum of five minutes within the pickup window for the rider to appear.

**Definition: No-shows Due to Error or to Circumstances Beyond a Rider's Control**

TTA does not count as no-shows or late cancellations any trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pickup location
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pickup window begins
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pickup window)
- Drivers arriving within the pickup window, but departing without waiting the required five minutes

TTA does not count as no-shows or late cancellations situations beyond a rider's control, such as:

- Medical emergency
- Family emergency
- Failure of a mobility device
- Sudden illness or change in condition

Riders should contact the Dial-A-Ride operations center when experiencing no-shows or late cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control. If a customer feels a "NO SHOW" was beyond their control (see examples above), the customer may contact the TTA administrative office (304-529-6094) to contest the "NO SHOW". An investigation will be conducted and the customer will be advised of the final decision within fifteen (15) business days.

## **Penalties for Violation of No Show, Cancel at Door and Late Cancellation Policy**

TTA's policy is designed to identify those customers who have a pattern and practice of violating the No Show, Cancel at Door and Late Cancellation Policy based on their frequency of use and percentage of trips missed.

Customers who have accumulated five (5) penalty points with a combination of no shows, late cancellations and cancels at door in a calendar month will trigger a review of their trip history.

### **Percentage Calculation**

The calculation will be based on weights as follows:

- No Show =1 penalty point
- Cancel at the Door = 1 point
- Late Cancellation = 1 point

Penalties for suspension will be determined by utilizing a 15% and pattern of abuse rule. A customer's number of trips and their pattern of trips along with their total number of violations will be taken into consideration when determining if the customer is considered for suspension. If a customer's penalty points exceed 15% of their scheduled trips, this would be considered a violation month.

**Suspensions begin on Mondays.**

**Examples**

<b>Non Penalty Month</b>	Events	Penalty Points	Scheduled Trips
Late Cancels	1	1	
No Show	4	4	
Total	5	5	40
		12.5%	
<b>Penalty Month</b>	Events	Penalty Points	Scheduled Trips
Late Cancels	1	1	
No Show	4	4	
Total	5	5	14
		35.7%	

The length of a customer’s suspension will adhere to the following schedule:

<b><u>Violations</u></b>	<b><u>Penalties</u></b>	
First violations exceeding 15% of scheduled trips	Warning letter, copy of suspension policy; education	1 <sup>st</sup> month in a rolling 6 month period
Second violation	3 days suspension	2 <sup>nd</sup> month in a rolling 6 month period
Third violation	7 days suspension (1 week)	3 <sup>rd</sup> month in a rolling 6 month period
Fourth violation	14 days suspension (2 weeks)	4 <sup>th</sup> month in a rolling 6 month period
Fifth and subsequent violations	21 days suspension (3 weeks)	5 <sup>th</sup> month in a rolling 6 month period

**NOTE:** With each consecutive no show, cancels at door and late cancellation, the percentage will be recalculated monthly. If the percentage is greater than 15% within a rolling six month period, further violations of this policy will result in suspension, per the above schedule.

Passengers may request a change in destination or pick-up location only by calling the Dial-A-Ride office at least two (2) hours in advance of the trip. The change will be made if the schedule permits. The trip cannot be changed in any way after the driver picks up the passenger.

TTA will work with a customer to reduce a customer's no shows, cancels at door and late cancellations prior to suspending a customer's service. Prior to sending a suspension letter, TTA will review all no shows, cancels at door and late cancellations to ensure that the process was followed properly and an accurate count is represented. Any no shows, cancels at door or late cancellations that are found to be in error will be removed from the customer's record.

**All penalties imposed under this policy are first subject to an appeals process.**

### **Appeals Process**

1. Customer will receive a written letter, documentation of the specific, verified occurrences of No Shows, Cancel at Doors and Late Cancellations, and the appeals process via U.S. mail.
2. Customer must give a written, faxed, or emailed notice to TTA of the intent to appeal within seven calendar days of the dated letter. The notice should be addressed to:  

Tri-State Transit Authority  
P.O. Box 7965  
Huntington, WV 25779  
Fax: 304-529-7300
3. The Assistant General Manager will conduct an investigation by contacting the customer by phone to review the specific occurrences for which the appeal has been filed. The customer may be required to provide additional documentation.
4. The Assistant General Manager will confirm or overturn the original finding based on the investigation. The customer will be notified immediately of the determination.
5. If the original finding is not overturned, the Assistant General Manager will begin the formal process and arrange an appeal hearing to be conducted within 30 days by the Appeals Committee for final review and recommendation. The customer may provide additional documentation and appear in person at the hearing.
6. The customer's Dial-A-Ride service will continue to be provided throughout the appeal process.
7. The decision of the Appeals Committee is binding. The customer will be notified of the appeal hearing decision by U.S. mail. If the original finding is overturned, the customer will be notified of the revised determination.
8. If the original finding is confirmed, the customer will be notified of the decision within seven calendar days.

9. Customers who wish to file a complaint regarding the Appeals Committee decision may do so by completing an FTA Office of Civil Rights Complaint form at [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov) and mailing it to:

Director, FTA Office of Rights  
East Building – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, TCR  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

## **XVI. Who Can Ride With Me?**

If you require assistance, then TTA recommends a personal care attendant accompany you. No fare will be charged for the first travel companion who accompanies a disabled rider. All additional riders will be charged regular fare and will be permitted on a space-available basis. In addition, you may travel with a service animal, such as a guide dog. Please tell the Dial-A-Ride supervisor when booking your trip if you will be accompanied by a service animal or traveling companion.

## **XVII. Customer Rights and Responsibilities**

Dial-A-Ride makes every effort to ensure that our service is safe and reliable. It is important to understand that as a Dial-A-Ride customer you have rights. However, with these rights come individual responsibilities to work with the system. For your convenience we have listed some of your rights and responsibilities below.

### **Your Rights:**

- Ride in a safe, clean wheelchair-accessible vehicle with seat belts and securement devices;
- Use the wheelchair lift;
- Travel with a personal care attendant and/or a traveling companion;
- Be accompanied by a service animal;
- Have your Dial-A-Ride trip scheduled within one hour of your requested time;
- Be picked up in a wheelchair accessible vehicle;
- Receive assistance to and from the curb and the vehicle;
- File a complaint if service is not satisfactory.

### **Your Responsibilities:**

- Pay your fare;
- Be courteous to other customers and Dial-A-Ride operators;
- Keep your service animal under control at all times;
- Make your reservation by 5:00pm the day before your scheduled trip;

- Provide Dial-A-Ride supervisor with the necessary information to properly schedule your trip;
- Understand that when you are picked up, you may be sharing the vehicle with other customers;
- Cancel your reservation as soon as you know you cannot make the scheduled trip;
- Keep all of your personal information updated

### **XVIII. How Do I Make A Complaint?**

Customers should feel welcome to register any complaints about paratransit service with TTA. Complaints can be registered by phone, by mail, or in person. The telephone numbers to report a complaint are 529-7700 (the Dial-A-Ride supervisor) and 529-6094 (TTA main office). The mailing address of TTA is as follows:

The Tri-State Transit Authority  
Post Office Box 7965  
Huntington, WV 25779-7965

Complaints can also be registered in person at TTA Center located at Fourth Avenue and Thirteenth Street or at the headquarters office located at 1120 Virginia Avenue West. All complaints are investigated. Customer will receive a response to their complaint within thirty (30) calendar days.

### **XIV. Additional Helpful Information**

Due to the volume of calls, the Dial-A-Ride supervisor cannot lookup addresses for you. In addition, Dial-A-Ride drivers cannot enter any building, facility, or residence to locate or assist you. Furthermore, the drivers cannot assist you with any bags or personal items that you may have with you.

You must have your fare ready; drivers collect fares before the trip departs. If you do not have the correct fare, then the driver cannot transport you. Please do not engage the driver in conversation while he/she is operating the vehicle. While riding on Dial-A-Ride, eating, drinking, smoking, or playing audio or video devices without earphones is prohibited.

**Finally, customers who engage in abusive behavior are subject to suspension of service.**

### **XV. Reasonable Modifications/Accommodations**

TTA recognizes that in order to have equally effective opportunities and benefits, individuals with disabilities may need reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies and procedures. TTA will adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable

modifications/accommodations, as necessary, to afford equal access to programs for persons with disabilities.

TTA shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless TTA can demonstrate that making the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity.

Whenever feasible, requests for modifications/accommodations should be made in advance of when the modified service is being requested to be provided by TTA. The request should be as specific as possible and include information on why the requested modification is needed in order to allow the individual to use TTA's services. TTA will make every effort to communicate determinations on requests for modifications in advance of when the service will be needed verbally or in writing.

Questions regarding reasonable modification and/or discrimination on the basis of disability should be directed to TTA's Civil Rights Officer. Complaints can be registered by phone, by mail, or in person. The telephone 529-6094 (TTA main office). The mailing address of TTA is as follows:

The Tri-State Transit Authority  
Post Office Box 7965  
Huntington, WV 25779-7965

Complaints can also be registered in person at TTA headquarters office located at 1120 Virginia Avenue West. All complaints are investigated. Customer will receive a response to their complaint within thirty (30) calendar days.