

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



## TRANSPORTATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIORS

ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES  
NON-ADA SERVICES

NANTUCKET REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
20 R SOUTH WATER STREET  
NANTUCKET, MA 02554

(508) 325-5113 option 1

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The NRTA reserves the right to modify or amend these policies and procedures from time to time as deemed appropriate.

These policies and procedures are available in accessible formats upon request.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA) provides year-round transportation to people with disabilities and seniors. This service is called “Your Island Ride.” In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), when fixed-route service operates ADA paratransit service is available to persons unable to access the fixed-route bus service.

Help is available to understand these policies and or complete the application process, in accessible formats if requested. Please call 508-325-7516.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**ADA Paratransit** – transportation the NRTA must provide, consistent with the ADA, to persons with disabilities unable to access the fixed-route bus system. **The service operates the same days and hours when fixed-route service operates.**

**Conditional Eligibility** – paratransit service will be granted when a person who can use the fixed-route buses under certain circumstances, but cannot under others (i.e., weather conditions or barriers to certain bus stops). People with conditional eligibility are sometimes required to take the fixed-route bus.

**Demand Response** – a term that is often used to describe any service which is not a fixed route. Demand-response service does not operate along fixed routes and requires the rider to make a reservation.

**Door-to-Door** – when necessary, the client will be assisted from their door to the van and from the van to the door of their destination.

**Curb-to-Curb** – when necessary, the client will be assisted from the curb to the van and from the van to the curb.

**Disability** – any physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. This definition is also for people with cognitive disabilities and those with contagious to non-contagious diseases.

**Fixed Route** – a service provided along a prescribed route according to a set schedule. Examples of this type of service are the routes and loops operated by the NRTA during its operations.

**Non/ADA Paratransit** – advanced reservation demand response service that is available to persons with disabilities and seniors.

Pick-up Window – the 30-minute time of 10 minutes before to 20 minutes after the scheduled time when the van will arrive.

Seniors – users that are 60 years of age or older.

Service Animal – Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items.

Temporary Disability – any condition that verified by a health care professional that would qualify a person to utilize the demand service for a determined temporary amount of time.

Trip – One-way transportation from a specified location to a specified location.

Unconditional Eligibility – Paratransit service granted to a person whose disability prevents him/her from using ever using fixed route bus service. People with unconditional eligibility are not ever required to take the fixed route bus.

Visitor – any person who lives outside of the NRTA service area (Nantucket).

Visitor Eligibility – Paratransit eligibility granted for 21 days of service within a year's period to persons having been granted eligibility with an off-island transit authority or through the NRTA's visitor application process.

## **YOUR ISLAND RIDE SERVICE**

Year-round, Your Island Ride is open to seniors (persons aged 60 years and older) and people with disabilities. NRTA requires people who want to ride the service to complete an application.

- Trips operate door to door.
- Service is provided on space availability.
- The scheduled operating hours are from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday for Age Eligible.

During the times the fixed-route bus service operates, Your Island Ride provides additional service for people whose disability prevents them from riding the fixed-route service. Service is provided to certified eligible individuals only.

- **Service is available during fixed route scheduled hours.**

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR YOUR ISLAND RIDE**

1. To obtain an application, download it from our website [www.nrtawave.com](http://www.nrtawave.com) or call NRTA at 508-325-7516 to have one mailed to you. You may also make an appointment for NRTA to help you complete the application. Transportation service will be provided to and from our office at no charge to you. Other assistance in completing an application can be arranged.
2. Upon receipt of the application, read the instructions and fill out the two pages that are required to be filled out by the person seeking to ride Your Island Ride, family member, or care giver.
3. For all people seeking eligibility, forward the partially filled out application to your license health care profession, as described on page 3 of the form.
4. Your licensed health care profession must fully complete the two pages of the application they are required to fill out and sign the application.

People whose conditions change may reapply at any time.

## **APPEAL FOR DENIAL OF ADA PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY**

An appeal must be filed within sixty (60) days of the denial of an individual's application. The individual filing the appeal will be provided with an opportunity to present their appeal in person. As part of the appeals process, NRTA has the right to request additional documentation (relating to the person's ability to use transit services) from a physical therapist, rehabilitation counselor, or other health care professional. NRTA may require that a health care professional designated by NRTA, at the expense of the NRTA, evaluate the applicant. The NRTA Administrator's designee will hear the appeal.

Following the ADA "Appeal Process" issued by NRTA:

1. Notify NRTA in writing with sixty (60) days of the determination date indicated on the determination letter that you request to be heard by NRTA Administrator. This hearing process will allow you to present information and arguments on your behalf. NRTA will then decide eligibility and written notification will be sent either stating the change in eligibility or the reasons for denial.
2. NRTA is not required to provide Paratransit service to the individual pending the determination on appeal. However, if NRTA has not decided within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appeal, NRTA will provide service from that time until a decision on the appeal is made. Written decisions are available in accessible formats upon request.

## **FARES**

The fare for a one-way trip on weekdays between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm for Age Eligible only is \$1.00 or from when the Fixed Route are in service for ADA Eligible then it when they are running. The fare for a one-way trip service provided at any other time is \$2.00. When free rides are on the Fixed Routes, they are also free on the Demand Response Vans.

## **ACCESSIBLE LIFTS, RAMPS AND DRIVEWAYS**

NRTA will transport passengers using a mobility device, providing that the following conditions are met. These conditions have been established as safety concerns for our customers as well as our drivers. It is NRTA's goal to follow ADA if adhering to ADA requirements ensures maximum safety to all parties involved.

1. Any building entrance, to which NRTA transports customers using a mobility device, having more than one step, must have a ramp from the doorway to a smooth surface walk/access leading to the vehicle.
2. If the combined weight of the passenger and mobility device exceeds the posted vehicle wheelchair lift maximum combined weight threshold, transport may not be provided.
3. The mobility device, a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered will be transported if it fits in the vehicle and is able to be properly secured.
4. Customers who have difficulty accessing vehicles using the vehicle steps may board by riding the wheelchair lift while standing. Drivers will always assist customers to board the vehicle.
5. NRTA requires access to buildings via driveways to be free of tree limbs and other impediments which cause vehicle damage or restrict vision.

## **COMPANIONS/PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS**

One personal care attendant and one companion can accompany riders. Additional companions can accompany the rider on a space-available basis. Personal care attendants, identified as necessary during the application process, travel at no charge. Companions pay the full fare.

## **SCHEDULING TRIPS**

Call in advance for an appointment at 508-325-5113 option 1. **Same-day transportation is only provided on a space-available basis.**

If you are a senior or a person with disabilities who is not eligible for ADA paratransit, call weekdays, excluding holidays, from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, and all rides can be made between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday only.

If you are a person who is eligible for **ADA** paratransit, reservation hours are extended when fixed-route service operates. **Reservations can be made the day before the trip up to 14 days in advance from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.** To speak to a dispatcher, call on weekdays. **All weekend reservations need to be made by 4:00 p.m. on Friday.** A telephone answering system is available on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Requested schedule times may be adjusted to within one hour to fit in with the schedule.

To help serve you better, we ask that you observe the following four tips:

1. Prepare for your call.
2. Have your trip information ready and organized.
3. Schedule the return trip up front
4. Be ready to go at the scheduled time.

**Prepare for Your Call.** Please have the following information ready when you call:

- Name
- Date of travel
- Origin address
- Destination address
- Desired pick-up or arrival time

The trip scheduler will let you know your pick-up and return times. NRTA will make every effort to schedule your trip at the desired times. For ADA paratransit service, the ADA may allow the ride to be scheduled up to 1 hour before or 1 hour after the requested times.

**Note Your Trip Information.** Have a pencil and paper ready to write your pick-up and return times down. This will help you remember them. If you have a calendar, write the times on it.

**Schedule Your Return Trip Up Front.** NRTA asks that you schedule return trips at the time you schedule the original trip. Passengers should anticipate the latest possible time needed for their return and schedule a return trip for that time. If you are ready to return before your scheduled time, or if you will be later than your scheduled time, please call NRTA immediately and we will do all we can to accommodate your return request.

**Be Ready to Go at the Scheduled Time.** Please be ready to go 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. NRTA makes every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. However, NRTA may arrive up to 10 minutes before or 20 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Example: If you schedule a 9:30 a.m. pick-up, the vehicle may arrive between 9:20 a.m. and 9:50 a.m.

This 30-minute period (of 10 minutes before to 20 minutes after the scheduled time) is called the pick-up window.

Drivers, after arriving within the pick-up window, will wait up to 5 minutes for Age Eligible trips and wait up to 10 minutes for ADA Eligible trips. Any passenger, who is not at the scheduled pick-up point and ready to go by that time, will be considered a no-show, and the driver will leave to pick up other riders. The driver will not return for a second attempt. The only exception will be passengers who have been detained during a medical appointment. If you know that you will be detained during a medical appointment, please call Your Island Ride at (508) 325-5113 option 1 as soon as possible. If you are running late at a Medical Appt and cannot call, we will leave and check back in between our other pick up to see if you are done. Please be patient waiting as we may be picking up other passengers at their scheduled times.

### **NO-SHOWS AND CANCELLATION POLICY**

Passenger no-show trips and late cancellations affect both the customer and NRTA. No-shows and cancellations lead to wasted fuel and time as well as decreased productivity, which impacts other clients causing unnecessary delays and detours.

A no-show occurs when the vehicle arrives at the pick-up location within the 20-minute pick-up window, waits for the required 5 minutes, and an attempt is made to contact the client, and the client does not board the vehicle. If there is a return trip scheduled, the operator will attempt to call the client to ascertain if the return trip is necessary. If no contact is made the vehicle will attempt the return trip. If the client does not board during the required waiting time the return will be considered another no-show.

A late cancellation occurs when a client cancels a trip less than one hour before the scheduled trip.

In any calendar month any customer who has no showed or late cancelled 20 percent or more of each trip booked will be subject to the schedule below. Suspensions begin on the first Monday.

- First violation – written warning.
- Second violation – 5-day suspension
- Third violation – 10-day suspension
- Fourth violation – 15-day suspension
- Fifth and subsequent violations – 20-day suspension

### **AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE RENDERED**

1. Help from the van to the door will be rendered as necessary and upon request.
2. Vehicle drivers are required to be at the vehicle door to assist customers getting in and out of vehicles.
3. NRTA will not leave customers unattended in a vehicle.
4. There is a 2-bag limit per person, including groceries, and the customer must be able to independently carry bags on and off the vehicle and to and from the door. Drivers will only assist with bags that he or she can easily carry. Drivers will not carry heavy bags.

### **REFUSING RIDES**

Rides can be refused under the following conditions:

1. If the combined weight of the passenger and wheelchair exceeds the vehicle wheelchair lift maximum weight threshold or the wheelchair dimensions exceed the recognized limits and do not fit on the vehicles.
2. Explosive, highly flammable or dangerous materials will not be allowed under any condition.
3. Violent, serious disruption or illegal conduct or represent a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
4. Refusal to wear a seatbelt.

NRTA shall not refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities solely because of the individuals' disability resulting in voluntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience others. Such action may be taken immediately or upon investigation of the incident. In the event of an incident that prompts immediate refusal of or termination of service; NRTA will investigate the incident and determine if the refusal or termination of service will persist. If future service is to be refused, NRTA will notify the individual in writing that he/she will no longer be provided with transportation. This determination will be made in a non-discriminatory manner consistent with the ADA.

### **APPEALS HEARING PROCESS**

An appeal of the decision to refuse or terminate service may be made by the affected customer within 10 days of the determination date. The customer may appeal the suspension and will have the opportunity to be heard, to present arguments and to be helped by an advocate working with a local social service agency. The appeal will be heard by the NRTA Administrator or the NRTA Administrator's designee. After the appeal is heard, written notification of the appeal decision and the reason for the decision will be provided within 30 days of the completion of the hearing. Any suspension would be for a reasonable period, considering the frequency the service is used.

If the individual does not agree with the determination decision of the hearing, then the individual may appeal the determination to the NRTA Advisory Board. If the individual does not agree with the determination made by the NRTA Advisory Board, then that individual can appeal to the MassDOT, Rail and Transit Division, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160, Boston, MA 02116

### **VISITORS**

Visitors are welcome to ride Your Island Ride. Please call us ahead of time so that we can determine your eligibility and obtain information needed to provide the service. We may request that you complete an application and provide documentation of residency. The NRTA accepts documentation of your ADA paratransit eligibility from another transit agency.

Visitor eligibility provides 21 days of Your Island Ride service within a year's period. The 21 days are not necessarily consecutive.

### **SEATBELTS**

All passengers are required to always wear seatbelts on Your Island Ride vehicles. Passengers will be refused transportation if they refuse to wear a seatbelt.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Trained service animals are permitted to accompany individuals with disabilities and must be under the control of the passengers.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Any person wishing to file a complaint related to Your Island Ride may do so by contacting:

Randy Elms, NRTA  
20 R South Water Street  
Nantucket, MA 02554  
relms@nantucket-ma.gov  
508-325-7025

Complaints may be filed via telephone or in writing via letter or email.

In the event a complaint is received by NRTA, the following process will be followed:

1. A letter will be sent acknowledging receipt of the complaint and a hearing, if requested, will be scheduled.
2. Should the complainant not be satisfied that the complaint has been resolved, a hearing will be scheduled with the NRTA Administrator.
3. Should the complainant still feel the matter has not been resolved to his/her satisfaction; a letter will be sent to the Director of Rail and Public Transportation, Massachusetts Department of Transportation. This letter will describe the complaint and attempts to resolve it at the local level and will include copies of all relevant documents.
4. NRTA will maintain records of all complaints received, hearings held and all attempts to resolve said complaints.

## **EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS**

Your Island Ride service will be cancelled when Nantucket Public Schools are closed due to weather or other conditions. The operator will determine other cancellations, due to unsafe conditions, and the NRTA, VTS, Your Island Ride Dispatcher, and clients will be notified.