

Office of Transportation Riders Guide

ADA Services
for Anne Arundel County



Effective: August 2018 (Revised June 2021)

This page left blank intentionally

Table of Contents

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE	1
TERMS TO KNOW	1
MEETING OUR CUSTOMERS' TRAVEL NEEDS	1
FIXED ROUTE SERVICE	1
GENERAL PARA-TRANSIT	2
COMPLEMENTARY PARA-TRANSIT.....	2
<i>Holiday Service</i>	3
<i>Service in Gated or Secured Areas</i>	3
APPLYING FOR ADA SERVICE	3
APPLICATION.....	3
ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION	4
WHO IS ELIGIBLE?	4
TEMPORARY DISABILITIES	5
SERVICE FOR VISITORS	5
ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN SIX (6) YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER	6
RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY.....	6
FARES	6
SCHEDULING RIDES	6
WHEN TO RESERVE A RIDE	6
HOW TO RESERVE A RIDE	7
“READY TIME” AND “READY WINDOW”	9
SCHEDULING MULTIPLE TRIPS	10
SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE	11
HOW TO CHANGE A SCHEDULED RIDE	11
IF YOUR APPOINTMENT IS RUNNING LONG	12
HOW TO CANCEL A SCHEDULED RIDE	12
NO-SHOW POLICY	13
<i>Points</i>	13
<i>Suspension Points Accumulation Chart</i>	14
NO-SHOW RETURN TRIPS	15
READY FOR PICK-UP.....	15
OPERATOR ASSISTANCE.....	16
PAYING YOUR FARE.....	16
TO CHECK ON YOUR RIDE.....	17
AFTER-HOUR EMERGENCIES	17
PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS	17
GUESTS/COMPANIONS	17
CHILDREN.....	18
WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES.....	18
SCOOTERS	18
WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT AND SEAT BELT POLICY.....	19
SAFETY BELTS.....	19
PACKAGES AND PERSONAL ITEMS	19
RESPIRATORS AND PORTABLE OXYGEN EQUIPMENT.....	19
SERVICE ANIMALS.....	20

PETS	20
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	20
INCLEMENT WEATHER	21
COMMUNITY DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	21
RIDER COURTESY AND CONDUCT	22
APPEALS	24
ELIGIBILITY APPEAL PROCESS	24
SERVICE SUSPENSION/TERMINATION APPEAL PROCESS	24
SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS	25

How to Use This Guide

This Ride Guide provides brief information about Anne Arundel County’s Demand Response Services. It explains how to become eligible to use the demand responsive Service, the days and hours of service, and how to request a ride. If you still have questions after reading this Ride Guide, you can call the Office of Transportation at (410)222-7440 or (410)222-0225/ (410)222-0022.

Terms to Know

Fixed route is what we call our regular bus service. It is scheduled to travel along set routes and at set times found in each route’s passenger schedule.

Demand response is a term for an alternative mode of transportation, that is, other than fixed route. It can encompass on-demand services such as accessible taxis and shared-ride reservation services.

Paratransit Service provides transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use the regular, fixed route transit service that serves their region.

Accessible means that a route or a vehicle is equipped to handle wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

Taxi Voucher provides discounted taxi vouchers for eligible residents of Anne Arundel County. The program allows qualified users to travel affordable, safely and independently with the purchase of discounted taxicab coupons. All vouchers can be used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Meeting Our Customers’ Travel Needs

Fixed Route Service

All of our “fixed route service” (transit vehicles that operate on set routes) have lifts or are low-floor models with a kneeling feature to better serve riders who use wheelchairs or who have difficulty getting up and down the bus steps. Our fixed route buses are 100% wheelchair accessible.

These vehicles have reserved spaces with tie down straps, and our operators are trained to provide a safe and secure ride for customers who use wheelchairs. There are also a number of seats usually available near the entrance of the vehicle for persons who have difficulty standing while the vehicle is moving. For everyone’s benefit, the operator or a pre-recorded message announces major stops, intersections, and transfer points to help customers recognize their bus stop or point of transfer.

For route and schedule information, or any questions you may have about using Anne Arundel County fixed route transit or para-transit services, visit our website at www.aacounty.org/transportation or call (410) 222-0022.

General Para-transit

For eligible customers who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on fixed route services, Anne Arundel County offers a shared-ride, origin-to-destination service.

The service is provided with lift-equipped vehicles, or it may be provided by an accessible taxi that has been scheduled through the Anne Arundel County Transportation office as part of our Taxi Voucher program.

Anne Arundel County provides “general para-transit service throughout the County. To confirm whether demand response can serve where you are traveling from and where you would like to go, contact the office at (410) 222-0022. Reservations must be made two (2) days, and up to seven (7) days, in advance. Demand Response trips can be scheduled for any purpose, whether for shopping, appointments, etc.

The Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation provides both general para-transit curb-to-curb service for Anne Arundel County residents throughout Anne Arundel County. Service is provided for Anne Arundel County residents sixty-five (65) years of age and older and adult disabled persons 18 years of age and older throughout Anne Arundel County.

ADA Complementary Para-transit

For eligible customers who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on fixed route services, Anne Arundel County offers Complementary para-transit services. Complementary para-transit service is provided with lift-equipped vans, or it may be provided by an accessible cab that has been scheduled through the Anne Arundel County Transportation office as part of our Taxi Voucher program.

Complementary para-transit service is designed to be “comparable to” (similar to) fixed route bus service, operating in the same areas and during the same days and hours. As a comparable service, Complementary para-transit service is only required to transport riders to and from locations that are within three-quarters $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of existing local fixed routes and during the same days and hours of that fixed route service. Points of origin-to-destination beyond this three-quarters $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor are not eligible for Complementary para-transit service, but are eligible for General paratransit service. Reservations for ADA complementary paratransit are taken up to the close of business the day before travel up to seven (7) days, in advance.

Holiday Service

Demand response service may have limited hours on certain holidays throughout the year, so please call to confirm such days as MLK Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve. For service after holidays, scheduling a new trip, you may call the reservation line at (410) 222-0022 to schedule next day trips after holidays.

Service in Gated or Secured Areas

Demand Response vehicles may not travel into areas that require security clearance, including the entry of a security code for access, unless cleared in advance. Should you travel to or from a gated/secured area, you will need to share this information with us when you make your reservation and make any necessary arrangements with that location's security or the demand response pick-up and drop-off point may be established outside the secured area.

Applying for ADA Service

Individuals interested in using demand response must first be determined eligible for the service. The eligibility review considers each person's functional ability to use the fixed route vehicles. If a disability or health condition prevents you from using fixed route bus services under any conditions, you might be determined "unconditionally eligible," meaning that you are eligible for demand response without any restrictions. If you can use fixed route buses some of the time, but not at other times, you will be determined "conditionally eligible" for those trips that you cannot make by bus.

To receive information about the eligibility process, visit our website or call Anne Arundel County Transportation to request that an eligibility information packet be mailed to you. You may request this information in various formats including electronically and in Braille. Once you have reviewed the eligibility information and feel that you might be eligible for demand response service, call Anne Arundel County Transportation to schedule an in-person interview and assessment. If you need transportation to and from the interview, just ask when you make your appointment and transportation will be provided free of charge. An application will be mailed to you along with a reminder of your appointment.

Application

The application form needs to be completed by you or for you and brought with you to the interview. The application is designed to gather information from the applicant regarding his/her disability and the applicant's own assessment of his/her environment and functional ability to use Anne Arundel County Transportation fixed route services.

Eligibility Notification

After the completion of the application process, you will be notified in writing of your eligibility status within twenty-one (21) days.

- If you are determined eligible for demand response services, you will receive an eligibility card. Your eligibility card will also allow you to use Anne Arundel County Transportation fixed route services at a reduced cost.
- If a decision is not made within 21 days of a completed application process, demand response service will be provided until a final decision is made.

Once you receive your eligibility notification, if you do not agree with the decision that is made, you can appeal the decision to the Director by following the information outlined in your eligibility letter. Also see the section in this Ride Guide entitled ‘Eligibility & Service Suspension/Termination Appeal Process.’

To begin the eligibility process, call Anne Arundel County Transportation at (410)222-0022.

Who is Eligible?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for demand response services under one of the following three categories:

1. Unconditional Eligibility

The first category of eligibility includes those persons who are unable to use fully accessible fixed route bus services. Included in this category is:

“Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.” [Section 37.123(e) (1) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who cannot independently negotiate the fixed route transit system (board, ride or disembark from a bus or trolley).

2. Conditional Eligibility

The second category of eligibility includes:

“Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance, to board, ride and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals

with disabilities if the individual wants to travel on a route on the system during the hours of operation of the system at a time, or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route..” [Section 37.123(e) (2) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual that is able to independently board, ride, and exit an accessible bus, but accessible equipment has not been assigned to your route, or a lift cannot be deployed at your stop.

3. Conditional Eligibility

The third category of eligibility includes:

“Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.” [Section 37.123(e) (3) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who, because of his/her disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed route transit and cannot access his/her final destination after disembarking from a fixed route transit. Two important qualifiers to this category are included in the regulations. First, environmental conditions and architectural barriers not under the control of the public entity do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. Second, inconvenience in using the fixed route transit system is not a basis for eligibility.

Transportation is provided Monday through Sunday, except holidays or Service Reduction in Anne Arundel County

For more information please call (410)222-0022; (410)-222-0225 or check out our website www.aacounty.org/Transportation

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to customers who have a non-permanent disability that prevents them from using Anne Arundel County Transportation. Eligibility will be provided for the expected duration of the disability, e.g., for the time expected to recover from a temporary impairment, or as a transitional period under specific circumstances. Customers must notify Anne Arundel County Transportation if additional time is warranted.

Service for Visitors

Visitors to the Anne Arundel can use Demand Response for up to 21 days a year by providing documentation that they have been determined eligible for similar ADA services by a transit agency in another part of the country. Visitors who do not have this kind of eligibility because they live in areas without public transit service might be asked for documentation of their health condition or disability.

Eligibility for Children Six (6) Years of Age and Under

Paratransit eligibility for children six (6) years of age and under will be considered with an adult. Eligibility will view the child and accompanying adult as one to determine the functional ability of the child/adult.

Recertification of Eligibility

Each demand response customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. Recertification may also become necessary from time to time if the condition of the disability changes or if the terms governing the program change. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. A customer's ID Card will indicate his/her demand response eligibility expiration date. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for services prior to his or her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew demand response eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the certification process.

Fares

If fares are to become apart of the service, Fares can be paid in the following ways:

- Cash – Exact fare only. Operators carry no change. Cash fares may be paid with coins or dollar bills. NOTE: Round-trip payments are accepted by the operator. If you pay round-trip, make sure the operator calls in to the dispatch office to let the other operator know you have paid for your return trip.
- Taxi Voucher Program – Fares are \$5 dollars for a book of vouchers. The fee structure is based on the distance of trips will be implemented: trips 5 to 7 miles will cost 1 ticket, 8 to 15 miles will cost 2 tickets, 16-25 miles will cost 4 tickets and trips 26 miles or greater will cost 6 tickets.

Scheduling Rides

Please Note: All telephone calls to Anne Arundel County Transportation service are monitored and may be recorded for quality assurance purposes.

When to Reserve a Ride

You can reserve your Complementary para-transit service ride from one (1) day to seven (7) days and ADA Demand responsive service two (2) day to seven (7) days in advance of your trip. Reservationists take trip requests from 8:00am-4:00pm Monday through Friday. Reservations can be one-way or round-trip, and you will need to provide all of the following pertinent information:

- Your Name
- Time of Your Appointment

- Address where you need to be Picked Up
- Address you are Traveling To
- Time you want your Return
- Return Trip Pick-up Address
- Return Trip Destination
- Phone Number where you can be reached (you may call back to confirm your ride time)
- Any accompaniment (PCA, guest, service animal, etc.)
- Special notification request, for example, asking for the operator to beep upon arrival if your disability affects your vision.

Please do not schedule a trip several days in advance if you are not sure that you will go or if you are not sure of the time you want to go. Reserving rides that are later cancelled or that result in a No-Show causes the vehicles to be less efficient, can significantly increase the cost of the service, and can lead to suspension of your service.

Scheduling Tip: During the busiest scheduling times of the day (mid-mornings and late afternoons), you may be placed on hold until there is a reservationist who can assist you. During these busy times, hold times can be 5 minutes or longer. If you are able, you may want to place your trip requests during the middle of the day when the phone lines are often open.

How to Reserve a Ride

All demand response trips are scheduled through Anne Arundel County Transportation office. To request a ride, call 410-222-0022.

Scheduling Tip: Keep a calendar or journal to record the date of call, time of call, and the person which whom communicated. Having pen and paper handy will also allow you to write down information from the reservationist, and your notes could assist both you and us in researching any scheduling concerns that may arise.

The reservationist will guide you through the process of scheduling a ride. Please note, if you are traveling from or to a gated community, you will need to provide the gate code when making your reservation. If you do not provide a code and the operator cannot get in the community to pick you up, it will be marked as a No-Show.

The reservationist will always ask for the following information, so make sure you are ready to provide:

1. Your first and last name
2. The date and day of the week you need to ride

3. The time you would like to arrive (your appointment time), if applicable
4. Exact street address where you need to be picked up
5. Exact street address where you are going and any point of reference that might help the operator. If you will be going to a large facility that has several entrances (such as a mall or large medical facility) you will be taken to and picked up from the Main Entrance unless a service point* has been established. If there is a demand response service point at the location, you will be picked up and dropped off at the service point.
6. The time you will be ready for a return trip, if applicable.
7. Whether or not a Personal Care Attendant or companion will be traveling with you.
8. If a service animal will be riding with you.
9. Any other details or information you feel we should know in order to safely and comfortably serve you.

The reservationist will enter this information into our scheduling system, determine if you are eligible for the trip, and identify a vehicle that is available to serve you. The reservation agent may sometimes need to put you on hold while the best travel option is identified or may take your contact information and call you back. The reservationist will repeat what they understood your request to be. Please pay close attention to what is repeated back to you to make sure it is correct.

Scheduling Tip: Consider your requested times carefully. It is difficult to know ahead of time exactly when you will be ready for your **return** trip, but it is very important to schedule the time as realistically and accurately as possible. *Give yourself some extra time if you are not sure.*

If you are going to a doctor's office or other appointment, allow some extra time to get from the vehicle to your destination. For example, if you have an appointment at 9:00am, you might want to tell the reservationist you would like to arrive no later than 8:45am. Similarly, include time to get to the place where the vehicle will pick you up for your return trip. For example, if you work until 5:00pm, you might want to ask the reservationist for a 5:15pm pick-up.

Also if your trip is for an appointment, let the person who is making your medical appointment know you will be using Anne Arundel County Transportation service and ask them how long the appointment will take. This will help you to set your return time.

If you are scheduling a return and cannot be picked before a certain time (for example, you cannot be picked up from work until 6:00pm), let the reservationist know this.

If you do not have a specific appointment time and can be flexible about your travel times, let the reservationist know this.

If you know that another demand response customer who lives near you will be traveling to the same place at the same time and you would like to travel with them, mention this when you call to request your ride. The reservationist can check to see if your rides can be combined; please note, however, that this may not always be possible.

It is very important for you to keep us updated on new phone numbers. From time to time, it can become necessary for us to change a pick-up time to prevent multiple vehicles being sent to the same location or to better group customers on the same bus. If this occurs, we will notify you of the time change either by speaking directly with you or by leaving a message for you about the time change. Calls may be made up to 4:00 PM the night before your ride.

“Ready Time” and “Ready Window”

After you have provided the trip information, the reservationist will offer you your trip options. We will make every effort to offer you a pick-up and drop-off time that is as close as possible to the times you requested. Demand Response is a *shared-ride service*, and other customers may need to be scheduled on the same vehicle, it may be necessary to get you to your appointment a little early or to pick you up for a return a little later than your request.

To ensure that the scheduling options offered will meet your needs, Anne Arundel County Transportation has established the following guidelines for the demand response scheduling process:

- Every effort will be made to schedule your trip so that you do not arrive more than 30 minutes before your requested drop-off time and no later than your requested drop-off time.
- Every effort will be made to schedule a return pick-up no later than 60 minutes after the time you have requested and no earlier than the time, you have requested.
- Every effort will be made to schedule trips so that travel times are comparable to the time it would take to make the trip by fixed route service. When comparing these ride times, walking distance to the bus stop will be considered as part of the measurement.

The actual pick-up time that is offered and accepted by you will be your “Ready Time.” The reservationist will then note that a vehicle might arrive up to 15 minutes before your Ready Time and up to 15 minutes after your Ready Time. This is called the 30 minute “Ready Window.” This window of time is needed to group rides and to accommodate unexpected traffic conditions, weather conditions, or other delays and

schedule changes. It is important that you be ready to meet the Paratransit vehicle during this 30-minute “window” of time.

EXAMPLE: A customer asks for a ride to and from work. They work from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, so they request an 8:45 am drop-off in the morning and a 5:15 pm pick-up in the afternoon. The reservationist is able to offer a 8:00 am pick-up in the morning and a 5:45 pm return pick-up in the afternoon. In the morning, the Ready Time is 8:00 am and the customer needs to be ready to meet the vehicle between 7:45 am and 8:15 am, the Ready Window. For the return, the customer’s scheduled time is 5:45 pm, which makes the Ready Window from 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm.

Riders must be ready to depart at any time during the thirty (30) minute Ready Window described when the reservation was made. Out of courtesy for other customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the operator will wait no longer than five (5) minutes after arriving. The vehicle will depart when the five-minute period is up. If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within five (5) minutes of the vehicle’s arrival, the vehicle will depart and a No-Show will be assessed to the customer’s record.

EXAMPLE: Your scheduled pick-up time is 7:50. The operator arrives at 7:40 and will depart at 7:45 if you are not out to catch the bus.

Scheduling Tip: Check your clock at home against Anne Arundel County Transportation clock when you speak with the reservationist. This will ensure that you have the same Ready Time and Ready Window as the operator.

The operator and/or dispatch office may be able to call you to advise that the vehicle has arrived; however, it is the customer’s responsibility to be at the curb, prepared to board, when the vehicle arrives. If the customer does not board the vehicle within the five (5) minute period, the operator will contact the Control Center for permission to depart, and the trip will be marked as a “No-Show.” If the No-Show trip is the originating trip of the day (the first trip, not the return) a vehicle will not be sent back for a new pick-up. Exception: if we were in error with the scheduling or if the operator was at the wrong location, we will send another vehicle for pick-up. Please note, however, that a “No-Show” will not automatically cancel all later rides for that day. See the section in this Ride Guide about “No-Shows” for further details.

Scheduling Multiple Trips

You can request up to three (3) round-trips per call. If you have more than three round-trips you need to schedule, please call back to schedule these other trips. This limit on scheduling has been set to minimize the telephone hold times for all customers. It can take 5-8 minutes to schedule each trip, or even longer, if you have conditional eligibility and your trip requires a transfer to regular fixed route service(s). The limit on

the number of trips scheduled at one time helps to keep the phone lines from being tied-up for long periods. When minimal phone wait times permit, additional trip requests may be made in the same call. Ask the reservationist if you can make additional trip requests, and remember to have all your information for each trip request available.

Subscription Service

If you need a ride to the same place, at the same time, at least once a week, “Subscription Service” may be a good option for you. This service allows you to schedule these recurring trips with one call. You will automatically be placed on the schedule each week. Ask the reservationist about this option.

For customers who are already receiving Subscription Service, it is important to let us know immediately if you do not need a ride on a particular day. This way, we can make the change on our schedules, avoid any mistaken No-Show notations, and schedule our other customers more efficiently. For example, if you have Subscription Service for a trip to school or work each weekday, keep us updated on holiday and vacation times when school is not in session or when your work is closed for the holiday. This will help us avoid unnecessary trips or missed connections.

You can put your subscription trip on “hold” for up to two (2) months. Then, when you are getting ready to have your subscription service taken off hold, call Anne Arundel County Transportation seven (7) days in advance to reinstate the service. If you need to put your trips on hold for a longer period than three months, we may ask you to call back and request a new subscription service at the time it is needed.

Depending on demand, it may sometimes become necessary to limit the number of subscription trips that we provide. If this happens, your request will be on a waiting list and we will call you back when we are able to meet your request for Subscription Service.

NOTE: All subscription trips are pre-cancelled on holidays. If you want a ride on a holiday, you must call to confirm whether we are operating and whether you are traveling within the service area to receive a ride.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

If you have scheduled a trip and your plans (times) change, call Anne Arundel County Transportation at 410-222-0022 at least one day before your trip. Tell the reservationist that you would like to change a ride that has already been scheduled, and the reservation agent will ask you:

- Your first and last name.
- The date and time of the trip you are calling to change.
- The new times you would like to schedule or the changes you would like to make.

The reservationist will always try to accommodate your needs, but changes to your original ride request may result in adjustments to your pick-up times.

NOTE: Anne Arundel County Transportation cannot change pick-up times or pick-up/drop-off locations on the same day of your ride due to scheduling restraints with equipment and other customers.

If Your Appointment is Running Long

Everyone has occasional circumstances outside of their control that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If your appointment is running longer than you expected and there is a chance you will not be ready for your scheduled return trip (or if you have missed the vehicle), call the Anne Arundel County Transportation office as soon as possible. Your request will be coordinated with the dispatch office that stays in radio contact with operators. You will be asked:

- Your first and last name.
- The time of your scheduled return trip pick-up.

Every effort will be made to adjust your return trip pick-up time and assign another vehicle to pick you up at a later time. However, since schedules are set the day before, rescheduling may not always be possible or there may be a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.

Remember to allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle and the inconvenience of an extra wait for you.

NOTE: If a vehicle is sent and you are not ready, you will be assessed a No-Show. If you call to change your appointment because you are running late, you may be assessed points in accordance with the “No-Show Policy” for the scheduled trip.

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

Scheduled rides that are cancelled after an operator is assigned (5:00 PM the night before), cost Anne Arundel County Transportation thousands of dollars each year and affect our ability to provide trip opportunities to other riders. If you have scheduled a ride that you no longer need to take, please call Paratransit *as soon as possible* to cancel. Notice is required at least two (2) hours before your scheduled pickup time. Customers with Subscription Service also have the option to put service on hold for up to three (3) months.

To cancel a scheduled trip, call 410-222-0022 during business hours to talk to a reservationist who will take your trip cancellation information.

No-Show Policy

“No-Shows” are times when an operator arrives to pick up a customer who is not there or who no longer wants the trip. No-Shows cost Anne Arundel County Transportation and County taxpayers thousands of dollars each year, and they inconvenience other customers as a shared-ride service. Continuous No-Shows by the same customer can therefore result in suspension of service. Please note, however, that Anne Arundel County Transportation will not suspend any rider without advance notification. You will always be given the opportunity to meet with us before a suspension is imposed. See the “Service Suspension” section in this Ride Guide for exceptions and details.

No-Show is when a customer schedules a demand response trip but then:

- Cancels the trip too close to the scheduled pick-up time to allow the trip to be rescheduled for someone else (ex. less than a day’s notice).
- Without any notice to Anne Arundel County Transportation, fails to take the scheduled trip.
- Without any notice to Anne Arundel County Transportation, delays the scheduled trip.
- The operator arrives at a drop-off location and the customer delays the bus by not getting off the bus (ex. customer does not want to get out in the rain).
- The operator arrives at a drop-off location and no one is there to receive the customer and the customer cannot be left unattended (ex. drop-off time is before a business opens).

If a No-Show is incorrectly attributed to you (for example, if our operator shows up outside the Ready Window), or if you feel that the No-Show or late cancellation was beyond your control, please call 410-222-0022 immediately. If you are able to provide specific information on the date/time you scheduled your trips and who you scheduled them with, we will be better able to research your dispute; but we will investigate any matter brought to our attention, relying on the data we have to determine the validity of the error. You may be requested to provide documentation, the purpose of which is to provide a fair and consistent policy for all.

Points

Customers who disrupt the scheduling process for this shared-ride service will be assessed points towards suspension in the following manner:

- Same Day Notice – Cancelling your ride after 7:00 PM on the day before your scheduled trip but at least two (2) hours before the trip. **1 point**
- Late Notice – Cancelling your ride between two (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled trip. **3 points**

- No-Show/Cancel at Door – Cancelling your ride less than thirty (30) minutes before your scheduled trip (includes telling the operator at your door that you will not be taking your trip) OR not being present within the Ready Window after the operator has waited five (5) minutes (includes showing up to take the ride after the operator’s wait time but before the operator has pulled away). **5 points**

Points toward suspension mean that you could lose access to the Paratransit service for a period of time. We do not like to enforce this kind of policy, but we cannot tolerate the disruption and inconvenience such behavior inflicts on all of our other customers. As you can see in the chart below, a customer would have to repeatedly display the lack of regard for other people’s time before having a suspension imposed.

Suspension Points Accumulation Chart

Points Assessed	Within	Period of Suspension
12	30 Days	1 Week
24	60 Days	2 Weeks
36	90 Days	6 Weeks* Loss of Subscription Service
48	120 Days	10 Weeks** Loss of Subscription Service
***		*** See Notes Below

Notes:

* Attending an optional education meeting will reduce service suspension by one (1) week.

** Attending optional education meeting will reduce service suspension by two (2) weeks.

*** If you are assessed 60 or more points on your record, your service suspension will extend four (4) more weeks for each additional 12 points over the base 48 points. For example, 60 points would be a 14-week suspension; 72 points will be an 18-week suspension; and so on.

Points can be removed from a customer’s record. If the demand response vehicle arrives late by more than fifteen (15) minutes due to circumstances within County control (for example: scheduling problem, operator error), then call and let us know. We will send you a coupon that can be redeemed for either the removal of a “same-day notice,” “late notice,” or “No-Show,” or you can receive a free ride coupon.

Coupons will be mailed out to customers. To redeem a coupon, indicate whether it is for the free ride or the No-Show removal and mail the coupon back. Operators cannot process changes to a customer’s record and will not be held responsible for accepting

coupons. If the customer chooses to have a No-Show removed from their record, they must indicate on the coupon which particular infraction they would like removed. Customers can keep the coupon until the time they want to redeem it, but no longer than one (1) year from the date of issue. **Coupons will not be replaced if lost.**

No-Show Return Trips

It is the customer's responsibility to cancel any rides they no longer need so that they are not charged with additional No-Shows.

Some examples of No-Show situations:

- If you No-Show on the first leg of your trip, no bus will be sent back to pick you up for that trip. However, if you have scheduled a return trip, then the return pick-up will not automatically be cancelled.
- If you take one trip and then No-Show on the return (i.e., if we took you to the location), we will make efforts to schedule another return trip upon request and as resources permit.
- If your only scheduled trip is a pick-up from a location that we did not take you to and you No-Show that pick-up, we may make efforts to send another vehicle.

Failure to cancel rides that are no longer needed will result in the assessment of points from the current No-Show policy. Each No-Show trip is assessed independently in accordance with ADA regulations. Riders will be assessed points for each trip they No-Show regardless of whether the trips occur in the same day.

If a schedule delay, bad weather, or breakdown causes demand response to be late and you decide to find another way to your appointment after waiting until the end of the Ready Window (15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time), please let us know that you found another ride so we do not send the bus or assess points for a No-Show.

How to Ride

Ready For Pick-up

You are expected to be ready to ride when the vehicle arrives. The Anne Arundel County Transportation demand response service operator will stop the vehicle at the curb in front of the pick-up address you provided unless something is preventing them from doing so. If there is an obstacle, then they will park as close as possible to the location. You are expected to be at the curb so you can identify/be identified by the bus operator. Remember, the vehicle might arrive up to 15 minutes before your Ready Time and up to 15 minutes after your Ready Time. Please be ready to go when the vehicle arrives so that the operator can stay on schedule for all customers. The operator is not permitted to honk the horn to let you know the vehicle has arrived. Wait in an area

where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the operator will be able to see you.

Please note that the vehicle may arrive any time within the 30 minute Ready Window. Operators can only wait for you for five (5) minutes after they have arrived. If you are not ready, the operator will have to leave to avoid inconveniencing other customers.

EXAMPLE: You are scheduled for a trip that has a 9:00 AM Ready Time. This means you should be ready for the vehicle to arrive anytime between 8:45 AM and 9:15 AM (the Ready Window). If the vehicle arrives at 9:05, the operator will wait for you until 9:10. If the vehicle arrives at 8:40, the operator will wait until 8:50 before departing since the Ready Window doesn't begin until 8:45. If the vehicle arrives early, you do not need to come out to board until the beginning of the Ready Window. However, if you are ready to go when the vehicle arrives, we encourage you to board early to assist the operator in maintaining their schedule.

Please make sure that your address is clearly visible from the street, especially at night. If you are being picked up at a large building, make sure to tell the reservationist when you schedule your ride which entrance you will be. Carry any necessary medication with you in case of delays that extend the time of the trip. If you use oxygen, bring an adequate (extra) supply. If you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, please bring a small snack with you in case the trip takes longer than expected.

Operator Assistance

Demand response is an origin-to-destination service. Operators are not permitted to leave the vehicle or other customers unattended due to safety and security concerns, so if you need assistance getting to the curbside or from the vehicle to your destination, please notify the reservationist of this when you schedule your trip or arrange to have someone there to assist you. If requested, operators will assist you as you enter and exit the vehicle. Operators will operate the wheelchair ramp or lift and will assist customers with the securement of wheelchairs and mobility aids and with seat belts. Bring only what you can carry on or off in one trip. Operators do not provide assistance loading or unloading groceries, as they need to maintain a schedule with the other customers. See “Packages and Personal Items” section for more detail.

Paying Your Fare

Fares must be paid when boarding the vehicle.

If you do not pay the correct fare, the operator may refuse to provide the ride and you could have a No-Show marked on your record. Operators do not carry cash for safety reasons and will not be able to make change.

If you have scheduled a round-trip and pay for both pick-ups at the beginning, be sure the operator lets the dispatch office know you have already paid for your return.

To Check on Your Ride

Unexpected delays can arise from road construction, traffic conditions, or bad weather, or on occasion mechanical problems with the vehicle. If a Demand Response Service vehicle has not arrived by the end of the Ready Window (15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time), call 410-222-0022 for assistance. Our dispatch office will radio the operator and give you an update on your trip. Stay within sight of the pick-up location if possible, in case the vehicle arrives while you are calling.

After-Hour Emergencies

Should an emergency arise after regular office hours (after 5:00 PM); call 410-222-0022. You will get a recorded message, so stay on the line and follow the directions. This is strictly for emergencies or to inquire about a ride if your vehicle is more than 15 minutes late for a pick-up. Trip reservations and schedule changes must be made during regular business hours.

Personal Care Attendants

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone you may bring with you to assist you while traveling or with personal care or activities. A PCA may ride free when traveling with you, but you must be registered with us as needing a PCA. This is done as part of the eligibility process. A PCA must get on and off the bus at the same places and times as you, and you must tell us that your PCA is traveling with you when you schedule your ride. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders. Operators cannot add riders who do not have a reservation, so if you do not make a reservation for your PCA, they will not be allowed to ride with you.

Note: A customer registered as needing a PCA may not use another demand response client as their PCA.

Guests/Companions

A guest or companion is someone you want to bring along to share the trip, not someone you bring to assist you. Guests/companions must pay a fare when accompanying you and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you.

You may schedule only one (1) companion to travel with you, and you will need to tell the reservationist when you schedule trips that you will be traveling with a guest/companion. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your guest/companion, and other scheduled riders. Operators cannot add riders who do not have a reservation, so if you do not make a reservation for you guest/companion, they may not be allowed to ride with you.

Additional guests/companions may be accommodated if there is enough space on the vehicle. To schedule additional guests, you may call the day before your ride to see if there is enough space on the vehicle.

Children

All children under six (6) years of age must be accompanied by an adult. They cannot ride unattended. Anne Arundel County Transportation policy allows two (2) children under six to ride free with an eligible fare-paying adult. An adult accompanying a child on any Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicle (including Demand Response) is responsible for the child and for providing the appropriate car seat. Operators will not secure a child restraint or car seat, will not assist with strollers, and are not permitted to carry children on or off the vehicle for you. Operators can, however, assist with securing the child's seatbelt. If you need assistance with the child, please bring someone else along to help you.

Children under six (6) years of age who are being considered for Paratransit eligibility will be assessed based on the functional ability of both the accompanying adult and child (as a team) to use fixed route bus service. When a child and adult team is found eligible, the adult serving as a Personal Care Attendant will ride free. The eligible child will have to pay the regular Paratransit fare.

Wheelchairs and other Mobility Devices

All vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. We highly recommend using the lap belt in addition to the wheelchair securements for your safety. Anne Arundel County Transportation's policy that we will only transport mobility devices that the vehicle can accommodate as defined by the ADA.

We may not be able to transport a wheelchair or mobility device that exceeds the following dimensions:

- More than 30 inches wide.
- More than 48 inches long (measured 2 inches above the ground).
- More than 600 pounds when occupied.

Riders using wheelchairs or mobility devices must be in the upright position when boarding and during travel on the bus.

Scooters

Some three-wheeled scooters are difficult to secure on Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicles. Some scooters also come with a warning from the manufacturer that they should not be used as seats on moving vehicles. Because of this, the operator may recommend that you transfer to a vehicle seat if you can. While the

operator may not require you to transfer, we strongly recommend that you do so we can provide you and other customers with the safest ride possible.

Wheelchair Securement and Seat Belt Policy

It is the operator's responsibility on any Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicle (including Demand Response) to ensure that all mobility devices are properly secured. Wheelchairs and scooters are required to be secured into the four-point securement system at all times during the ride. Anne Arundel County Transportation requests that riders also allow operators to secure the lap belts and shoulder belts to ensure the customer's safety.

Safety Belts

Although not required, our community requested that seat belts be installed on the vehicles. For your safety and security, Anne Arundel County Transportation strongly encourages you to use a safety belt and remain seated while riding on Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicles.

Packages and Personal Items

You may bring grocery bags, luggage, or other packages or (legal) personal items with you on Anne Arundel County Transportation. Please do not bring more than you and/or the assistant who is traveling with you can manage without delaying the vehicle, however. Operators are not required to assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items. Delaying the vehicle occurs when you bring more items than you can carry on the vehicle at one time and you keep the vehicle from being able to move on after five (5) minutes.

Additionally, please keep in mind that this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Grocery store carts are not permitted on vehicles, but you may bring packages on-board in a personal two-wheeled, collapsible cart. If you are bringing a cart with you, let the reservationist know when you request your transportation so we can schedule an accessible vehicle that will best accommodate the collapsible cart. Packages may not take up seats on the vehicle and must be safely stowed out of the aisle, either under your seat or on your lap.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on all Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicles. The operator will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Operators are not permitted, however, to assist you in using this equipment. If you need assistance with portable life support equipment, please arrange to bring someone who can help you.

Service Animals

Customers may travel on any Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicle with a service animal. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. If you are traveling with a service animal on Anne Arundel County Transportation, be sure to inform the reservationist when you are scheduling a ride. If you have an allergy to animals (not including pet dander), please notify Anne Arundel County Transportation when scheduling your reservation. This will aide in assisting that you are not placed on a vehicle with a live animal to which you have an allergic reaction.

You are responsible for maintaining control of your animal while on board the vehicle. If you are planning to use Anne Arundel County Transportation with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- Keep the animal on a leash or in a container when boarding, while riding, and when exiting the bus.
- Alternative service animals that are not leashed must be kept in an enclosed carrier/container.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The animal must not be aggressive towards people or other animals.
- You are responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well groomed.

Pets

Animals that are not service animals may ride on Demand Response vehicles only if they are properly secured in a cage or kennel. For safety reasons, operators are not permitted to carry cages or kennels on or off the vehicles. If you need assistance with a pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you. If you have an allergy to animals (not including pet dander), please notify Anne Arundel County Transportation when scheduling your reservation. This will aide in assisting that you are not placed on a vehicle with a live animal to which you have an allergic reaction.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency, please remain calm and follow the operator's instructions.

A customer who becomes ill, or who notices another customer who may be ill, should immediately inform the operator.

If a customer is to be met when they are dropped off, due to their disability, and the person meeting them is not there when the operator arrives, the customer will be transported back to the Anne Arundel County Transportation office (or to another safe location). The customer's guardian or caregiver will be notified and will be required to come to pick up the customer or to make other transportation arrangements. Respite care charges may be assessed to the customer if this occurs. If we are unable to make contact with the guardian or caregiver, the proper authorities will be notified.

Inclement Weather

Anne Arundel County Transportation reserves the right to suspend, modify or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions that may jeopardize the safety of our customers, our employees, or our vehicles. On bad weather days, please listen to the school closure reports on the radio or television because service announcements may be included with school closure information. You can always call the Paratransit office to find out whether service will be cancelled, but the phone lines may be tied up if everyone calls at once.

If your trip is for dialysis, chemotherapy, or another life-sustaining purpose, call Anne Arundel County Transportation at 410-222-0022 to make sure you can get where you need to go. Every effort will be made to deliver life-sustaining and essential trips using demand response or by arranging other emergency assistance.

Travel is sometimes suspended in areas with lower elevations during heavy rains, hurricanes, and at times when there are flood warnings. If you are planning to travel to these areas at times when inclement weather is predicted, take into considerations the problems you may have in getting a return ride should service be suspended. Also, if you are traveling during inclement weather, please be prepared for longer ride times. For example, bring any medication you may need; if you use oxygen, bring an adequate (extra) supply; and if you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, bring a small snack with you in case the trip is longer than expected due to the weather.

Community Disaster Emergency Procedures

During a community disaster, Anne Arundel County Transportation will make every attempt to transport our customers as scheduled. Due to the nature of the disaster, it might be necessary to establish pick-up points that either requires us to walk in to the area to get you or to have you get assistance from someone at your location to bring you to the vehicle. Through coordination with the local disaster control center, we will make every attempt to establish these locations to minimize your travel to and from them.

If you are at home when a disaster occurs, you should stay home. If we took you to a location and you make other transportation arrangements due to the emergency, please let us know so that we can account for all of our customers who have scheduled trips.

In the event of a community disaster, Anne Arundel County Transportation will:

- Conduct an inventory of vehicles and passengers on-board.
- Conduct an inventory of passengers delivered in the system.
- Hold off on any additional passenger pick-ups until we have been able to determine whether we can safely proceed.
- Determine whether it is necessary to drop off passengers already on vehicles at established shelters.
- If a vehicle is out of contact with the dispatch office when a community disaster occurs, the operator will proceed according to pre-established protocol:
 - o Determine whether it is safe to proceed.
 - o Assess any passengers on-board.

By keeping our customer records as up-to-date as possible, we feel we will be able to provide a better service to our customers in times of an emergency. As part of our preparation for an emergency, we may from time to time request your emergency contact information, including a telephone number—preferably your cell phone—as well as the name of a person to contact on your behalf and their phone number. If you have common places that you travel, please provide us with telephone numbers to those locations as well. Make sure we have at least one emergency contact person or location on file for you.

If the nature of the disaster requires that, you need your demand response trip earlier than originally scheduled, contact the office and we will attempt to meet your scheduling needs. Keep in mind that our ability to respond immediately is limited to the nature of the disaster. You can also call Anne Arundel County Transportation if you have not yet been picked up for your trip or to confirm that we are able to safely get you where you need to go.

In the event that our internal phone system is not functional, listen for emergency news announcements.

If it is unsafe for Anne Arundel County Transportation to travel into a disaster area, we reserve the right to suspend, modify, or cancel service without notice.

Rider Courtesy and Conduct

Anne Arundel County Transportation has a list of common-sense rules to ensure the safety of all customers, operators, and others on the road. We ask that all customers, their personal care attendants, and any companions traveling with them observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- Customers shall maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene.
- Shirts and shoes or other footwear (if ambulatory) must be worn.
- Smoking shall be kept off of and away from the vehicle.
- Eating or drinking shall be done before entering or after exiting the vehicle, unless required for health reasons.
- Illegal drugs and open containers of alcohol shall not be permitted on the vehicle.
- Abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions will not be tolerated towards the operator or other customers.
- Please be respectful of service animals and refrain from petting them without the permission of the owner.
- Use of electronic equipment (music, games, etc.) shall be with headphones and kept at a low enough volume so as not to be heard by and disturb other passengers.
- Operation of vehicle equipment is left to operators and other Anne Arundel County Transportation employees; tampering can result in accidental injury.
- Trash shall be disposed of properly both on and around the vehicle.
- Baby strollers shall be folded and stowed to avoid blocking the aisle or causing injury to persons on the vehicle.
- Parents/accompanying adults shall make sure their children behave.
- Head, arms, and other body parts must be kept inside the vehicle.
- Objects may not be thrown from the windows.
- Federal regulations prohibit the transportation of flammable or explosive materials on transit vehicles.
- Dangerous weapons are prohibited on Anne Arundel County Transportation vehicles.
- Deliberate fare evasion may result in loss of services.
- Passengers must depart the transit vehicle upon demand of any authorized Anne Arundel County Transportation representative, including the operator.

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who violate rules of courtesy and conduct may be subject to penalties up to and including suspension of that customer's service.

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another customer or the operator, or who engage in other illegal activities, may be subject to immediate and permanent suspension from receiving Demand Response service. They may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

Customers, their Personal Care Attendants, or their companions who engage in an activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of Demand Response services may be subject to a suspension of that customer's service. If a customer on their own is disruptive to Anne Arundel County Transportation service, Anne Arundel County Transportation reserves the right to require that a Personal Care Attendant travel with the customer as an alternative to service suspension.

Any customer who is suspended from service will be notified in writing and will be given an opportunity to appeal the suspension.

Appeals

Eligibility Appeal Process

A customer who disagrees with their eligibility decision may request an appeal. The appeal request must be made in writing and must be received by within sixty (60) days of the eligibility determination. Send written requests to:

**Office of Transportation
2664 Riva Road 3rd Floor
Annapolis, MD 21401**

A written copy of the appeal process may be obtained by calling at 410-222-0022.

Service Suspension/Termination Appeal Process

Notification of suspension or termination of service will always be sent in writing so that customers have the opportunity to discuss or perhaps appeal the circumstances. You must follow the process outlined in your written notification. Failure to follow the process described by the dates listed in the letter will result in the service suspension being upheld.

Suggestions and Comments

We welcome all feedback, suggestions, and comments about our demand response service. If you would like to commend an operator for service provided, call Anne Arundel County Transportation at 410-222-4222. Call 410-222-0022 and visit our website to fill out an online feedback form at www.aacounty.org, or mail a letter to:

**Office of Transportation
2664 Riva Road 3rd Floor
Annapolis, MD 21401**

To allow us to follow-up on your suggestions or concerns, please be specific and provide us with the following information:

- Your name, address, and phone number.
- The date, time, and location of the incident.
- If your concern involves a scheduling issue, we will need the name of the employee you spoke with and the time of your conversation with them.
- A detailed description of the incident or suggestion.

To assist us in researching a scheduling concern, we encourage you to keep track of the date, time and reservationist who schedule your rides on a calendar or in a date book.

We commit to you that we will log and follow-up on each comment received with contact information, and we will contact you by phone or in writing to discuss our findings. Due to the investigation process, please allow us 5-7 days to complete our research once you have submitted your information.