ADA Driver Training

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National RTAP
Rural Transit Assistance Program

FTA
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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ADA Driver Training Course Development

- In 2022, our Review Board asked National RTAP to create a new training about what drivers need to know to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- At our first 2023 board meeting, we created an outline and reviewed the first draft of the training

- A subcommittee of our board reviewed the final draft, which was also reviewed by FTA

- The course, available on National RTAP eLearning, was launched in the Summer of 2023

- A handout for supervisors to track driver hands-on training was added in the Fall of 2023

Accessing ADA Driver Training

ADA Driver Training

This course will train rural and tribal transit drivers on what they need to know to safely and professionally provide service for passengers with disabilities and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

ADA Driver Training

Course Contents

This course will cover the following topics. At the successful completion of the course and quiz, the learner will receive a certificate of completion.

01
Disability Information
Types of disabilities

Disability sensitivity

02
Service Types & Levels
Fixed route, demand response, ADA complementary paratransit

03
Passenger Assistance
Lifts, ramps, wheelchairs, packages, PCAs, medical devices

04
Special Considerations
Service animals, children, guests, challenging situations, emergencies

Regulations & Guidance

This course is based on regulations that govern transportation for persons with disabilities, which include:

FTA ADA Circular

49 CFR Section 37: Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities

49 Section 37.129: Types of Service

49 Section 37.165: Lift and Securement Use

49 CFR Part 38: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles

49 CFR Section 38.27: Priority Seating Signs

49 CFR Part 27: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

Types of Disabilities

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), disability is defined as any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them.

There are many types of disabilities that affect a person's:

Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html

ADA &
Sensitivity

> Treat customers with disabilities with courtesy and respect. Give customers with disabilities the same information and choices that you give other customers...

National RTAP ADA Toolkit
[Passenger Assistance and Customer Service](#)
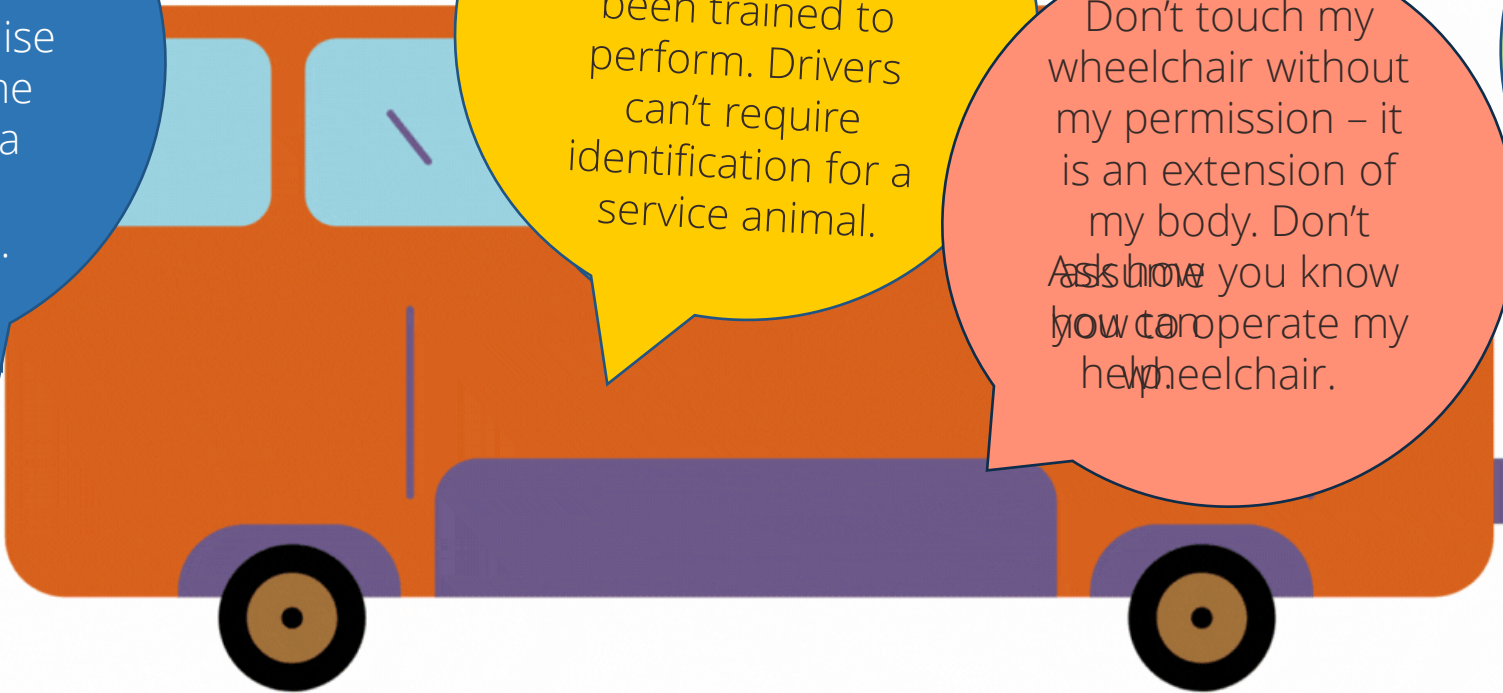
Rider Responsibilities

The [FTA ADA Circular](#) lists the following rider responsibilities:
- Caring for a service animal is the responsibility of the passenger or a PCA
- When scheduling paratransit eligibility interviews and assessment appointments, transit agencies are not responsible for delays created by applicants

Transit agencies can also list the responsibilities they expect from their riders on their website and in their print materials.
other ideas for your rider responsibility policy.

Working with dispatchers & schedulers

Dispatchers are the central communication hub for transit services. Dispatchers and schedulers work together to keep the buses moving efficiently and cost-effectively.

The dispatcher is usually the first person contacted if there are issues that disrupt the transit service.

Schedulers create the daily schedules for demand response, complementary paratransit, and deviated fixed-route service. They also provide input to service planners responsible for developing fixed-route services.

Many transit agencies use two-way radios to communicate between drivers and dispatch. The conversations that are held on these radios can be accessed by the public. Therefore, it is important to communicate on the radio as though your customers are listening.

Lift Deployment and Assistance

All lifts are different based on manufacturer specifications. View National RTAP eLearning videos on lift deployment from the manufacturer that your system uses.

For side lifts: Leave sufficient space between the lift and the curb to board passengers or park close enough to deploy the lift on the curb and sidewalk.

For rear lifts: Leave sufficient clearance behind the vehicle to safely maneuver passengers using mobility aids onto the lift, also ensuring that the toe-guard flap folds up and down in the proper position.

All vehicles: Stop the vehicle in an area with a smooth, solid surface leading to the vehicle.

Always inform the passenger before the lift is engaged.

Lift Operations

1 — Stop on level ground with room for the platform to deploy.

Ensure the passenger mobility devices are positioned entirely on the lift platform.

2 — Put the vehicle in park, set the parking brake and turn on the four-way flashers.

If the lift has securement handles, the passenger may want to take hold of them.

3 — Deploy the lift while standing on the ground next to the vehicle.

Hold onto the mobility device when raising and lowering the lift if you are assisting the passenger.

4 — If necessary, assist the passenger onto the lift.

When the lift is level with the floor, advise the passenger to enter and assist if needed.

5 — Make sure the passenger locks any mobility device brakes.

Direct the passenger to the securement location and stow the lift.

6 — Ask the passenger to turn off a power wheelchair.

Assist the passenger with mobility aid securement, if necessary.

Ramp Deployment and Assistance

All ramps are different based on manufacturer specifications. The manufacturer provides training on how to best use specific bus ramps.

Leave enough space between the ramp and the curb to board passengers or park close enough to deploy the ramp on the curb or sidewalk. Stop the vehicle in an area with a smooth, solid surface leading to the vehicle.

Use of the kneeling feature, which allows the bus to be lowered so that the bottom step is closer to the curb, may also be necessary to achieve the required ramp slope.

Always inform the passenger before the ramp is engaged.

Drivers are required to report lift or ramp failures to the dispatcher immediately. It may be possible to continue in service if the ramp can be deployed manually when necessary.

Wheelchair Securement

Transportation providers are required to use a securement system to secure wheelchairs. They may or may not require that an individual permit their wheelchair to be secured.

An agency may not deny transportation to a wheelchair or its user on the grounds that the device cannot be secured or restrained satisfactorily by the vehicle's securement system [Section 37.165: Lift and Securement Use](#).

A transit agency is not required to transport an individual who refuses to allow their wheelchair to be secured if the agency's policy requires securement. [FTA Circular 4710.1, Section 2.4.3, page 2-14](#).

Mandatory securement policies are up to the transit agency.

Power Scooter Securement

If a passenger is using a power scooter, you can recommend that they transfer to a seat, and the empty scooter should be secured. If the passenger wishes to ride on their scooter, you must allow them to. The scooter and passenger (if all passengers are required to wear seatbelts) must be secured.

Extension straps or loops can aid in securing scooters. Many transit agencies offer to provide mobility aid users with straps to attach to their device for ease of securement.

Oversized Mobility Devices

[49 CFR Part 38: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles](#) requires that vehicles accommodate occupied wheelchairs weighing a minimum 600 pounds and measuring 30" x 48." However, many vehicles and lifts are manufactured to accommodate larger and heavier wheelchairs. A transit system is obligated to carry a wheelchair and occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements.
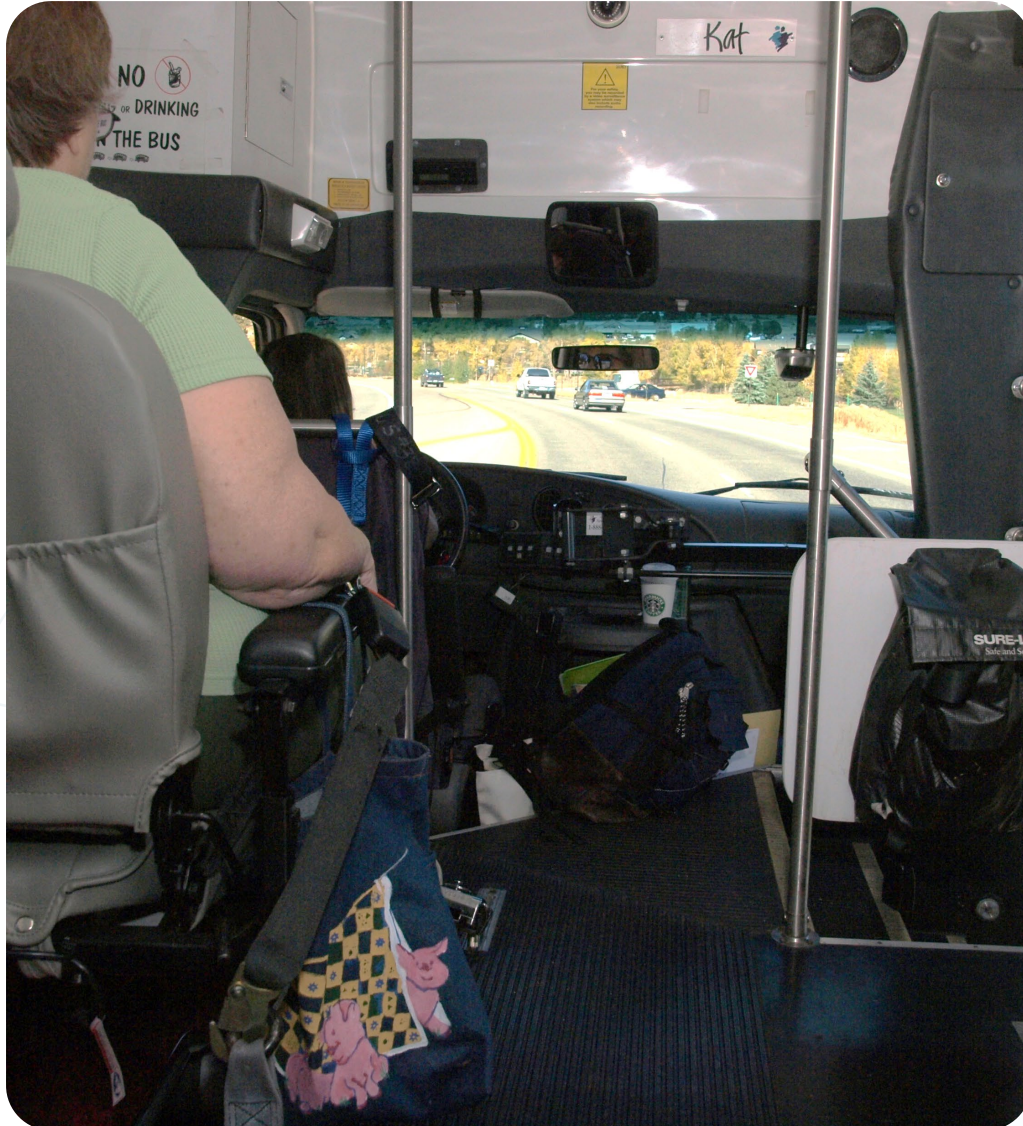
Accommodating Bariatric Riders

To accommodate a rider and a mobility device that together are too heavy be safely accommodated on the lift, the rider could be asked to board separately from the device. Example 8, Appendix E, 49 CFR Part 37

Another individual, such as a personal care assistant (PCA), would need to operate the unoccupied mobility device on the lift.

Priority Seating

Fold-down seats installed in the securement area are often designated as priority seating for seniors and people with disabilities.

Transit agencies are allowed to remove seating from the securement area, as long as priority seating meeting the regulatory requirements in [49 CFR Section 38.27: Priority Seating Signs](#) is provided elsewhere in the vehicle.

Package Assistance

Bus drivers are not required to help passengers with items such as grocery bags. Transit agencies can have policies that require passengers to be responsible for their own personal belongings. However, many transit agencies have policies that allow bus operators to assist with a certain number or weight of bags.

See [Appendix E to 49 CFR Part 37](#) for more information.

The policy must be applied equally to all riders, whether or not they have a disability.
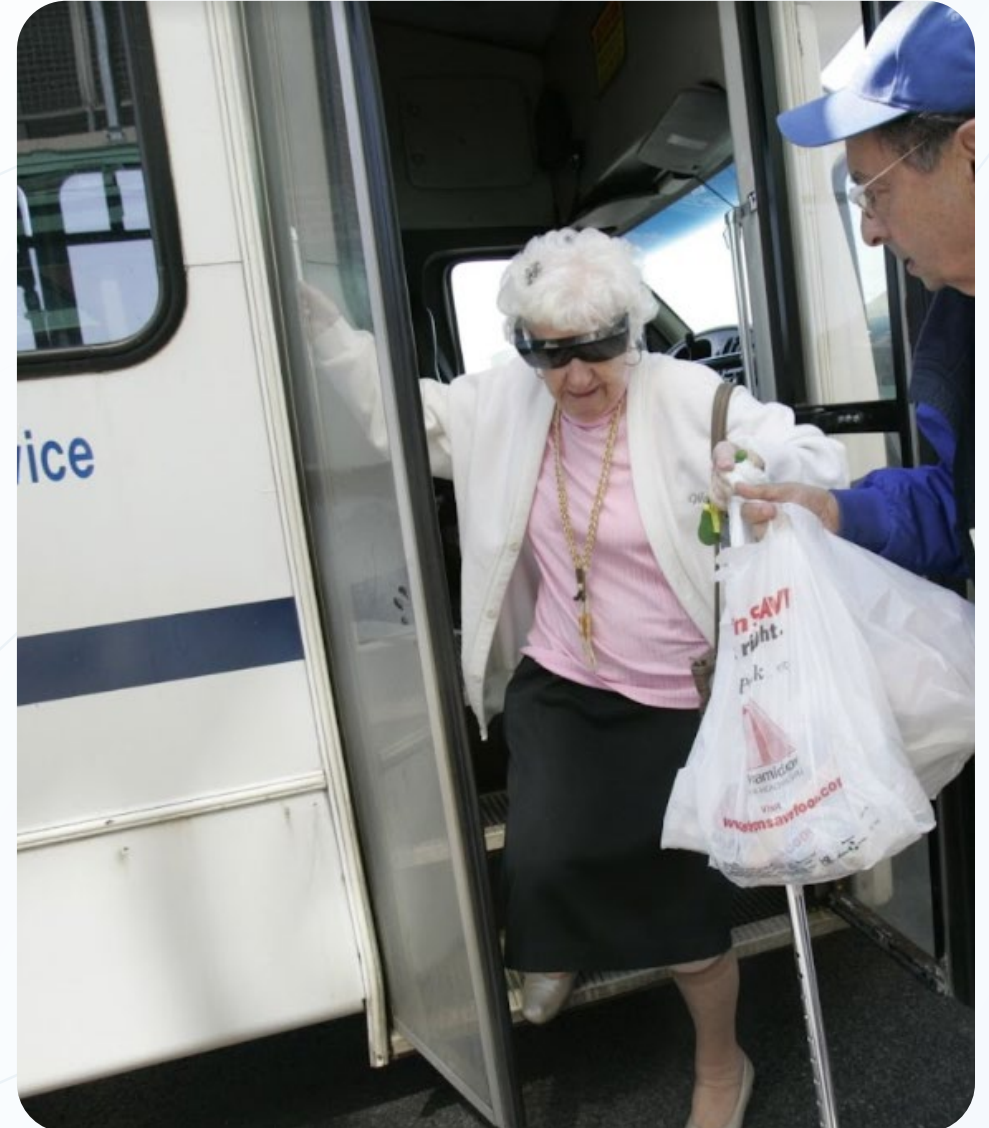
Personal Oxygen Tanks and other Medical Devices

Transit agencies cannot prohibit an individual with a disability from traveling with a respirator, concentrator, or portable oxygen supply provided the devices are properly secured under [49 CFR subtitle B, chapter 1, subchapter C: Hazardous Materials Regulations](#), [Section 37.167(h): Other Service Requirements.](#)

Some transit agencies provide a special holder for an oxygen tank, although this is not required by the ADA.

Challenging Situations and Noncompliance with Rules

Under the ADA, a transit agency can have a policy requiring mobility devices to be secured and can refuse to transport a passenger who will not allow their device to be secured. There are other passenger scenarios that may be challenging for drivers. For tips for helping passengers in challenging situations, see National RTAP's Problem Passengers: Managing Difficult Passengers & Situations Learner's Guide.

Rider No-Shows

Transit agencies can establish a process to temporarily suspend service to passengers who establish a pattern of missing scheduled trips on ADA complementary paratransit. The agency can't include trips missed due to circumstances beyond the rider's control.

Agencies must consider both the number and frequency of no-shows before imposing a service suspension.

Passengers may only be suspended for a reasonable period. FTA considers any suspension period longer than 30 days to be excessive. Passengers must be given the opportunity to appeal the decision.

Drivers should document no-shows per agency policy.

A "no-show" is when an ADA eligible passenger misses a scheduled complementary paratransit trip.

Late Bus Arrival

Transit agencies must provide on-time complementary paratransit service to ADA eligible individuals if it is under their control to provide the service.

Late bus arrivals must not be counted in determining a pattern of no-shows.
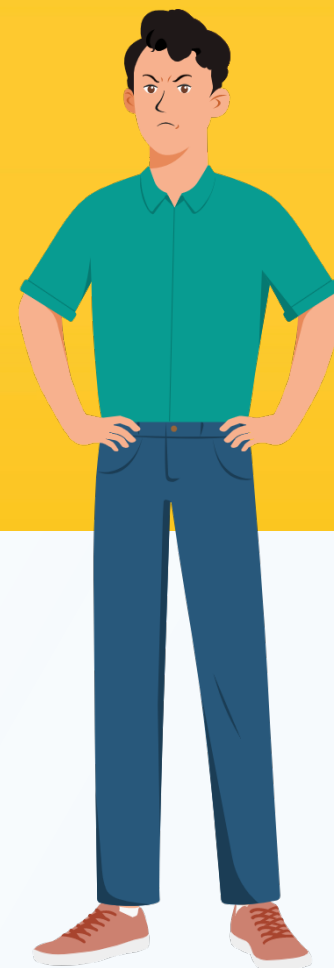
Faulty Equipment

If a bus lift or ramp is not working, alternative accessible transit service must be provided promptly if the wait for the next accessible bus is 30 minutes or more.

The bus must be removed from service and not be put back into service until the lift or ramp is repaired.

Bloodborne Pathogens

1. Put on gloves and other personal protective equipment.

2. Provide the rider with an antiseptic towel, if cleanup is needed.

3. Apply absorbent solidifier.

4. Use the scoop and scraper.

5. Clean area with decontaminant.

6. Remove protective equipment carefully if it is contaminated.

1. Place all discarded material in a biohazard bag.

2. Wash your hands with soap and running water.

3. If water is not available, scrub with an antiseptic towel and wash your hands as soon as you can.

4. Bring filled bags to the designated location at your operations and maintenance facility.

5. Complete an incident report and replace items that were used from the spill kit, as needed.

6. A rider who is bleeding poses a direct threat to health and safety. Contact EMS for help.

In-Person Training Hands-On Evaluation Form

ADA Driver Training Hands-On Evaluation Form

Name of Trainee: _____ Date: _____

Name of Trainer: _____ Location: _____

Skill	Rating			Comments	Trainer Initials
Passenger communications	1	2	3		
Body mechanics	1	2	3		
Pre-and post-trip inspection of vehicle accessibility equipment	1	2	3		
Deploy the lift	1	2	3		
Lower the lift platform	1	2	3		
Assist rider onto lift platform, if necessary	1	2	3		
Raise the lift platform	1	2	3		
Assist rider off lift platform, if necessary	1	2	3		
Stow the lift	1	2	3		
Deploy kneeling mechanism, if equipped	1	2	3		
Deploy the ramp	1	2	3		
Assist rider onto ramp, if necessary	1	2	3		
Assist rider off ramp, if necessary	1	2	3		
Stow the ramp	1	2	3		
Direct passenger to securement location; assist if necessary	1	2	3		
Front securement	1	2	3		
Rear securement	1	2	3		
Seat belt	1	2	3		
Shoulder harness	1	2	3		
Test overall securement	1	2	3		

Ratings:
1. Demonstrates complete mastery over the task. Able to explain the task thoroughly and clearly.
2. Demonstrates a good understanding of the task. Able to clearly explain the task. May be hesitant in performing the task. Needs more than one attempt to complete the task properly.
3. Completes the task with some difficulty. May need to attempt the task repeatedly or receive instructions to complete task.

General Comments:

Trainee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Trainer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adapted from a form that was created by Robert (Bob) Schmitt, Professor, University of Wisconsin, and has been used for National Transit Institute (NTI) Advanced Mobility Device Securement (AMDS) training and Community Association of America (CTAA) Passenger Assistance and Sensitivity (PASS) training.

The purpose of this form is for transit agencies to document training for drivers that provide service to persons with disabilities. Note, using this ADA Driver Training hands-on evaluation form **does not** satisfy federal Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) requirements. For those requirements, please see the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Entry-Level Driver Training webpage at https://fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/entry-level-driver-training-eldt.

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Q&A

Thank You

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Webinar Survey

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Federal Transit Administration