

**Suffolk County Transit (SCT) Fixed-Route Bus Service Policies
Established for the
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

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The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a wide-ranging federal civil rights law which, among other things, is intended to prevent discrimination against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service. In September, 1991, the USDOT issued implementing regulations with regard to public transit services contained in the "Provision of Service" requirements, subpart G of the ADA rules and regulations. The rules and regulations range from specific to broad directives to operators of fixed-route public bus systems.

The policies which follow are based upon those ADA implementing regulations as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Included in these policies are matters related to service delivery, employee training, equipment requirements, as well as other issues. Fundamentally, the purpose of these policies is to provide equivalent access, without unnecessary barriers, for persons with disabilities to SCT public transit fixed-route service as would otherwise be available to the non-disabled population.

Suffolk County Transit Fares

Regular fare \$1.50

Student Fare \$1.00 (Between 14 to 22 years old) (High School/College ID required)

Children under 5 years old FREE

(Limit 3 children accompanied by adult)

Senior and Person with Disabilities 50 cents

Personal Care Attendant FREE

(When traveling with passenger with disability)

Transfer

- 25 cents
- Available on request when paying fare
- Good only for two additional rides
- Accepted only on connecting routes
- Valid for two hours from time received
- Not valid for return trip
- Special restrictions may apply (see transfer)

Reduced Fare Program For Seniors And Persons With Disabilities

Persons with valid, municipally issued cards identifying them as at least 60 years old or mentally or physically handicapped may ride for the reduced, one-way fare.

A valid Medicare Card is also accepted as ID. Persons must display their ID card to the driver when paying the fare to ride at the reduced rate.

For ID information:

Seniors ID call (631) 853-8200

Handicapped ID call (631) 853-8333

Hearing impaired TTY (631) 853-5658

Lift, Ramp and Securement Use

Passengers utilizing mobility devices, including wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and braces, or who are otherwise mobility impaired may use the lifts/ramps to board and disembark buses. Included in the definition of wheelchair are three and four-wheeled mobility aids such as three-wheeled scooters and other equipment of non-traditional designs. Generally, these mobility aids must not exceed 30 inches in width or 48 inches in length and must not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Passengers using mobility aids which exceed these limits can be refused service.

Passengers with mobility impairments who do not use a mobility aid are permitted to use the lift/ramp system for bus entry and exit. Also, upon the request of a passenger, the bus operator will actuate the kneeling feature at the bus front entrance door, lowering the entrance steps.

Where necessary or upon request of the passenger, bus operators must provide basic assistance to passengers in the use of the lift, ramp and securement systems. Bus operators must provide basic assistance to passengers in wheelchairs who wish to use the securement system to secure themselves and/or their wheelchair and request assistance in doing so. Wheelchairs which can be secured must be secured during transport. Service cannot be denied on the basis that the mobility device cannot be secured. Passengers in wheelchairs are encouraged but not required to be secured during transport.

Use of Lift or Ramp to Disembark

Riders who use the lift will be allowed to disembark at any bus stop unless

- the lift/ramp cannot be deployed
- the lift/ramp would be damaged if it were deployed
- temporary conditions at the stop preclude the safe use of the stop by all passengers

Bus Stop Announcements

Bus operators must announce or cause to be announced 1) all bus stops that are transfer points with other bus lines; 2) bus stops at major intersections and destination points; and 3) bus stops at intervals along the route sufficient to permit persons with disabilities to be oriented to their location along the route. Specific bus stops must also be announced at the request of passengers with disabilities.

Bus operators will use county-issued lists of bus stops to comply with the bus stop announcement requirement. These lists may be supplemented from time to time based upon route and other service changes, omissions and/or inaccuracies in current listings. Operators are to advise dispatch of any recommended or necessary changes.

Bus operators are required to use the automated voice annunciation system on buses

so equipped. A next-stop visual display will be used to accommodate such announcements for persons with hearing disabilities. The visual displays are installed on buses equipped with automated voice annunciators and are located in the forward area of the bus facing the passenger area just behind the driver. On all other buses, or where a passenger has requested a specific stop announcement, bus operators are to use the interior public address (PA) system to announce stops. In cases where no PA or automated annunciation system exists, or is working, bus operators are to announce stops directly to the passengers. All non-working stop announcement equipment is to be reported to dispatch/maintenance immediately.

All SCT fixed-route buses are to display a sign in the interior advertising area advising riders of the bus operator's obligation to announce stops as well as the availability of complaint forms which can be used to notify SCT of a bus operator's failure to make such announcements. All SCT buses will have an available onboard supply of prepaid postage comment/complaint forms which the passenger may use to advise SCT of complaints/comments/recommendations regarding ADA or other bus system matters. Interior signage shall also indicate availability of alternate transportation where lift/ramp and in case of visually impaired riders; failure to make required stop announcements.

Bus Route/Route Destination Identification

All SCT buses are to display the bus route number and destination on the destination sign display area above the windshield in the bus exterior. The route destination will also be displayed to the bus exterior in the upper portion of the forward-most passenger window on the curbside of the bus.

SCT bus operators are to announce or cause to be announced the bus route number and destination of the bus to waiting passengers at bus stops serving more than one bus route. Exterior automated annunciators, public address, direct announcement by bus operators are to be used to effect this requirement.

Alternate Transportation - Non-Working Wheelchair Lift/Bus Stop Announcements

Although ADA regulations permit Suffolk County (SCT) to use buses with an inoperable wheelchair lift on a limited basis when no spare is available, SCT's policy is not to put into service, whenever possible, a bus with an inoperable wheelchair lift.

In the event an in-service, fixed-route SCT bus has an inoperative lift and the headway to the next accessible bus is greater than 30 minutes, SCT will make alternate transportation available to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the bus because its lift does not work. Such alternate transportation shall be arranged for the passenger in a manner as reasonably prompt as possible for travel between bus stops in the SCT system which the passenger would otherwise have traveled using fixed-route buses.

In the event appropriate bus stop announcement(s) is/are not made and, as a result, a passenger who has a visual impairment is inconvenienced by missing their bus or bus stop, reasonable steps are to be taken to accommodate the passenger. Such steps can include placement on another bus (within a reasonable time period) for the passenger to continue their trip or access the destination bus stop on the original bus line, or the provision of alternate transportation. When an inoperative wheelchair lift occurs during the bus route a Service Delay/Wheelchair Lift Incident Report must be completed. This report requires accountability on the part of the driver and dispatcher to ensure that alternate transportation is provided and provided in a timely manner. SCT policy is to review each Inoperable Wheelchair Lift Incident Form to ensure that every line is completed and all necessary information recorded in accordance with ADA regulations.

Driver communication with the passenger will include specific alternate arrangements which can be made to allow them to continue their trip in a reasonably timely manner. Alternate transportation services will be provided by bus operators and vehicles under the control of the SCT network of bus companies. Passengers using the alternate transportation service as a result of non-working lifts or bus route destination announcements not being made will be charged fares equivalent to that which would have been charged using the fixed-route system. Passengers using alternate transportation as a result of missing their stop due to bus stops not being announced will ride fare free on the connecting or alternate service arranged for them.

Boarding Time/Disembarking Time

Generally, sufficient time is available on all fixed routes to permit persons with disabilities to board and alight buses. Bus operators should be cognizant of the additional time requested by a person with a physical disability or vision impairment to be properly seated.

Drivers are to notify dispatch of recurring circumstances along particular route(s), schedule(s) or at bus stop(s) where, based upon actual rider experience, insufficient time may exist to properly accommodate disabled passengers.

In most cases, passengers are expected to be at the bus stop at the scheduled bus arrival time. Bus operators are not to run ahead of schedule. Bus operators are to be cognizant of disabled passengers who may be in the immediate vicinity approaching the bus stop. The bus operator will momentarily delay the bus departure to allow the disabled passenger to access and board the bus.

Attendant Policies/Refusing Service

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are permitted to accompany disabled riders at no charge on all SCT bus lines. To ride fare free, the PCA must identify himself/herself as

such in the presence of the disabled passenger at the time of boarding. No formal identification is required of the PCA; however, they must be traveling with the disabled person they are assisting.

On fixed route buses, disabled riders cannot be required to travel with an assistant and must be permitted to travel independently.

With regard to passengers with disabilities, service may be refused only if the rider engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct. This does not include behavior or appearance that only offends, annoys or inconveniences other riders or employees.

Priority Seating

The forward-most area of the passenger compartment is designated as priority seating for passengers with disabilities. Wheelchair tie-downs are located in this section. Passengers using wheelchairs may transfer to seating in this area or travel in the wheelchair secured at a tie-down location. Passengers with disabilities cannot be required to use the priority seating and non-disabled passengers may use these seats in the absence of riders with disabilities.

Mobility Aids and Life Support Systems

Passengers with disabilities who require the use of a service animal are permitted to travel on SCT buses with service animals trained to assist them.

Passengers with a disability are permitted to travel on SCT buses with a respirator or portable oxygen supply consistent with applicable U.S. Department of Transportation rules.

Bus Operator Use of Accessibility-Related Equipment, Features, and Compliance with the Requirements of Federal ADA Transportation Regulations

Bus operators and, as appropriate, other SCT system employees shall conduct periodic surveillance of drivers to monitor driver performance in terms of vehicle operation, fare collection procedures, adherence to published schedules, communication with passengers, use of USDOT/FTA and ADA accessibility features and equipment, compliance with USDOT/FTA and ADA bus stop and route announcement requirements as well as other USDOT/FTA and ADA requirements including passenger assistance with accessibility features. The bus operator shall maintain records of such surveillance, including findings and any corrective action/disciplinary measures taken. The bus operator shall maintain progressive employee disciplinary procedures in association with repeated violations of USDOT/FTA ADA implementing regulations.

Training

All personnel employed in the operation of SCT services shall be trained to proficiency consistent with federal regulations as appropriate to their duties so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities who use SCT services in a respectful and courteous way, with appropriate attention to the differences among individuals with disabilities.

Such training will be arranged by bus carriers in the SCT network and provided bi-annually to all affected employees, including but not limited to drivers, dispatchers, and administrative personnel. Appropriate records of such training shall be kept by SCT. New employees shall have training in ADA requirements as part of their initial training.

Equipment Maintenance

Lifts, ramps, securement systems, public address systems, and other access-related equipment will be maintained in good working order. Bus operators are required to check and report on the working condition of all accessible features as part of the daily pre-trip bus inspection. Lifts are to be cycled as part of this inspection. Accessible features found not working are to be reported for repairs. Accessible features reported not working are to be repaired as promptly as reasonably possible.

Complementary Paratransit; Suffolk County Accessible Transportation (SCAT)

SCAT is a component of the SCT public bus transit system and is available exclusively to ADA-eligible passengers, their companions, and Person Care Attendants. To be ADA-eligible for paratransit, an individual with a disability is either 1) not capable of using SCT fixed-route buses independently (without the assistance of another); 2) unable to access fixed-route buses due to accessible features not working or not available; or 3) unable to use SCT buses because their disability, when combined with environmental or other barriers, prohibit them from accessing public services which would otherwise be accessible to persons without disabilities. To use SCAT, individuals must be registered with the County or another transit system as ADA-eligible for paratransit. Special ID cards are issued to ADA-eligible riders. SCAT ID, however, is acceptable identification for reduced fare on SCT fixed-route buses.

SCAT provides curb-to-curb transportation and will pick you up and drop you off between any two points in Suffolk County that are within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a Suffolk County Transit or HART bus route. In addition to the curb-to-curb service, SCAT will also offer Origin to Destination service. This service will allow SCAT drivers to provide basic additional assistance to paratransit riders between curbside and building entrances. To receive such assistance, passengers must request it at the time they reserve their trip.

Passengers with disabilities who wish to use fixed-route services and can or wish to do so independently cannot be required to use SCAT in lieu of SCT buses which are otherwise accessible. In this case, the term "independently" or the phrase "without the

assistance of another” does not relieve the bus operator from his/her responsibility to provide basic assistance to the individual regarding ingress and egress to/from the bus and the passenger seating area or use of the securement devices.

SCT riders seeking information regarding registration or use and availability of SCAT services should be directed to the appropriate telephone numbers printed on all SCT schedules.

For other SCAT policies visit sct-bus.org.

SCT & SCAT Passenger Complaint Procedures:

- Comments/Complaints recommendations welcome.
- In case of complaints, please provide as soon as possible by telephone at 631.852.5200, Fax: 631.852.4873 or in writing to: SCT, 335 Yaphank Avenue, Yaphank, NY 11980-9744.
- All complaints handled as quickly as possible. SCT will need relevant information such as bus route/bus number, time/date of occurrence, description of incident.
- SCT will attempt to respond as soon as possible and generally within 10 days.
- SCT may contact you if additional information is required.
- If you are not satisfied with SCT response, you may appeal to SCT if new information is available.
- Passenger with disabilities who feel they have been denied service, to which they are legally entitled, may appeal SCT decision. (See Denied Transportation Service under SCAT Service and Reservation #'s).
- SCT may include provision for credit of a fare where a complaint is sufficiently verified and credit is justified.