

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:
Suffolk County Transit (SCT)
Accessibility Policies**

Overview

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: \$2.25

Youth/Student Fare: \$1.25

 Youths 5 to 13 years old

 Students 14 to 22 years old (High School/College ID required)

Children under 5 years old: FREE

 (Limit 3 children accompanied by adult)

Senior, Person with Disabilities, Suffolk County Veterans and Medicare Card Holders:
75 cents

Personal Care Attendant: FREE

 (When traveling with passenger with disability)

Transfer

- 25 cents
- Available on request when paying fare
- Good for two (2) connecting buses
- Valid for two (2) hours from time received
- Not valid for return trip
- Special restrictions may apply (see transfer)

Reduced Fare Program For Seniors, Persons With Disabilities, and Medicare Card Holders

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. Suffolk County Transit may decline to carry a wheelchair/occupant if the combined weight exceeds that of the lift specifications or if carriage of the wheelchair is demonstrated to be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements.

Passengers with mobility impairments who do not use a mobility aid are permitted to use the lift/ramp system for bus entry and exit. 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 not required to be secured during transport.

Use of Lift to Disembark

Riders who use the lift/ramp 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, which is equipped on every SCT fixed route bus. A next-stop visual display is used to accommodate such announcements for persons with hearing disabilities. Visual displays are installed on all buses and are located in the forward area of the bus facing the passenger area just behind the driver. In cases where the automated annunciation system is not 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.

Vehicle 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

In the event an in-service, fixed-route SCT bus is in operation with an inoperative lift or ramp, 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 vehicle 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

disabled passenger 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.

Alternate transportation arrangements for the passenger will be initiated by the bus operator in consultation with dispatch. 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/ramps 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. All drivers are instructed to request individuals, except other individuals with a disability or elderly persons, who are sitting in a location designated as priority seating for elderly and handicapped persons or are sitting in a fold down seat in a wheelchair securement location to move in order to allow an individual with a disability to occupy the seat or securement location. The driver does not have to enforce this request if passenger does not comply.

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 must make use of accessibility-related features for their intended purpose(s). Bus operators and other employees will be periodically monitored for compliance in the use of accessibility-related equipment, features or otherwise performing their duties in compliance with requirements of federal ADA transportation regulations. Failure by such employees to adhere to these requirements will not be permitted and may subject the individual(s) to progressive disciplinary action.

Training

All personnel employed in the operation of SCT services shall be trained to proficiency 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 periodically to all affected employees, including but not limited to drivers, dispatchers, and administrative personnel.

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/ramps 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; 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 service is a curb-to-curb, reservation service available for travel to and from locations in Suffolk County during the times and on the same days that Suffolk County Transit bus lines are in operation. In addition to the curb-to-curb service, SCAT also offers Origin to Destination service. This service allows 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.

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.