

Muskegon Area Transit System ADA Complementary Paratransit Rider's Guide



A Public Transportation Service
For Persons with Disabilities

Muskegon Area Transit System
2624 Sixth Street
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

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What is the MATS ADA Complementary Paratransit Service?

The MATS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit Service is a shared-ride public transit service for persons with disabilities who are functionally unable to use the MATS fixed route bus service due to the nature of their disability. It is intended to provide a level of transportation service comparable to that which the MATS fixed-route bus service provides. Riders share trips if they are generally traveling in the same direction at the same time, and trips can be taken for any purpose.

This is an advanced-reservation, origin-to-destination service that operates within a geographic area extending 3/4 mile around the fixed-route bus system during the days and times that the fixed-route buses are in operation. Buses will pick up and drop off riders at their home, office, or other locations within the ADA service area, as requested.

MATS manages and operates the service, creates policies, and certifies rider eligibility according to the ADA. MATS' Customer Care Representatives answer questions, take trip reservations, and schedule rides. MATS strives to ensure safe, reliable, and courteous service.

The small buses used in this service are equipped with wheelchair lifts and comply with ADA regulations. The lift is designed to hold a mobility device that is less than 32" wide, less than 48" long and weighs less than 800 lbs. when in use. If a rider and their mobility device exceed these dimensions, every effort will be made to transport the rider, as long as it is safe to do so.

Who Is Eligible to Ride?



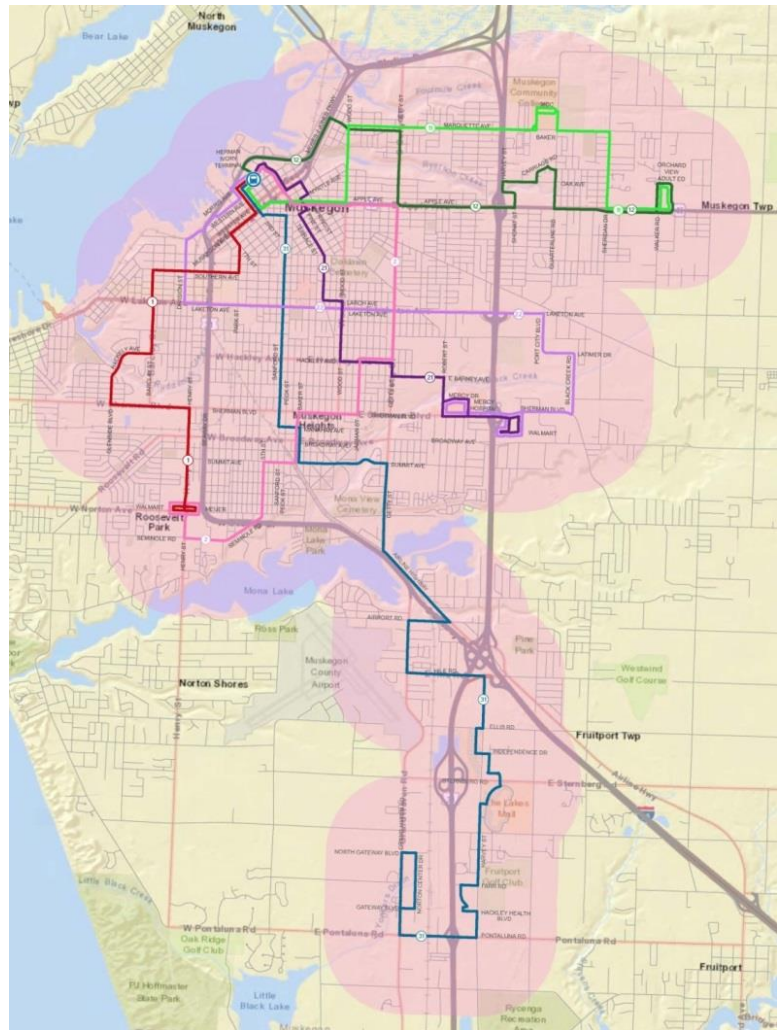
“CERTIFIED INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES” Only certified individuals with disabilities can ride this service. If you would like to use this service, you can apply for certification by submitting a written application to MATS. MATS may approve applications for individuals with disabilities who, as a result of a disability, are unable to board, ride, or exit buses on the fixed-route system.

Applications are available online at matsbus.com. Applications can also be requested in person at the downtown Herman Ivory Terminal or over-the-phone by calling MATS at 231-724-6420, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If your application is approved, your certification will last for one year. Individuals can apply for re-certification each year.

Where and When is the Service Available?

The Paratransit Service operates within 3/4 mile of the fixed-route bus system. The pink shaded area on the map shows the present ADA service area. To confirm available service to or from a specific address, you may contact MATS at 231-724-6420.

The Paratransit Service is available during the same hours and days that MATS fixed-route services are in operation. Operating hours are currently Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 5:51pm. There is no service on weekends or County-recognized holidays. Calls to reserve trips must be made in advance. See the “How Do I Reserve a Ride” section of this guide for more information.



What is the Fare?

The fare is \$2.00 per one-way trip.

Fares must be paid when boarding the vehicle, either in the exact cash amount or with a pre-purchased ticket. Drivers do not make change.

Tickets can be purchased from the Paratransit Service Drivers, from Customer Care Representatives at the downtown Herman Ivory Terminal, or at the MATS Administration Building at 2624 Sixth Street.

How Do I Reserve a Ride?

To use the Paratransit Service, you must have a reservation. To make a reservation, riders may call the ADA service line at 231-724-3555 during MATS office hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm. On days where the MATS office is closed, but where the following day is a MATS service day, you may request a trip by leaving a detailed voicemail. MATS will ensure that the trip request is processed and any serviceable trip is provided.

Reservations must be made by the close of MATS' office hours on the day before your planned travel and can be made up to 14 days in advance. Same day service is not provided.

When you call to request a ride, our staff will need to know the following:

- Rider's name
- Date service is needed
- Preferred pick-up time, or the specific "arrive by/appointment time" if applicable
- Pick up address and destination address
- Whether the rider's mobility aid type has changed
- Whether a Personal Care Attendant or companion(s) will be traveling with the rider

The ADA permits MATS to negotiate your pickup time, but MATS may not require you to schedule a trip more than 1-hour before or after your requested pickup time. For example, if you want a ride at 10:00am, MATS must offer a pickup time between 9:00am and 11:00am. If a return ride is needed, then you will need to book that ride in advance also. MATS is unable to conduct "will-call" returns in this program and will rely on you to estimate and give a return ride time. This return ride may be scheduled during the same phone call.

If you have a recurring work, school, or other schedule that repeats itself weekly, you may request that MATS consider you for subscription service that would automate your trip scheduling. Subscription service requests are subject to MATS approval upon review of system efficiencies and capacity.

What if I Need to Cancel or Reschedule?

To **Cancel** a ride:

- Call the MATS ADA Service line at 231-724-3555 at least 1 hour before the scheduled time.
- Drivers cannot accept cancellations.

To **Reschedule** or make changes in reservations:

- Call the MATS ADA Service line at 231-724-3555 on the day prior to your scheduled trip, or earlier.
- Same day changes are not guaranteed.
- Drivers cannot accept changes in reservations or destinations.

We appreciate your effort to keep track of your ride requests and to cancel unneeded rides in advance, as “No-Show” or “Cancel-at-the-Door” situations cause unnecessary expense to our program. MATS is not presently enforcing a “No-Show” policy or penalty. Any change to this status will be conveyed to riders by individual letter, as well as by public information on the MATS website.

Who can Ride with Me?

Personal Care Attendant (PCA): A PCA is someone that travels with a rider to provide disability-related assistance during the trip or at the destination. PCAs may travel with riders at no additional cost, but must be indicated to MATS at the time a trip is scheduled to ensure bus capacity.

Companion: Companions may also travel with riders. The fare for each companion is the same as that for the rider. Arrangements must be made at the same time the trip reservation is called in to the MATS office.

Service Animal: A service animal may travel with a rider at no additional cost. Service Animals must be trained to perform a function for the person with a disability and must remain off the vehicle seats and under control at all times.

Comfort Animals: Comfort animals are not allowed on MATS buses.

Taking Your Scheduled Trip

When you make your trip reservation, you will be given a specific scheduled pickup time. As that time approaches, make yourself ready to board at the designated pickup location. We will pick you up at the curb, unless another location has been agreed to.

MATS uses a 0-15 minute pickup window. This means that we plan to pick you up at your scheduled time, or within 15 minutes after that time. When the bus arrives, the driver will wait 5 minutes for you to board the vehicle. After waiting 5 minutes, the driver will leave. If the bus arrives earlier than your scheduled pickup time, you will not be required to board early, unless you want to. Your 5-minute boarding time will not start prior to your scheduled pickup time.

Inform the driver of any assistance you need as you approach the bus. Confirm your name and destination. Upon boarding, pay your fare and find your way to a seat. Seatbelt use is encouraged. If you use a mobility device, the driver will assist you in using the lift if needed and in securing your device for the trip.

Rider Responsibilities

Riders should:

- Wait in a safe, well-lit location.
- Choose a pick-up and drop-off location that allows the driver to maintain sight of the bus when assisting you to or from the door if necessary.
- Be ready to board the bus at or before your scheduled pick-up time.
- Let the bus come to a complete stop before approaching.
- Allow drivers to assist you in boarding the bus; ask for assistance if needed.
- Take care of all personal belongings - they are your responsibility. Items found on the vehicle will be turned in to MATS at the end of the driver's shift. The rider will be responsible for picking up the item from MATS during regular business hours.
- Be able to load or unload your own belongings in one boarding (two grocery bag limit).
- Not eat, drink or smoke in the bus.
- Be prepared and able to sit in the bus for the shared ride trip duration.
- Display no disruptive behavior or risk expulsion.
- Not request unscheduled stops.
- Be dressed properly, including shoes and shirt.
- Requests for specific drivers or vehicles cannot be honored.

- Treat drivers and other riders with respect and courtesy.
- Not attempt to tip drivers.

MATS ADA Bus Driver Responsibilities

Drivers are not required to:

- Carry a rider's belongings.
- Push mobility devices through grass, sand, mud, ice, or snow or debris.
- Lift riders.
- Go into buildings.
- Provide PCA-level services for an individual unable to travel alone.

Drivers will:

- Assist riders in using the stairs or wheelchair lift and in securing a wheelchair in the vehicle.
- Be courteous and drive safely.
- Wear a seat belt.
- Be properly uniformed.
- Make a good-faith effort to find a rider at a pickup location (honking the horn is NOT acceptable).

Drivers must have an acceptable driving record and participate in MATS' drug and alcohol testing program. Also, they are trained in defensive driving and methods to safely assist and be sensitive to a rider's special needs.

MATS General Comments or Service Complaint Procedures

MATS encourages your feedback. To submit a question, comment, or complaint, you can call the MATS office at 231-724-6420 or fill out an online form at matsbus.com.

MATS Accessibility Advisory Committee

MATS has formed the MATS Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) to give riders and community members the opportunity to provide input regarding the MATS ADA Paratransit Service. The MAAC meets quarterly and posts its meeting materials online at www.matsbus.com. If you are interested in participating, please contact the MATS ADA Coordinator at 231-724-6420. You can also visit matsbus.com for more information.