

# PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE



# COAST RTA PARATRANSIT PROGRAM RIDER'S GUIDE

## WELCOME TO COAST RTA

The information contained in this rider's guide has been developed to help new and existing customers become acquainted with the Coast RTA Paratransit Program and to provide the necessary information and instructions required to use it effectively.

## DEFINITION OF ADA PARATRANSIT

The Coast RTA Paratransit Program is part of a comprehensive public transportation system. It is neither a personal taxi nor a social service agency. It is a **shared-ride public transportation** service in compliance with the complementary paratransit services provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the final rule for 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38 issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) in the 9/6/1991 Federal Register.

Coast RTA operates a shared-ride, curb-to-curb service. The definition of curb-to-curb service is the customer will be picked up at the closest curb to the pick-up location and will be taken to the closest curb of the drop-off location. For those requiring assistance beyond the curb due to their disability, Coast RTA will assist customers as far as their door if it is safe to do so.

The Coast RTA Paratransit Program provides transportation that is comparable to the fixed route bus system's hours of operation, service area, and other service characteristics. The duration of a trip may also be as long as the comparable fixed route bus trip plus one-half (1/2) hour for travel and wait time. Transportation is provided within a ¼ mile corridor on either side of the existing local fixed route bus services in Horry and Georgetown counties. This service can be used for any purpose, including work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc.

The Coast RTA Paratransit Program is a shared-ride service. This means that customers will be on vehicles with other customers for some or all their trips.

## CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

### Length of Certification

All paratransit customers are required to be recertified every three (3) years. An application will be mailed three (3) months prior to expiration, along with an enclosed letter notifying the customer that their certification for customer service is up for renewal. Failure to return the application in a timely manner may result in a loss of service.

### Coast RTA Paratransit Program Photo Identification Card

The Coast RTA Paratransit Program photo identification (ID) card is used to show proof of eligibility to ride Coast RTA complementary paratransit. **Customers must have their photo ID card present when riding and show it to the Operator when requested.**



If the Coast RTA Paratransit Program photo ID card is lost, a replacement can be obtained for a fee of \$5.00 at the Coast RTA office located at 1418 Third Avenue, Conway, SC, 29526. Contact Customer Service at 843.488.0865 with any questions.

## TYPES OF ELIGIBILITY

Coast RTA, in accordance with Federal ADA requirements, has the authority to grant three types of eligibility for use of the Paratransit Program they are **Unconditional**, **Conditional** and **Temporary**. Eligibility is as follows:

**Unconditional eligibility** will be granted to an individual who is unable to use fixed route transit services under any circumstances and is thus eligible to make all trips using complementary paratransit.

Examples of applicants granted unconditional eligibility include:

- Individuals who cannot travel independently due to severe or profound intellectual disabilities or advanced dementia.
- Individuals with physical disabilities who have limited functional ability (e.g., customers who use a manual wheelchair and who cannot sufficiently propel themselves)
- Individuals who have lost vision late in life and have not learned to travel independently in the community.

**Conditional eligibility** may be granted to an individual who is able to use fixed route transit services for some trips but not others. Conditional ADA Paratransit eligibility will be for those trips for which he or she meets the criteria. An individual's conditional eligibility will be processed based on factors that are specific, measurable, and thorough. Examples of individuals who might be candidates for this type of eligibility:

- Individuals with intellectual disabilities who have learned how to make certain trips on fixed routes but cannot make all trips independently – They would not be eligible for the trips they have learned to take by fixed route but would be eligible for all other trips.
- Individuals with physical disabilities who can reach a bus stop or rail station within four blocks when the route is accessible – An appropriate condition on eligibility in this instance is “when the distance to or from stops and stations is more than four blocks or when the route to stops and stations is inaccessible.”
- Individuals with health conditions who can get to and from stops and stations when the temperature is not too hot (e.g., less than 80°F) or the distance is not too far (e.g., closer than four blocks) – They would be ADA paratransit eligible when the temperature exceeds 80°F or the stop or station is more than four blocks away.

**Temporary eligibility** may be granted to an individual whose health condition or disability is expected to change in the short term or whose mobility device will soon change. Temporary eligibility can be either unconditional or conditional, depending on the individual's functional ability. For example, an individual may need to undergo two months of treatment for a health condition, resulting in severe fatigue that prevents him or her from using fixed route service. This individual would be ADA Paratransit unconditionally eligible for the duration of the treatment period.



## SERVICE AREA

The Coast RTA Paratransit Program operates three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of a mile on either side of each local bus route in Horry and Georgetown counties.

Customers are not required to live inside the service area; however, all customer trips must begin and end within the Coast RTA Paratransit Program service area, and customers must board and disembark the paratransit vehicle inside of the service area at a safe transfer location. Transfer points will be established with customers traveling outside the service area.

The map of the Coast RTA Paratransit Program service area is provided below. The map can also be viewed, downloaded, or printed by visiting [www.rideCoastRTA.com](http://www.rideCoastRTA.com). Select 'Paratransit' and then click on the 'Service Area' link.

## OPERATING DAYS AND HOURS

Coast RTA's Paratransit Program services are available from 4:30am to 8:00pm daily. The service hours are the same as the local fixed route bus service.

Service is not available in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

## FARE INFORMATION

Paratransit customers will pay double the fixed-route bus fare, but no more than \$2.00 per person each way.

Fares may be paid with exact cash or by using the Tap System.

Fares will be collected in the farebox or by tapping the card validator at the front of the vehicle.

**Operators do not make change or stop for change.**

Approved and registered PCA's travel at no cost. The need for a PCA is indicated during the application process and should be informed to the reservationist during the trip scheduling.

Companions may travel with the eligible paratransit customer for \$2.00. Additional travel companions may ride on a space available basis. All travel companions including children seven (7) years old and older must each pay the ADA paratransit companion fare.

Note: Operators cannot make change for fares. Operators are not allowed at any time to accept tips or gratuities, or act in a manner that would suggest that tipping is appropriate.

### **Free Fare for Customers with Disabilities on Fixed Route Bus Services**

Any person who is currently certified with the Coast RTA Paratransit Program may ride the fixed route bus services for FREE. All Coast RTA buses are wheelchair accessible, and Operators aid (boarding/exiting/etc.) to customers with disabilities when needed/requested.



## TRIP SCHEDULING INFORMATION

Coast RTA operates an advanced reservation service for all paratransit trips. Reservations may be made by calling Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 for hearing impaired. Reservations may be made the day before travel and up to fourteen (14) days in advance.

Customer Service agents are available during normal business hours of 5:00am to 9:00pm daily for trip reservations.

There are no daily limits on the number of reservations the customer can request.

**Note: The Coast RTA Paratransit Program does not provide emergency or same day transportation.**

### Required Reservation Information

Customers must be prepared to give the reservation agent the following information:

- First and Last Name
- Home Address
- Telephone Number
- Pick Up Location and Address
- Drop Off Location and Address
- Desired Time of Arrival at Your Destination
- Desired Time for the Return Pick Up
- Use of a Mobility Aid, such as a Wheelchair, Walker, Crutches, etc.
- If Traveling with an Attendant and/or Companions

Reservation agents are required to ask for complete information and will repeat the information back to the customer to confirm that the reservation information is correct. A paratransit vehicle Operator or customer cannot change the pick-up or drop-off time or location on the day of the trip.

### Pick Up Times

The scheduled pick-up time will be based upon the preference set by the customer. Customer can either schedule their pick-up time based on the required drop-off/appointment time or required pick-up time.

At times, the Coast RTA vehicle may arrive early. Customers can board the vehicle early but are not required to board the vehicle before the scheduled pick-up time.

### Negotiating Pick-up Times

Every effort will be made to accommodate the requested pick-up time. However, customer trip demand at certain times of the day may require that the customer adjust their desired time by up to one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the desired pick-up or drop-off time. Reservation space is assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Please make sure to allow ample time for traffic or any other delays associated with transit when planning a trip.



### **Requesting a Pick-up Time**

Customers may request a pick-up time for anytime during operating hours. If a requested pick-up time is not available, the reservation agent may offer a pick-up time within one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the requested pick-up time.

If a customer requires arriving at a specific location “no later” than a certain time, the customer must provide the required time of arrival or appointment time when calling. The customer must also state the preferred pick-up time.

Remember, Coast RTA’s Paratransit Program is a shared-ride service and customers may need to ride with other customers. If a customer does not want the reservation agent to estimate an appropriate pick-up time, the customer should plan to allow enough time for an on-time arrival.

### **Negotiating Pick-up or Drop-off Time**

Customers may be asked to adjust their requested pick-up or drop-off times due to demand at certain times of the day. See examples below.

The “latest arrival” time means that the customer must be at their destination at a specific time (for example, Medical/Dental appointments, and start time for work/school).

The one-hour negotiating window should be used on the early side to ensure that the customer arrives on time.

Example1: Customer must arrive at doctor/work/school no later than 8:00 AM

The reservation agent must evaluate travel time and 30-minute window when assigning the pick-up time. (Example travel time 1 hour plus ½ hour window, total 1 ½ hours)

The customer may be offered a time before 6:30 AM but not later. A pickup time of 6:15 AM would be reasonable while 6:45 AM may not be reasonable in ensuring that they arrive on time at the destination.

The “earliest departure” time is the earliest time the customer wants to be picked up (Example, getting off work or leaving school)

The one-hour negotiation window should be used on the late side because the customer cannot leave before the stated time.

Example 2: The customer ends work/school at 4:00 PM

The reservation agent must consider that the customer will not be ready until after 4:00 PM

The customer may be offered a time after their 4:00 PM end time but not earlier. A pick-up time of 4:15 would be reasonable while 3:45 PM would not be reasonable since they cannot leave work or school early.

The one-hour negotiation window should be used on the late side because the customer cannot leave before the stated time.



## Traveling Without Time Restrictions

When no exact arrival or departure time is involved, the one-hour negotiating window can be used on either side of the requested time since the customer is not constrained by appointments and/or work school schedule.

## Changing a Scheduled Trip

If a customer has a scheduled trip and their plans and/or travel times change, they must call Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 **at least one (1) day before a trip.**

Customers should inform the reservation agent of their request to change a trip that has already been scheduled. Customers should be prepared to provide the following information to the reservation agent:

- First and last name
- Date and time of the scheduled trip to be changed
- New pick-up and/or drop-off times, location, etc.

The reservation agent will always try to fulfill a customer's request, however, changes to a previously scheduled trip may result in adjustments to the pick-up and/or drop-off times.

**Note: Coast RTA may be unable to change pick-up times or pick-up/ drop- off locations on the same day of a trip due to scheduling constraints with equipment and other customers.**

## Early or Late Pick-up Requests

Coast RTA may change the requested departure time to one (1) hour however, other scheduled trips cannot be disrupted. Any change beyond one (1) hour must be agreeable to the customer. Coast RTA may, at the discretion of the Paratransit Coordinator, honor a late trip request if it coincides with the previously established schedule.

Operators are not allowed to start earlier than the first scheduled pick-up on their scheduled trip manifest nor are Operators allowed to stay later than the last scheduled drop-off on their manifest for an early or late pickup request.

## Reservation Confirmation

Customers will be given a scheduled pick-up time at the end of the reservation call. Occasionally, **Coast RTA will make a confirmation call to customers between 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM on the day the reservation was made in order to confirm the following day's pick-up time.** This applies to customers that were not provided with a pick-up time because they requested service by leaving a voicemail or the reservationist was unable to provide a pick-up time during the reservation call.

## Cancelling a Reservation

Cancelling a reservation in a timely manner helps to keep the service operating on schedule and prevents the possibility of the customer being charged for a "no show" for missing a trip.

The following information must be provided when cancelling a trip:



- First and last name
- Date of travel
- Scheduled pick-up time
- Return trip information

### *Advanced Cancellation*

To cancel a reservation customers should contact Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00am and 9:00pm daily. Please consider others and make any cancellations as soon as possible or at least two (2) hours prior to pick-up time.

### *Cancel at Door*

A cancellation at the door is when the vehicle arrives at the location designated for a specific scheduled trip within the 30-minute pick-up window and the customer (or the customer's representative) notifies the driver at that time that they no longer need the scheduled trip. These are considered No-Shows and a pattern of valid no-shows may lead to service suspension.

Please Note: The driver is not responsible for cancelling any other trips booked for that day. Customers (or the customer's representative) must call Coast RTA Customer Service to cancel other trips. They can be reached at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00am and 9:00pm daily.

### *Late Cancellation*

A late cancellation is defined as either a cancellation made less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pickup time, or a cancellation made at the door, or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window. A late cancellation will be considered a no-show.

### **Subscription Service (Standing Orders)**

If a customer requires a ride to the **same location**, at the **same time**, and **at least three (3) days per week**, "Subscription Service" may be a good option. This service allows customers to schedule recurring trips with one call. Customers will then automatically be placed on the schedule each week. For additional information call Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00 AM and 9:00 PM daily.

Note: All subscription trips are pre-cancelled on the specified Coast RTA service holidays (Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day).

### **Cancelling a Subscription Service Trip**

For Subscription Service customers in need of cancelling a trip on a particular day, **Coast RTA must be called to cancel one (1) day prior to the scheduled trip**. This will help avoid unnecessary trips or missed connections. Cancelling a trip on time also helps customers keep no-shows of their record. A Subscription Service customer that is suspended due to no-show violations will lose their current subscription status. They may, however, reapply after the suspension period has been completed.

### **Postponing Subscription Service**





Customers can put a subscription trip on “hold” for up to three (3) months. Then, when ready to resume service, the customers must call Coast RTA seven (7) days in advance to reinstate the subscription. If a “hold” is needed for longer than three (3) months, customers may be asked to reapply for Subscription Service.

### **Changes to Subscription Service**

Subscription Service customers may temporarily change the destination or pick-up address on a subscription once per year for a minimum of two weeks if the time slot is available. Requests for temporary changes must be made at least one (1) day in advance. **Same day address changes cannot be accommodated.**

Any permanent change to an approved Subscription Service trip will require reapplying for this service. This includes changes to pick-up/drop-off times, location, etc. If a corresponding time slot is available, then the customer’s new subscription will take effect on the date requested. If no corresponding time slot is available, the customer will be placed on the Subscription Service waiting list. Subscription trips will be assigned as space becomes available.

Note: As traffic patterns and demographics change, Coast RTA reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to existing subscriptions. These changes will allow Coast RTA to make the best use of its resources while providing the timeliest service possible to all its customers.

*Should a customer’s subscription require adjustment, these changes will be made on an individual basis with input from the customer and/or their guardian/caretaker. At no time will Coast RTA adjust or change a customer’s subscription without consulting with the customer in advance of the change. If an agreement cannot be reached between Coast RTA and the customer, it may result in the customer’s subscription being cancelled. The customer will, however, have an opportunity to reapply for Subscription Service and be placed back on the request list until an appropriate time slot can be found.*

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that not more than 50% of the rides at any hour of any day may be subscription rides, total subscription trips may not exceed fifty (50) percent of space availability at any time during the day. Certain time periods may not have subscription time slots available. If the current subscription service trips exceed the 50% threshold, Coast RTA will start a wait list for customers interested in signing up for subscription trips.

## **RIDING COAST RTA PARATRANSIT**

### **Safely Traveling on Coast RTA**

Coast RTA has created several recommended practices for customers to ensure a safe and successful ride. Customers shall:

- Be informed regarding program benefits and limitations.
- Make trip requests at least one (1) day in advance. In accordance with the ADA, customers may be asked to negotiate a different time of pick-up to one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the requested time. Once the time has been negotiated, it cannot be changed without the customer’s consent.



- Be ready and remain at the pick-up location within the 30-minute pick-up window. Wait at the main entrance door in an area where the vehicle can be seen, as Operators will not enter the building or residences.
- Cancel trips as soon as possible but not later than two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Have times, addresses and other needed information ready when making a reservation.
- Present correct fare and/or fare media when boarding the vehicle.
- Keep wheelchairs and other mobility devices in good working condition, including having an operable wheelchair brake.
- Expect shared-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. Travel time should be comparable to the service provided by Coast RTA's fixed-route bus service including transfers.
- Request a pick-up time taking the 30-minute window time, distance, and rush hour traffic into consideration.
- Advise Customer Service of the appointment time or work report time if a certain arrival time is needed. A pick-up time that takes into consideration travel time and appointment time will be provided.

### **Text Message Alert**

Customers can also sign up for a free service that will provide text alerts when the vehicle is on its way.

### **Boarding the Paratransit Vehicle**

Customers must have their Coast RTA ADA Paratransit Program photo identification card and paratransit fare (cash or Value Pass) ready to present to the paratransit vehicle Operator when boarding the vehicle. Failure to provide the fare and photo ID at the time of boarding may result in possible service disruption.

### **30 Minute Pick-up Window**

As with most paratransit systems, Coast RTA uses a thirty (30) minute pick-up "window." This means the vehicle can arrive 15 minutes before a scheduled pick-up time or 15 minutes after a scheduled pick-up time and still be considered on time. Customers should keep the pick-up window in mind when making reservations, particularly when requesting a specific pick-up time.

If the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the thirty (30) minute period, customers are recommended to contact Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00 AM and 9:00 PM to check the status of their pick-up.

### **Late Pick-up**

If the vehicle has not arrived within the thirty (30) minute pick-up window, call Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 for late vehicle assistance.

### **Trip Length**

Customers must be aware that the Coast RTA Paratransit Program is a shared-ride service. The duration of a trip may be as long as a comparable fixed route trip plus one-half (1/2) for travel and wait time.



## Missed Trips

A Missed Trip results from trips that are requested, confirmed, and scheduled, but do not take place because:

- The vehicle arrives and leaves before the beginning of the pickup window without picking up the customer and without any indication from the customer that they no longer want to make the trip. Note: that a customer is not obligated to board until the start of the pickup window until 5 minutes have elapsed.
- The vehicle does not wait the required time within the pickup window, there is no contact with the customer, and the vehicle departs without the customer. Note that if during the wait time the customer indicates he or she no longer wants to take the trip, this is typically recorded as a "cancel at the door."
- The vehicle arrives after the end of the pickup window and departs without picking up the customer (either because the customer is not there or declines to take the trip because it is now late).
- The vehicle does not arrive at the pickup location.

If a customer misses a scheduled trip, they must immediately call Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711. Coast RTA will attempt to identify an available vehicle for pick-up. This may mean that a vehicle will arrive later than the original pick-up time.

If a missed trip originated from the customer's home, Coast RTA will not send a replacement vehicle. If a customer has other rides scheduled that day, they must call to confirm that the rides are still needed or should be cancelled.

## No-Shows

The ADA regulations allow paratransit service to be suspended for a passenger who establishes a "pattern or practice" of missing scheduled trips. Coast RTA understands that because trips must be scheduled in advance, passengers may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. Passengers may also miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely manner for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely manner can lead to suspension of service.

Excessive cancellations and no-shows will result in suspension of service.

What Constitutes a "No-Show" or Same-day Cancellation? A no-show or same day cancellation will be recorded if the passenger:

- Cancels a trip less than the two (2) hours before it is scheduled to begin
- Is not at the agreed upon pick-up spot during the 30-minute pick-up window
- Does not board within five (5) minutes from when the Coast RTA vehicle arrives during the 30-minute pick-up window

## "No-Show" Consequences

A passenger will be suspended from Coast RTA service for 2 days if they have 3 or more no-shows in a 30-day period AND more than 10% of their trips have been no-showed or cancelled late. If the



passenger continues to demonstrate a pattern and practice of late cancellations or no-shows, they may be suspended for up to fifteen (15) consecutive days.

- First occurrence - 2 consecutive day suspension
- Second occurrence - 3 consecutive day suspension
- Third occurrence - 5 consecutive day suspension
- Fourth occurrence - 8 consecutive day suspension
- Fifth occurrence - 10 consecutive day suspension
- Sixth occurrence -15 consecutive day suspension

### **Late Cancellation**

A late cancellation is defined as either a cancellation made less than two (2) hours before the scheduled pickup time, or a cancellation made at the door, or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pickup window. A late cancellation will be considered a no-show.

### **Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control**

At the discretion of Coast RTA, no-shows or late cancellations may not be counted when there are situations beyond the rider's control that prevent the rider from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

- Medical emergency/hospitalization
- Family emergency
- Sudden illness or change in condition; or
- Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice

No shows or late cancellations will not be counted when the missed trip is due to Coast RTA's error.

### **Appeals Process**

A passenger may appeal any of the above actions if they feel that a no-show occurred because of unexpected circumstances beyond their control (e.g., medical or family emergency). Appeals can be made verbally to our Communication Center Supervisor 843- or in writing by sending an email to XXXXXXXXXXXX within five (5) business days of receiving notification of the offense.

### **Personal Care Attendants (PCA)**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help an ADA eligible paratransit customer meet their personal needs. This individual may either be an employee of the customer, a relative, a friend, or a care provider.

During the application process for eligibility, the applicant should indicate whether they will travel with a PCA. And please inform the reservation agent when scheduling the customer trip(s) if a personal care attendant will be traveling with the customer.

PCA's travel at no cost when accompanying the eligible paratransit customer. If the customer requires a PCA and is under the age of 12, the PCA must be an adult. The PCA must be physically able to



assist and meet the needs of the paratransit customer. For example, must be able to push a wheelchair, or provide other assistance as required by the certified customers. The PCA riding with a Coast RTA paratransit eligible customer must board and exit the vehicle at the same location as the eligible customer.

Similarly, Personal Care Attendants (PCA) or travel companion(s) who violate rules of courtesy and conduct, engage in any activity that disrupts the safe and effective operation of Paratransit services, engage in physical abuse, or cause physical injury to another customer and/or the Operator, or engage in other illegal activities may be subject to immediate and permanent suspension from riding Paratransit service. PCA's or travel companion(s) may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

### **Companions**

ADA Paratransit eligible customers may travel with one companion. If traveling with a PCA, customers may travel with one companion in addition to a PCA. Additional companions will be allowed on a space available basis.

Travel Companions are subject to a paratransit fare of \$1.50. Companions riding with a Coast RTA paratransit eligible customer must board and exit the vehicle at the same location as the eligible customer.

### **Children**

Children under six (6) years old may ride Coast RTA's Paratransit Program services for FREE. Children seven (&) years and older must pay the companion fare of \$1.50. Children must remain properly seated and are not allowed to walk around inside the vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Expectations of Using Coast RTA Paratransit Program Services**

Customers can expect a safe, comfortable ride on Coast RTA. The following information provides additional details on what customers can expect on Coast RTA:

- Safe trips in clean, air-conditioned, smoke-free, and properly equipped accessible vehicles.
- Operators that are trained to meet a customer's special transportation needs, including boarding, and exiting assistance, wheelchair securement, reasonable assistance with bags, etc.
- Professional and courteous treatment from all Coast RTA staff and other customers.
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs.
- Pick-ups within a 30-minute window; the pick-up window begins 15 minutes before and ends 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.
- Prompt investigations and effective resolution of complaints, without fear of reprisal.
- Assistance beyond the curb if needed because of a disability.

### **Customer Conduct**

Customers must be respectful and courteous to Operators and other passengers at all times. Customers must comply with the following operating requirements and rules of conduct.



- Inability to pay for the proper fare may result in refusal of service. Deliberate fare evasion will be grounds for refusal of service.
- The use of abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions towards the Operators or other customers is prohibited.
- Eating and drinking is not allowed on Coast RTA vehicles (unless needed due to a disability)
- Smoking, including vaping, on the bus is prohibited.
- The use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs or riding under the influence of intoxicating alcohol or drugs, is always prohibited.
- The 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/or disturb other customers.
- Customers must not create unsafe situations on Coast RTA vehicles and must always have proper personal hygiene.
- Customers shall not operate or tamper with any equipment while on the vehicle. This rule includes operation of the lift and attempts to remove mobility device tie-downs or customer seat belts.
- Baby strollers and two-wheeled collapsible carts shall be folded and stowed to avoid blocking the aisle or causing injury to persons on the vehicle.
- Be respectful of Service Animals and refrain from petting them without the permission of the owner.
- Trash shall be disposed of properly both on and around the vehicle.
- Parents/accompanying adults travelling with children shall maintain control during the ride.
- 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.

### **Assistance Provided by Coast RTA Operators**

As required by the ADA, Operators are trained and expected to provide a “reasonable” level of assistance. Coast RTA defines “reasonable” as assisting customers as needed/requested if the assistance does not create an unsafe situation for the Operator or customers.

Here are some examples of how Operators assist Coast RTA customers:

- Operators are required to assist customers when boarding or exiting the vehicle, and to and from the curb of their destination or point of origin. If assistance beyond the curb is required, notice must be given to the reservation agent when the trip is scheduled.
- Operators may provide limited assistance loading/unloading packages for customers.
- Operators are responsible for the operation of the lift and other equipment, and for securing wheelchairs and customer seat belts in the vehicle.

### **Operator Wait Time**

It is important for the customer to be at the designated pick-up location at the scheduled pick-up time indicated by the reservation agent when the customer makes their reservation. The vehicle **will wait up to five (5) minutes** past the scheduled pick-up time for a customer to arrive at the curb or



designated pick-up point. If the vehicle arrives after the scheduled pick-up time, the Operator is instructed to wait five (5) minutes and to contact Coast RTA Customer Service.

**The vehicle is not permitted to wait while the customer conducts business at their destination.** The customer will need to make a reservation in advance for their return trip at a designated pick-up time. Pick-up time and Operator wait time requirements also will apply to the return trip.

### **Unattended Customer Policy**

This policy addresses instances when a customer's PCA, caretaker, family member, etc., is not available at a drop-off location. If the customer cannot be left unattended after exiting the vehicle and the caretaker is not at the drop-off location when the vehicle arrives, the customer will remain on the vehicle and the vehicle will continue as scheduled. The Operator will contact Coast RTA Customer Service for assistance. Coast RTA Customer Service will call the emergency contact number and provide the caretaker with the next safe drop-off location to meet the vehicle in-route. If the contact number is not answered or if the number is disconnected, 911 will be called to take custody of the customer.

The first instance will be a written warning, the second instance within a 180-day period the customer's service will be suspended for fourteen (14) calendar days. If this situation happens a third time within a 180-day period, the customer's service will be suspended for thirty (30) calendar days. If this situation happens a fourth time within the 180-day period, the customer's service will be suspended for sixty (60) calendar days. If the situation happens a fourth time, the caretaker will have to show cause why the service should not be permanently removed.

### **Reasonable Modification**

Coast RTA shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability or to provide transit service accessibility. Coast RTA will make every attempt to provide transportation services that meet our customer needs as long as the request:

- Does not fundamentally alter the service
- Does not create a direct threat to the health and safety of others
- Is not necessary to permit the customer to use the services for their intended purpose

### **Wheelchair Assistance Policy**

Coast RTA will transport all wheelchair types and other mobility devices as defined by ADA regulations. Coast RTA may not be able to transport a customer in a wheelchair or mobility device that exceeds the lift manufacturer's dimensions and design load for the lift in our current paratransit vehicle. That is, mobility devices measuring over 30 inches in width and over 48 inches in length when measured two inches above the ground and weighing up to 800 pounds combined weight when occupied. Customers will, however, have the opportunity to attempt to board a Coast RTA vehicle to confirm that the wheelchair, scooter, etc., is too large and/or heavy to board. If the customer can board, services will be provided.

For customer safety and comfort, the following guidance and procedures must be met:

- For safety purposes, it is strongly recommended that wheelchairs back onto the lift platform



- Brakes must be locked while on the lift
- Electric power must be turned off until the Operator instructs the customer to re-engage
- Mobility device customers must wait for the Operator's assistance and follow instructions for entering the vehicle
- It is strongly recommended for the customer's safety that a person using a manual wheelchair have attached footrests
- Customers with inoperative mobility devices will try to be accommodated, but operators will not lift or carry the customer or the mobility device
- Customers may be requested to move to a seat for safety and securement

### **Scooters**

Three- and four-wheel scooters designed for use indoors to assist customers with mobility disabilities are allowed. Scooters have a high center of gravity and are therefore prone to tipping; even when secured. Customers are encouraged to board vehicles separately, if able, and/or transfer to a seat once onboard the Paratransit vehicle. Scooters are also required to be secured into the four-point tie-down system at all times during the ride. Cooperation with the Securement and Seat Belt Policy is in the best interest of safety for the customer.

### **Mandatory Mobility Device Securement and Seat Belt Use**

It is the Operator's responsibility to ensure that mobility devices are properly secured. Mobility devices are required to be secured into the four-point tie-down system at all times during the ride. Operators are required to secure the lap and shoulder belts to ensure the customer's safety. If a customer refuses, either mobility device secure or use of seat belts, service WILL be denied.

### **Ambulatory Customers**

Ambulatory customers are those that can walk under their own control, or use a mobility aid such as a cane, walker, crutches, etc. Customers unable to use the steps to enter the vehicle may stand on the lift platform to be lifted into the vehicle. Customers who stand on the lift must be able to stand without assistance and to hold the rails with both hands. Customers that are unable to stand on the lift platform should discuss with the reservation agent so that Coast RTA can assist with other ways to board and depart the paratransit vehicle.

### **Packages on Coast RTA**

Customers may bring three (3) small bags on Coast RTA vehicles. However, customers may not bring more bags than can be safely managed by themselves and any PCA, companions, etc. Operators are not required to assist with loading and unloading packages and personal items if it is unsafe to do so.

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 customers may bring packages on-board in a personal two-wheeled, collapsible cart. If bringing a cart, customers must inform the reservation agent when scheduling a trip. Coast Transit will do its best to accommodate a collapsible cart. Packages may not take up seats on the vehicle and must be safely stowed out of the aisle, either under the customer's seat or on their lap.





## **Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment**

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on all Coast RTA vehicles. The Operator will assist customers in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Operators are not permitted, however, to assist customers in using this equipment. If a customer needs assistance with portable life support equipment, they must arrange to bring a Personal Care Attendant.

## **Service Animals**

Service animals are allowed in all COAST RTA vehicles and facilities. A service animal is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with disability, including but not limited to:

- Guiding individuals with impaired vision
- Alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds,
- Providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or
- Fetching dropped items.
- If traveling with a Service Animal on Coast RTA Paratransit, be sure to inform the reservation agent when scheduling a ride.

If a customer has an allergy to dogs (not including pet dander) please notify Coast RTA when scheduling a reservation. The reservationist will do the best they can to transport a customer on a vehicle without Service Animals or pets onboard as accommodation.

*Please be aware of the following Service Animal requirements:*

A Service Animal must always be on a leash and under control. If a leash prevents the Service Animal from completing a task for a customer with a disability, then the owner may control the animal with voice commands.

For the safety and comfort of the Operator and other customers, Service Animals are required to be clean, well groomed, completely under the control of their handler, and non-aggressive.

Customers are responsible for maintaining control of a Service Animal while on board the vehicle. The animal must remain on the floor or on the customer's lap. The animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.

Customers are encouraged to bring a blanket for Service Animals since vehicle floors may be hot. For safety reasons, Operators are not permitted to handle Service Animals.

## **Pets**

Per the ADA, Emotional Support and Comfort Animals are NOT Service Animals as they have not been trained to perform a task. Therefore, Emotional Support, Comfort Animals and pets are not allowed on Coast RTA buses unless they are always in an enclosed carrier.

## **Denying Services to Customers**

Actions of misconduct, including violent or disruptive behavior, will be grounds for suspension of service. Anyone found to be acting in an unsafe or illegal manner which may endanger themselves, other customers, the Operator, the paratransit vehicle, or the traveling public will be terminated from



the service immediately. Customers must depart the transit vehicle upon demand of any authorized Coast RTA representative, including the Operators.

Customers who violate rules of courtesy and conduct or who engage in any activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of Paratransit services may be subject to penalties up to and including suspension from Coast RTA services.

Customers 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** Coast RTA services. Customers may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

Any customer who is suspended from service will be notified in writing and will be given an opportunity to appeal against the suspension following the Coast RTA appeals process.

Similarly, Personal Care Attendants (PCA) or travel companion(s) who violate rules of courtesy and conduct, engage in any activity that disrupts the safe and effective operation of Paratransit services, engage in physical abuse, or cause physical injury to another customer and/or the Operator, or engage in other illegal activities may be subject to immediate and permanent suspension from riding Coast RTA. PCA's or travel companion(s) may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

### **Procedures for Pick-up Locations**

To provide safe, on-time service for all customers, Coast RTA has developed the following procedures:

#### *Apartment Complexes*

Customers who live in a large, multiple-unit apartment complex must meet the bus at the curb closest to their address. Customers in apartment complexes that are inaccessible to paratransit vehicles (for example, low clearances, cul-de-sac, et cetera) must meet the paratransit vehicle at the main entrance to the complex. If the complex has a guarded gate or limited access, the customer should inform the security staff of the scheduled bus pick-up and return times. If a customer is visiting someone inside a guarded gate or limited access complex, it is the customer's responsibility to advise the person they will be visiting ahead of time for access.

#### *Office/ Medical/ Mall/ Churches and Other Complexes*

Customers traveling from a large office complex, medical facility, malls, churches, or other large areas must meet the paratransit vehicle at the curb closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance unless instructed otherwise. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the complex or facility.

#### *Nursing Homes/ Assisted Living Centers*

Customers traveling from a nursing home or hotel should meet the paratransit vehicle at the curb closest to the main lobby unless instructed otherwise. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the center.

#### *Adult Day Care and Dialysis Centers*



Customers should be waiting in a designated area when the paratransit vehicle arrives for their pick-up at the centers. Operators will assist customers in boarding the vehicle. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the facility. It is highly recommended that the center contact Coast RTA by calling Coast RTA Customer Service if there is a problem with the scheduled pick-up time. Coast RTA does not handle emergency trips to the hospital.

### *Malls*

Customers will be picked up and dropped off at the main entrance that is closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance unless instructed otherwise. Operators remain with the vehicle and do not go inside the mall.

### *Exception*

If a facility's main reception desk or main lobby entrance does not meet ADA accessibility standards, it is the customer's responsibility to contact the facility administrator for determination of their designated accessible entrance and notify Coast RTA **prior** to the trip.

### *Gated Communities*

Those customers that reside or travel to or from a gated community should remain in their dwelling until the vehicle has arrived at the gate. The customer will be notified that the vehicle has arrived at the gate. If the gate buzzer does not work, the Operator will request Coast RTA Customer Service to notify the customer to open the gate.

### *Closed Business or Facility*

If a business or facility is closed upon the arrival of the vehicle, the customer can choose to stay on the vehicle and be dropped off at the return address at the convenience of Coast RTA (return trip fare must be paid), or the customer can get off the vehicle and wait for the return trip paratransit vehicle to pick them up.

### **Lost Items**

Any personal property and items left on the vehicle will be turned in to Coast RTA Customer Service. Personal property and items will be held for thirty (30) days. Please call Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00am and 9:00pm daily for instructions on how to claim and where to pick up lost personal property and items.

### **Hazardous Weather and Emergency Events**

In the event of snow, ice, or other potentially hazardous weather or emergency situations, Coast RTA may cancel paratransit service. Coast RTA will not transport in unsafe conditions. While every effort will be made to operate vehicles according to confirmed schedules, hazardous road conditions or emergency events may cause operation of vehicles to be unsafe and, therefore, service may be temporarily terminated. If conditions warrant, vehicles may operate on a limited basis. Coast RTA will resume regular service when all roads are clear and safe for travel, or the emergency event has ended.

As soon as operational decisions are made to terminate or reopen services, local radio and television stations will be notified. Updates will be posted on the Coast RTA web page [www.rideCoastRTA.com](http://www.rideCoastRTA.com).



Customers may also contact the Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00am and 9:00pm to check the status of paratransit service operations.

### **Customer Comments and Suggestions**

Coast RTA seeks to provide its customers with safe, reliable, and efficient transportation at all times. Customers should submit comments and suggestions including questions, complaints, or compliments, to COAST RTA using one of the following methods:

Call Coast RTA Customer Service at 843.488.0865 or TDD at 711 between 5:00am and 9:00pm

Submit comments using the Coast RTA website at [www.CoastRTA.com](http://www.CoastRTA.com).

Write to Coast RTA Customer Service at the following address:

#### **Coast RTA**

**Attn: Customer Service**

**1418 Third Avenue, Conway, SC, 29526**

Specific details help Coast RTA thoroughly address customer comments or suggestions. Please include the following information when calling or writing:

- Full name, address, and telephone number
- Date and time of experience
- Vehicle number and/or Operator name, if applicable
- Reservation agent name or other employee name, if concerning a telephone conversation
- Explanation of the incident or suggestion

### **FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS**

Before calling for the services listed below, please read, and become familiar with the applicable sections of this Paratransit Program Rider's Guide for details on the service and when to call.

**Call 843-488-0865 or TDD at 711 to:**

- Schedule a Trip
- Change a Scheduled Trip
- Cancel a Scheduled Trip
- Where's My Ride?
- Inquire about Service Status during Hazardous Weather and Emergency Events
- General Coast RTA Paratransit Information
- Lost Photo ID Card
- Lost Personal Property and Items
- Comments, Suggestions and Complaints





