

INFORMATION BROCHURE FOR DISABLED

SERVICES DEMAND RESPONSE

**AND**

**MASSACHUSETTS ACCESS PASSES**

**SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TRANSIT** **AUTHORITY**

***SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF:***

#### Acushnet Dartmouth

#### Fairhaven Fall River

#### Freetown Mattapoisett

#### New Bedford Somerset

#### Swansea Westport

#### .....Since 1974

##### OPERATING FACILITIES:

**SCTM/ New Bedford SCTM/Fall River**

65 Potomska St. 601 Brayton Ave.

New Bedford, MA Fall River, MA

Phone: 508-999-5211 Phone: 508-999-5211

For relay service please refer to:

[www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/massrelay](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/massrelay)

or Dial 711 to use MassRelay

###### Administrative Offices

700 Pleasant Street, Suite 320

New Bedford, MA 02740-6263

Phone: 508-997-6767

Website: [www.srtabus.com](http://www.srtabus.com)

**History of SRTA**

The **SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY** (SRTA) was established in 1974 by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature under Massachusetts General Law 161B. It has been providing fixed route bus service to its member communities since 1974. It operates 23 fixed routes throughout its service area. In 1979 the Authority established a Demand Response Service to meet the needs to the disabled community who needed some form of transportation service that was not adequately being met by regular buses.

Currently the Authority provides both Demand Response and reduced fare service on its fixed route buses in compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) (as amended), FTA regulations governing Medicare recipients and various Massachusetts regulations regarding services to the disabled.

The Authority has set forth the following guidelines for registering and using its Demand/Response Service and its Statewide Access Pass Program for Fixed Route buses as follows.

**Serving Area**

This service can be used anywhere within the SRTA service area. The SRTA service area is made up of the cities of **New Bedford** and **Fall River**; the towns of **Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Mattapoisett, Somerset, Swansea and Westport.**

**Eligibility**

Under the ADA policies there are three categories of individuals who may use this service.

They are:

1. **Individuals who independently cannot use any part of fixed route service**

*"Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of physical or mental impairment (including vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities." (ADA, 1990)*

This includes people with mental and visual impairments who cannot recognize destinations, understand bus changes or distinguish between buses on different routes at terminals and/or routes.

1. **Individuals using routes that are not accessible**

"*Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with some assistance to board, ride and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities if the individual wants to travel on a route of the system during the hours of operation of the system at a time, or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route."*

As all of SRTA’s fixed route vehicles are accessible; anyone who qualifies under this category will be entitle to “Massachusetts Statewide Access Pass.” This entitles the individual receiving this pass to access fixed route bus service at the reduced rate of $.75. It also allows the person to receive the “disabled” fare from ANY public transit agency within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (including the MBTA). To receive the reduced fare outside of the Authority’s service area, simply show the Access Pass ID to the driver when boarding the bus.

**3. Individuals who do not have the ability to access fixed route at all times**

"*Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system."*

*Conditions that make getting to and from stops more difficult DOES NOT make one eligible for Demand Response. Distance from a fixed route DOES NOT make one eligible for Demand Response. Architectural barriers not under the control of the Authority DO NOT make one eligible for Demand Response. Weather conditions or terrain alone DO NOT make one eligible for Demand Response. These factors IN COMBINATION with a person's impairment MAY make them eligible.*

**Types of Eligibility**

**In order to be eligible for ADA service, a person must be unable to ride our accessible fixed-route system and must meet one or more of the followings:**

***Unconditional Eligibility*** - Your disability or health condition always prevents you from using public buses and you qualify for ADA Paratransit service for all of your trips.

***Conditional Eligibility*** - You are able to use the public buses for some of

your trips and qualify for ADA Paratransit service for other trips when your disability or environmental barriers prevent the use of public bus service.

***Temporary Eligibility*** - You have a health condition or disability that temporarily prevents you from using the public bus.

To receive **How To Apply For ADA Paratransit Services** an application, simply contact the Administrative Offices (508) 999-5211. The application may be downloaded from the SRTA website: [www.srtabus.com](http://www.srtabus.com) or contact the Authority by e-mail at maquino@srtabus.com and an application will be mailed to you also, available at the New Bedford and Fall River Terminals. If you have difficulty in filling out this application, please contact the Administrative Offices and we will assist you. If you wish an application in an **ACCESSIBLE FORMAT** other than mentioned above, we will provide a CD version of the brochure, instructions and application UPON REQUEST. Please contact this office to discuss your needs.

Fill out pages 3 through 7 of the application and have a health care professional complete pages 8 and 9.

It does not need to be a doctor. A visiting nurse, physical therapist or counselor may fill out the certifier’s portion. Once the application is completed and ALL necessary questions have been answered, mail the completed form to: SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY, 700 Pleasant Street, Suite 320, New Bedford, MA 02740-6263.

When the application is received the Authority will review it for completeness and eligibility and a determination will be made.

**Certification Process**

The applicant will receive either a letter of approval, a letter explaining need for additional information or a letter of rejection. This process will take no more than 21 working days.

If additional information is needed to determine eligibility, the certification process stops and the 21day clock begins again with the receipt of the additional information. A person is registered for this service for a maximum of 4 years.

It is possible that SRTA will look to schedule a call or a meeting in person should additional questions arise from reviewing your application. If there is a need for an in-person meeting, SRTA will be happy to provide transportation to and from our offices at no cost to the applicant as well as caregivers or Personal Care Attendants who may need to attend.

Demand Response may be used for any type of trip within the Authority's service area. The service may be used for **shopping, medical appointments, employment, education, social functions, etc.**

**Re- Certification Process**

All customers will need to re-apply for Paratransit service on or before the expiration date on their eligibility approval letter. Three to four weeks prior to the expiration date, SRTA will notify customers via mail of their re-certification in order to continue uninterrupted.

**ADA Appeals Process**

If you are granted less than unconditional eligibility for or are suspended from ADA Complementary Paratransit services and you feel that this determination has been made in error, you have the right to appeal this determination.

All appeals to denials of eligibility must be submitted to the SRTA within 60 days from date of denial of an individual’s application. All appeals shall be addressed to the SRTA, Administrator, 700 Pleasant St Suite 320., New Bedford, MA 02740.

In order to file this appeal, you must notify the SRTA either in writing or in person, within 60 days of the date on the letter advising you that you are ineligible for services. Your written appeal may state your reasons why you feel that the determination of ineligibility issued is unjust and state how your disability prevents you from utilizing or accessing our buses.

The denied individual shall be given the opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments before an appeals committee. After your appeal is received, a hearing will be scheduled to evaluate your case. This hearing process will allow you to present information and arguments on your behalf. You may have others who are knowledgeable of your physical and/or mental limitations speak on your behalf.

Applicants who require special accommodations should make this request this in advance. SRTA will make every effort to ensure the proper resources are available for your hearing.

After the hearing, you will be advised in writing and in accessible formats as appropriate, and within reason, of the decision of the appeal committee. For other than ADA Paratransit Eligibility determinations, the appeal committee will present its decision to the SRTA Administrator for confirmation. If an appeal committee’s negative decision is confirmed by the Administrator, the ruling will be final.

The SRTA is not required to provide you with complementary paratransit service while your appeal is under consideration. However, for suspension, service will be provided from the day after which SRTA receives a letter appealing the suspension until the appeal committee has rendered its decision. If the appeal committee has not made its decision within 30 days of the date on your written request for appeal, you are entitled to complementary paratransit service from that time until a final decision is made.

You may reapply at any time if you feel your condition has changed.

If you receive notice of a warning or temporary suspension, based on violation of program rules, you have the right to appeal that determination as well and use the same process as described above.

**Hour of Paratransit Operation**

SRTA’s paratransit program is required by ADA to operate the same days and hours as fixed route bus service.

**Demand Response Service Hours:**  
Weekdays – 5:20AM – 10:10PM  
Saturdays/Holidays – 6:10AM – 8:05PM  
Sundays – 9:00AM to 6:00PM

**Reservations/Scheduling a ride and Negotiation of trips**

ADA Reservations can be made on Monday through Saturday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM (6) days a week. Reservations may be made up to seven (7) days in advance, but no later than the previous day before 4:00 PM. All ADA trips must be within ¾ mile of our fixed route corridor and travel times must fall within the hours of an SRTA bus route. We are committed to providing trips that are not excessive in length (time) and have adopted the standard that no ADA trip will take more than twice the amount of time of SRTA’s fixed route service currently runs on, including transfers and wait times. The ADA allows for the Operator to negotiate a scheduled pick up time, up to one hour before or one hour after the requested time but there are times when cooperation is needed to meet the most requests.

To make a reservation please call center (dispatch) at (508) 999-5211 press option #2. After hours feel free to leave a message with your name, phone number and detailed message.

Cancelation for Sunday service please feel free to contact the on-call staff:

* New Bedford phone number (508) 958-6456
* Fall River phone number (508) 509-9272

**Fare Information**

The fare is $3.00 for a registered user. For trips beyond the 2 mile radius of a Fixed Route, add $1.00. Any questions can be answered by the Dispatcher when you call to book your ride.

Discount books of 10 trips can be purchased for $25 at both the New Bedford and Fall River terminals. You may also purchase them on our Demand Response vehicles. If you wish to buy tickets on our vehicles, please request your tickets through the call center when booking your ride. Our drivers will only carry requested tickets.

Companion: Same fare as Rider

Children (5 and under): No Charge

PCA\* No Charge

\*Customer eligibility file must designate that the customer requires a PCA.

**Standing Orders/ Subscription Services**

Standing Orders/Subscription service is for SRTA customers who make a reservation to and from the same locations at least once per week. Call center (dispatch) to request that these trips be automatically scheduled, which eliminates the need to call individually for each trip. **Subscription service is subject to availability**. Multiple no shows or late cancels may result in discontinuation of the standing order. The client will be notified by phone or in writing prior to discontinuation of the standing order.

**Subscription Service/Standing Orders trips are not provided on holidays**; therefore, you are responsible for reserving your trips on those days. The following holidays you need to book your trips if you have a standing order:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Patriot’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day

**Door –To-Door Service**

Drivers will assist customers upon request with boarding and exiting the vehicle and/or to and from the ground level exterior door of the building. Riders who require door to door assistance must call dispatch only once to notify them that they are requesting the assistance which will be added to their client file. Drivers cannot escort customers past the ground floor of any building and are not allowed to enter residences.

**Paratransit Customer Accommodations**

**Personal Care Attendants**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is any individual who serves as an assistant to the client. In order to have a PCA; the client must have their certifying health care professional indicate the need for such assistance at the time of application.

Each registered user is allowed to have ONE person accompany them on the service. If the registrant uses a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), they may have one other person accompanying them. If the registered user wishes to have more than one person, it may be accommodated IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE. Anyone accompanying an individual and is not considered a PCA will be charged at the same rate as the client.

A PCA does not have to pay to accompany a registered user. ONLY if the certifier has indicated on the client’s application the need for a PCA. For this service there is no children’s fare. This is in accordance with current FTA guidelines.

Reasonable accommodation requests can be made in writing, on the phone or in person to Authority staff, reservationists, supervisors or drivers when needed.

**A need of a PCA for Safety**: When it is noted by the driver that a customer cannot be left alone, SRTA will contact the customer (or caregiver) to determine what difficulties they may be experiencing. If suitable arrangements cannot be made to ensure the customer will have a caregiver waiting at the drop-off location, the customer will be notified that SRTA will be unable to transport them without the assistance of a PCA. Service could be suspended for those customers who have been notified of the need to travel with a PCA and continue to try to travel without a PCA present. The major concern is the well-being of the customer having difficulty after the driver leaves which could create a safety hazard for them. SRTA is committed to providing our customers with the safest transportation possible.

**Companions**

Customers may have one (1) companion accompany them. If you will be traveling with a companion, you must notify the reservationist at the time you schedule your ride. Companions are charged the same fare as the customer and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location. Additional companions can travel with a Paratransit customer on a “space available basis” and will pay the same fare as the customer.

**Wheelchair/MobilityAid**

If an individual would like to use the lift they simply ask the driver.

The driver must be able to safely secure the mobility device. Customers who use a 3-wheeled scooter may be asked to transfer to a regular seat. These types of chairs are difficult to secure. However, the choice to transfer to a regular seat is the discretion of the customer.

The American Safety Council recommends that customers in wheelchairs board by backing onto the lift for safety purposes.

**Use of lift by standees**

Any individual can request use of the lift or the ramp. An individual does not need to have a mobility device or mobility impairment to utilize that equipment.

**Individuals Using Oxygen, Respirator and Concentrators With Oxygen**

Any individual who needs to use oxygen, respirators or concentrators with Oxygen are welcome to bring those devices on both paratransit and fixed route vehicles.

**Disruptive Behavior Policy**

SRTA has established an administrative process through which individuals who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct can be suspended or prohibited from using SRTA service.

Note: The use of alcoholic beverages or riding under the influence of intoxicating drugs or alcohol is prohibited at all times.

**Transporting Children**

* ADA eligible children must pay the full fare and must be accompanied by an adult.
* Children, age 6 and over, traveling as companions must also pay the full fare.
* Children under 6 years old or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be secured in an approved child safety seat provided by the customer.
* Strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the customer. Non-collapsible strollers are prohibited.
* Children capable of sitting on their own must sit in a seat.

**Transporting with Service Animals**

* Service animals are welcome and ride free-of-charge.
* A disruptive animal is subject to suspension of service.
* Service animals must sit on the floor or on the passenger’s lap.
* They may not occupy a passenger seat.
* Passengers must be in control of their service animals at all times while on the vehicle.

**Inclement Weather**

In the event of severe weather, including snow, ice, flooding, etc., the ability to provide transportation may be hampered. If you do not need to travel on those days, please call the reservation office to cancel your

trips in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to provide transportation but safety considerations may prevent trips being provided.

**No Show Policy/Pick-upWindow**

Under the current No Show/Late Cancellation policy, service will be suspended for passengers who book trips and repeatedly show a pattern of failing to board the vehicle and/or cancel trips less than one hour before the pick-up window. Adherence to this policy benefits all passengers since no-shows and late cancellations prevent other passengers from receiving timely and efficient service.

**Definitions**

A “No Show” occurs when a passenger does not board the vehicle within 5 minutes of the vehicles arrival within the 20-minute pick-up window. Example: The passenger’s 20-minute pick-up window is 9:55 AM to 10:15 AM. The driver arrives at 10:00 AM. The driver will wait 5 minutes for the passenger to board the vehicle. If the passenger does not board the vehicle by 10:05 AM. The passenger is considered a “No-Show.”

A “Late Cancellation” occurs when a passenger cancels a trip less than one hour before the scheduled pick up time. This includes cancelling with the driver at the door. Example: If the passenger’s scheduled 20-minute pick up time is 9:55 AM to 10:15 AM, the rider must call prior to 8:55 AM to avoid being a late cancellation.

**No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy**

In order to be subject to a Warning or Suspension, a passenger must miss more than 25% or more trips in a 30-day period or 3 consecutive trips and use the service at least once a week. If a customer uses the service less than once a week, missing 3 or more consecutive trips will not result in a warning or suspension however the customer may be contacted to discuss options for improvement. Return trips which are not taken as a result of missing the first leg of the trip will not be counted as part of the 3 consecutive trips.

Trips which are cancelled more than one-hour before the scheduled pick-up time are not considered a late cancel or no show.

A passenger will be subject to a warning or suspension if the above characteristics are met. All suspensions will begin on a Monday. The length of the suspension will adhere to the following schedule.

**Violation Schedule**

First violation in a rolling 12-month period Counsel Phone Call

Second violation in rolling 12-month period Warning Letter

Third violation in rolling 12-month period 3 Days

Fourth/ subsequent violations in a rolling 12-month period 7 Days

If a passenger no-shows or late cancels because of circumstances beyond their control, they are to contact SRTA at (508) 999-5211 to explain the circumstances of infraction. At that time, the customer can request that the trip not be considered a no-show or late cancel.

No-shows or late cancels may be disputed within 15 days of the trip. Prior to sending a suspension letter SRTA will review all no-shows and late cancels in the customer’s account to ensure that the process and guidelines were properly followed. Any no-show or late cancels found to be in error will be removed from the customer’s file.

**Appeals Process**

If a customer disputes a warning letter or suspension under this policy, they have the right to file an appeal. Appeal requests must be filed in writing and forwarded to SRTA’s offices at:

**Southeastern Regional Transit Authority**

Service Appeals

700 Pleasant Street, Suite 320

New Bedford, MA 02740

Upon receipt of the appeal, the passenger’s suspension will be put on hold for a period not to exceed one week (7 days). During this time, SRTA staff will review the appeal and make a determination if the appeal has merit. If SRTA staff determines that the appeal has merit, service will continue and the no-shows/late cancels will be stricken from the customer’s record. If the appeal is found to not have merit, the suspension will continue on the following Monday. Please note, missed trips or trips not taken due to an error by the bus operator will not be held against the customer.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: “NO SHOW” POLICY FOR TRIPS ORIGINATING OR ENDING AT A SOCIAL DAY CARE PROGRAM, JOB TRAINING SITE OR JOB LOCATION.**

The Southeastern Regional Transit Authority will not suspend customers for use of service for trips that they or their guardian make that begin or end at a training location, a care facility or job site. Those trips will be honored. Trips for other purposes, however, will be subject to the suspension and service will not be provided until the end of the of the designated suspension period.

**Visitors**

Any visitor who presents ADA eligibility documentation from another jurisdiction will be provided service. We will accept a certification by the visitor that he or she is unable to use fixed route transit. The visitor will be provided 21 days of service within a 365-day period.

**Statewide Access Pass (fixed route bus service)**

In accordance with the FTA and Mass DOT guidelines, the Authority recognizes that some individuals are disabled but still able to use fixed route services. For those individuals who are certified as eligible for Demand Response are strongly encouraged to use regular buses when they are able. These persons must use regular buses but may receive reduced fares on this service. The Authority’s current disabled fare on fixed routes is $.75. If you use a wheelchair and wish to use regular service, the driver will deploy the lift or ramp you will be placed in the bus and secured into position.

If you have one of the following you could obtain a Charlie card without the application process.

* Medicare card holder.
* Veterans ID from the Dept of Veterans Affairs with a disability rating of 70% or greater.
* Senior ID.
* Certificate of blindness.
* Demand Response certificate letter
* Transportation Access Pass ID from Any RTA in Mass

Present original letter on agency letterhead, from authorized agency representative (or vendor) verifying status as current client.

* **DDS**/Department of Developmental Services
* **MRC**/Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
* **DMH**/Department of Mental Health (including DMH vendors)

Photo IDs are taken on ***Monday to Friday*** from 9:30AM- 3:00PM at the Fall River and New Bedford Terminals as well as the SRTA Administrative Offices (700 Pleasant Street, Suite 320, New Bedford, MA 02740-6263). The cost of this photo ID is $5.00. (If your ID is lost or stolen the 2nd copy costs $3.00; 3rd copy costs $5.00).

**Complaints**

If you experienced a problem with a specific ride, you may wish to file a formal service complaint. All formal complaints are investigated.

To file a formal complaint, customers can contact the Customer Service Manager at (508) 999-5211 ext: 3309 or by email at [info@srtabus.com](mailto:info@srtabus.com) or online at www.srtabus.com/contact-us

* Rider’s name, address, and telephone number
* Date and time of the incident
* Bus number, route and direction
* Details of the incident

SRTA is committed to protecting the confidentiality of its riders. Anonymous service complaints, however, it will be investigated but will not receive response.

When a customer submits a complaint by email or by calling the SRTA the Customer Service Manager will submit the complaint to our contractor (SCTM) for further investigation.

The contractor (SCTM) will reviews, investigates and will respond within 3-5 business days of receiving the complaint and provide any supplementary information to determine the validity of the complaint. Complaints related to ADA, security and those of which are considered serve will receive additional review by SRTA. Feedback from SCTM or SRTA will be provided to the individual and they will have the opportunity to discuss any service changes or scheduling arrangements made in response to the incident.

**Lost & Found Articles**

Lost and Found property is stored in a locked / restricted area to maintain accountability, safekeeping and security. Every reasonable effort is made to keep the property in the same condition in which it was recovered. Articles will be held for 10 days. To claim a lost article, please call (508) 999-5211. Consumers are responsible for claiming lost articles.

**Customer Responsibilities**

No service can be successful if it does not have both parties working together. You can help by following the procedures listed below:

* Inform SRTA of address changes, changes in emergency phone numbers or any other information regarding accessibility needs or changes.
* Read all sections of the information Brochure carefully.
* Be prepared when calling for appointments and have the necessary information available. This will keep the process moving promptly.
* Make every effort to be on time when using Demand Response. This will help ensure timely trips for everyone.
* Pay the correct fare in cash or tickets (drivers do not make change).

\* You will not be transported if the fare is not paid prior to leaving your pick-up location.

* Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in a safe condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.
* If you have a companion animal, remember to keep your animal under control for the safety of yourself, the animal and others on the service.
* When booking for a Doctor's appointment, please indicate a pickup time for your return trip if possible. This allows for better service to all users. In the event designating a specific time for pickup for your return is not possible, please call dispatch when you are ready and a vehicle will return for you as soon as possible.
* Expect “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after, or dropped off before you reach your destination.
* Call to cancel unneeded rides to avoid “no show”.
* Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
* Wear seat belts.
* Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the “20-minute window”.
* No eating, drinking or smoking on board. No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

**SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**ADA COMPLIANCE BOOKLET**

**8/15/18**

**(THIS BROCURE WILL BE REVIEWED EVERY 2 YEARS FOR COMPLETENESS AND ACCURACY UNLESSMAJOR CHANGES IN POLICY OR SERVICE TAKE PLACE)**

**TO BE USED ALONG WITH FORMS SRTA ADA 10/2016**