



**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**  
65 Potomska St.  
New Bedford, MA  
Phone: 508-999-5211

**SCTM/Fall River**  
601 Brayton Ave.  
Fall River, MA  
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.

## **2. 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 entitled 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 this brochure or our ADA application, simply contact the Administrative Offices (508) 999-5211, download it from the SRTA website: [www.srtabus.com](http://www.srtabus.com) or contact the Authority by e-mail at [maquino@srtabus.com](mailto:maquino@srtabus.com). We are happy to send you the information in any form you would like. They are also available at the New Bedford and Fall River Terminals. If you have difficulty in filling out the application, please contact the Administrative Offices and we will assist you. Please reach out to our office if you wish to have this brochure or the application in an accessible format. We will be happy to work with you on your request.

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**

Once SRTA has received a completed application, the certification determination will be complete in no more than 21 days. 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. Once the certification determination is complete, the applicant will receive either a letter of approval, a letter explaining need for additional information or a letter of rejection.

Should SRTA fail to make a determination within the 21 day period, the applicant will be treated as eligible and allowed to ride until the certification determination is complete.

A person is registered for this service for a 4 year period.

### **Re- Certification Process**

Approximately a month prior to the eligibility expiration date, SRTA will notify clients via mail or by phone of the re-certification process.

## **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:

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.

SRTA will make every effort to ensure the proper resources are available for your hearing and will be happy to assist with any reasonable accommodations.

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.

The SRTA will grant temporary eligibility for complementary paratransit service while your appeal is under consideration. 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. The appeals committee will endeavor to make its decision within 30 days of the date on your written request for appeal.

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.

## **Hours 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

Demand Response may be used for any type of trip within the Authority's service area during the operating hours.

## **Origin to Destination Service**

SRTA provides an origin to destination service. Generally this will mean that the service is curb to curb. Should you need a reasonable modification of the policy, please let the Reservationist know at the time of booking the trip. Drivers will assist clients boarding and exiting the vehicle and/or to and from the ground level exterior door of the building. Drivers cannot escort clients past the ground floor of any building and are not allowed to enter residences.

## **Reasonable modification**

If you need a reasonable modification of any policy to use the service due to a disability call 508-999-5211. SRTA would be happy to work with you on your request.

## **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 day before by 4:00 PM. All ADA trips are within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of our fixed route corridor and travel times must fall within the hours of an SRTA bus route. SRTA will work to accommodate all non-ADA trip requests for our ADA clients but they may not be guaranteed based on available capacity. 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.

## **Booking a trip**

Where do I start? Ask yourself what is more important: do I need to be somewhere at a certain time or do I want to get picked up at a certain time?

If you need to be somewhere by a certain time, ask the Reservationist to schedule your trip by appointment time. The Reservationist will find the best available pick-up time for you to arrive before your appointment.

If you want to get picked up by a certain time, ask the Reservationist to schedule your trip by pick-up time. The Reservationist will look for the first available pick-up within an hour before or after your request. If you request a pick-up time, we cannot give you an arrival time. Allow enough extra time to get to your appointment after the operator drops you off.

### **What do I need to know to book a trip?**

To make a reservation please call **(508) 999-5211** press option #2. The Reservationist will need the following:

- Your name and ID number as it is written on your eligibility letter.
- Your home address and phone number.
- The date of your trip.
- The exact street address for your pick you up.
- The time you would like for your pick up or the requested appointment time
- The exact street address of where you are going and it would be helpful to have a phone number where you can be reached while you are there.
- What mobility aid you will be using and if you will be bringing an oxygen tank.
- If you will be bringing someone, and if they use a mobility aid or an oxygen tank.
- The time you would like to be picked up for your return trip.

The ADA allows for the Reservationist to negotiate a scheduled pick up time, up to one hour before or one hour after the requested time. Once a pick up time is agreed to, the operator will have a 20 minute pick up window, 5 minutes before and 15 minutes after your scheduled time, in which to pick you up. This means if you have a 7:45 pick up, the operator can arrive between 7:40 and 8:00 and be considered on time. The operator is required to wait at least 5 minutes for you to board. After they wait for 5 minutes, within your 20 minute pick up window, they may have to move on to their next destination without you. Dispatch will attempt to confirm your need for a ride before the operator moves on.

If you should need to cancel your trip, please feel free to call and let us know. Call the same number as you did when you booked your trip. Canceling trips in advance will help avoid issues with our No Show/Late Cancel policy which can be found on page 11.

If calling after hours feel free to leave a voice mail with your name, phone number and detailed message and someone will try to get back to you at the start of normal business hours.

Cancellation 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 client. For trips beyond the 2 mile radius of a Fixed Route bus stop, add \$1.00. Any questions can be answered by the Reservationist 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 with the Reservationists 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

### **Standing Orders/ Subscription Services**

Standing Orders/Subscription service is for SRTA clients 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

## **Paratransit Client Accommodations**

### **Personal Care Attendants**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is any individual who serves as an assistant to the client.

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.

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

### **Companions**

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

### **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.

### **Detrimental Conditions Policy**

SRTA has established an administrative process through which individuals whose needs exceed what public transportation can offer or who engage in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct can be suspended or prohibited from using SRTA service. You will be notified by phone as well as in writing of the concerns that have been raised.

Note: The consumption of alcoholic beverages or smoking of any kind 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 client.
- Strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the client. 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 and are the clients responsibility
- A disruptive animal is subject to suspension of service.
- Animals may not occupy a passenger seat.

## **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. Every effort will be made to provide transportation but safety considerations may prevent operations to continue on that day.

## **No Show Policy**

Under the current No Show/Late Cancellation policy, service will be suspended for clients 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 client does not board the vehicle within 5 minutes of the vehicles arrival within the 20-minute pick-up window. Example: The client’s 20-minute pick-up window is 9:55 to 10:15. The driver arrives at 10:00. The driver will wait 5 minutes for the client to board the vehicle. If the client 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. Please call the dispatcher as soon as you know you will not be taking your ride.

### **No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy**

In order to be subject to a Warning or Suspension, a client 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 client uses the service less than once a week, missing 3 or more consecutive trips will not result in a warning or suspension however the client 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. Please note, missed trips or trips not taken due to an error by the bus operator will not be held against the client.

A passenger will be subject to a warning or suspension if the above characteristics are met. All suspensions will begin on a Monday.

### **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 client 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 the infraction. At that time, the client 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 client’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 client’s file.

### **Appeals Process**

If a client disputes a warning letter or suspension under this policy, they have the right to file an appeal. Please follow the ADA Appeals Process on Page 5 of this brochure.

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. If SRTA staff finds in favor of the clients appeal, service will continue and the no-shows/late cancels will be removed from the client's record. If the Authority upholds the appeal, the suspension will continue on the following Monday.

## **Visitors**

Any visitor who presents ADA eligibility documentation from another jurisdiction or a doctor's note, will be provided service. We will accept a certification by the visitor that they are unable to use fixed route transit. The visitor will be provided 21 days of service within a 365-day period. SRTA will need to certify a visitor looking to use the service for greater than 21 days.

## **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). This fee will be loaded on your card and can be used for your fare.

### **SRTA Complaints & American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complaint Policy & Resolution Procedures**

If you experienced a problem with:

- a specific ride
- a call
- if you have a Title VI complaint meaning you feel you have been discriminated against based on race, color or national origin (including limited English proficiency)
- if have an ADA or disability complaint

You may wish to file a formal service complaint. All formal complaints are investigated. To file a formal complaint or obtain complaint forms, clients can contact Customer Service 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](http://www.srtabus.com/contact-us) or [www.srtabus.com/complaints](http://www.srtabus.com/complaints) to find forms and more information.

As best as you can, please have the following information:

- 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 client submits a complaint, the complaint is input into a feedback software by a customer service representative immediately upon receipt of the complaint.

The contract operator (SCTM) will review, 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, Title VI, 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.

## **Complaint Tracking and Record Retention**

The Title VI coordinator will be responsible for tracking title VI complaints and ADA coordinator will be responsible for tracking ADA complaints for the purpose of establishing trends in allegations of discrimination.

The Title VI coordinator will maintain a summary log of all title VI complaints. The ADA coordinator will maintain a summary log of all ADA complaints. In addition, all complaint documentations and materials gathered during the investigation are maintained for no less than seven (7) years.

## **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**

You can help contribute to a successful service by following the recommendations listed below:

- Inform SRTA of address changes, changes in emergency phone numbers or any other information regarding accessibility needs or changes.
- Please have 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.
- This is a “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after, or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Call to cancel unneeded rides.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- For your safety, our contract operators recommends the use of safety belts and restraints when appropriate.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the “20-minute window”.
- No eating, drinking or smoking on board.

**SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
ADA COMPLIANCE BOOKLET  
12/15/18**

**THIS BROCHURE WILL BE REVIEWED EVERY 2 YEARS FOR COMPLETENESS AND  
ACCURACY UNLESS MAJOR CHANGES IN POLICY OR SERVICE TAKE PLACE  
TO BE USED ALONG WITH FORMS SRTA ADA 10/2016**