

WESTCAT

ADA PARATRANSIT

RIDE GUIDE



**A Reference Guide to Western Contra Costa Transit Authority's
ADA Paratransit Service**

Updated May 2025

INTRODUCTION

WestCAT is pleased to provide a robust Paratransit service to the communities of Pinole and Hercules, and the unincorporated communities of Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, Bayview, Rodeo, Crockett, and Port Costa. WestCAT is committed to providing passengers with safe, dependable, and comfortable service that is accessible to and usable by all.

About This Guide

This guide provides detailed information about WestCAT's ADA Paratransit service including how to apply, how to qualify for service and how to get started. Please read it carefully to learn how the service works and if it is right for you.

You'll also find sections dedicated to Helpful Hints, Important Telephone Numbers, Safety Policies and Customer Service. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact us at (510) 724-7993. We look forward to serving your special transportation needs.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
About This Guide	2
ADA PARATRANSIT	5
About ADA Paratransit	5
ADA Paratransit Eligibility	5
ADA Dial-A-Ride Registration/Application	6
ADA Paratransit Certification	7
ADA Paratransit Certification Denial	7
ADA Paratransit Reservations	7
Subscription Service	9
ADA Paratransit Days and Hours of Operation	9
ADA Paratransit Fares & Tickets	10
Cancellation Policy	10

Policy: No-Shows & Late Cancellations	10
Definitions: No-Show, Pick-up Window, Late Cancellation	11
Definition: No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances beyond Passenger's Control	11
What if I am a no-show?	12
Penalties for Excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations	12
Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations	12
Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions.....	12
Other Information.....	13
Travel Training	14
Personal Care Attendant (PCA)	14
Companions	14
Early Morning, Late Night, & Sunday ADA Paratransit Service.....	14
Service Refusal and Service Conditions Policy.....	15
Complementary ADA Paratransit Service for Visitors	15
ADA Eligibility Appeals Process	16
ADA Reasonable Modification	16
Reasonable Modification Complaint Procedures	17
Advocacy Efforts	18
HELPFUL HINTS & RULES TO RIDE BY	19
Best Time of Day to Travel	19
If You Need an Immediate Ride	19
Boarding with a Mobility Device	19
Passenger and Driver Seatbelt Policy	20

Transporting Animals.....	21
To Receive a Reduced Fare on Fixed Route.....	21
Transporting Life Support Equipment	22
Transporting Packages	22
What Assistance Will the Driver Provide?.....	22
CUSTOMER SERVICE.....	24
Complaint Comments	24
Complaint Resolution	24
Notice of Rights under Title VI	27
PASSENGER SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES REMINDER	28
IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS	29

ADA PARATRANSIT

Section 223 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires WestCAT to provide complementary paratransit service to all ADA certified individuals, who because of a disability are not able to use WestCAT's regularly scheduled fixed route buses.

About ADA Paratransit

ADA Paratransit is a door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation service (provided in vans/and sedans) that is provided to people with disabilities who are unable, or have limited ability because of their disability, to use the existing regularly scheduled fixed route buses AND have completed the ADA certification/application process. All public transit agencies that provide fixed-route bus and rail service are required by the ADA to provide this service. WestCAT's ADA Paratransit is a separate service from local Senior Dial-A-Ride service, with a separate application process, but the same drivers and vehicles are used.

ADA Paratransit operates as a shared ride system. This means that other passengers may be on-board during any part of a ride and that scheduled pick-up times or routes of travel may be altered so another passenger can be accommodated. It is likely that the vehicle will stop and pick-up other passengers as it proceeds. Shared rides help lower the cost of Paratransit. We ask that you wait for the bus at the curb. However, for specially requested door-to-door service, we ask that you notify us when reserving your trip, so that extra time can be scheduled for your pick-up and/or drop-off.

ADA Paratransit provides the following benefits:

- Priority over Senior Dial-A-Ride services
- Longer service hours
- Ability to transfer to other Bay Area Dial-A-Ride/Paratransit providers (regional rides)
- One companion may ride with you for the same reduced fare
- One certified Personal Care Attendant may ride with you at no additional charge

ADA Paratransit Eligibility

ADA Paratransit is only available to customers who are eligible under the American's with Disabilities Act and who have completed the application process, which requires certification from a licensed medical professional.

Eligibility for ADA service is directly related to the inability of a person with a disability to use the existing regularly scheduled fixed route buses. It is not just based on the presence of a disability, but on the effect that the disability has on the person's ability to use the fixed route system independently. Requirements for complementary paratransit do not apply to commuter bus service. Several factors must be considered in determining ADA paratransit eligibility. These include:

1) Individual Disability

Any individual with a disability who is unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including a 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.

2) Limited Accessibility of the Fixed Route System

Any individual with a disability who is unable to independently board, ride, or disembark from an accessible vehicle when the system is not fully accessible.

- The lift cannot be deployed at the boarding or disembarking location the person with a disability wishes to use.
- A required mobility device such as a wheelchair cannot be accommodated.

3) Environmental & Architectural Barriers

Individuals whose disability prevents them from traveling to a boarding or disembarking location (Example: steep terrain, extreme temperatures, severe air pollution, or inability to negotiate architectural barriers to reach a specific bus stop) this is considered a conditional eligibility and a person may be eligible for only some trips. Architectural barriers not under the control of WestCAT and environmental barriers (e.g., distance, terrain, weather) do not, standing alone, form a basis for eligibility under this paragraph. The interaction of such barriers with an individual's specific impairment-related condition may form a basis for eligibility under this paragraph, if the effect is to prevent the individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location.

ADA Dial-A-Ride Registration/Application

To register for WestCAT Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit service, contact us at (510) 724-7433 to have application materials sent to you, or you may pick an application up at our Administrative office, located at 601 Walter Ave., Pinole, CA 94564.

Help is also available in filling out the certification application if you need it. Just give us a call at (510) 724-7433 or for TTY 711 and we will assist you. In addition, all information about the process, materials necessary to apply for eligibility, and notices and determinations concerning eligibility are available in accessible formats, upon request.

Once WestCAT receives your completed application, you will be notified by mail of your eligibility status within (21) days. If, by a date (21) days following the submission of a completed application, WestCAT has not made a determination of eligibility, the applicant shall be treated as eligible and provided service until and unless WestCAT denies the application.

ADA Paratransit Certification

Once you have been certified ADA eligible you will be entered into a regional database that is available to the nine Bay Area counties.

When traveling outside WestCAT's service area any transit provider located within the nine Bay Area counties will be able to access your record via the regional database, and provide transportation based on their individual system rules.

ADA Paratransit Certification Denial

An individual who applies for ADA certification and is denied has the right to an appeal. This must be done in writing within 60 days. For more information see section titled "ADA Eligibility Appeals Process."

ADA Paratransit Reservations

Once you are certified through WestCAT, call **(510) 724-7433** and our ADA Coordinator will book the entire trip and advise you of times and fares.

Reservations for this service are accepted during normal business hours on a "next day" basis, Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. by calling (510) 724-7433. Reservation service is available one day before a service day when the offices are not open. For additional information, you may call (510) 724-7993.

When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- First and last name of passenger
- Date of travel
- Pick-up address: number, street, apt/suite/bldg. number, and city
- Provide detailed pickup instructions (side or rear door, and so on) for large facilities, for any pickup locations that may be difficult for drivers to find, and for any locations where your needed pickup is not at the main entrance
- Requested pick-up or drop-off time
- Requested return time if booking a round trip
- Drop-off address: number, street, apt./suite/bldg. number, and city
- If passenger will be using a wheelchair or other mobility equipment (walker, cane, etc.)
- If the passenger will require additional assistance to/from the vehicle to the first doorway to complete their trip
- If passenger will be bringing a service animal
- Companions, children, or Personal Care Attendant (PCA) who will travel with passenger.

Having this information ready before you call will prevent dispatch from having to ask you to hold while they look up an address, and allows them to continue responding to other callers.

Our ADA Coordinator will not contact you until your entire trip has been arranged. If the trip is the first trip you have taken as an ADA passenger, the process with other operators may take several days. Once you have used the system, your trip will generally take only one day to book.

When our coordinator calls you with times, please write the times down so there will be no misunderstandings.

Important! Regional trips (trips outside the WestCAT area) require transfers to other operators. Call as soon as you are aware you will need a ride outside the WestCAT service area. You may call up to (2) two weeks in advance of your appointment. Some providers require more than a week's notice for regional trips and this will help us ensure availability of the service at the time you need it.

General Advice When Making Reservations

When you call for a trip, please understand that our schedulers are taking calls in the order that they are received, and passenger scheduling is done in a specific order so that the system can run efficiently and be available for all users. If you are placed on hold, please be patient, do not hang up and call back. If you do, expect that you will then be placed at the end of the call sequence and your call will be answered in the order it was received.

It is advisable to call at least two days prior to your ADA Paratransit trip. Reservations may be made from 1 to 3 days in advance. However, we suggest that all passengers scheduling a trip call as early as possible so that we can be sure to accommodate you at your requested time. Priority is given to ADA certified passengers.

Trips are booked on a "first-come, first-served" basis. You may negotiate your trip with the scheduler, but there is no guarantee that the specific time you want will be available. Therefore, please call as soon as possible, and we will do our very best to accommodate your request.

When you call to reserve a ride, your ride will be scheduled within a 15-minute period of time, or "pick-up window" (example; "We will pick you up between 1:00 p.m. and 1:15 p.m."). Therefore, you would need to be ready and prepared to board the bus at 1:00 p.m. It is your responsibility to be ready and waiting to board the bus when it arrives. If you require additional boarding time, please notify the scheduler at the time that you reserve your ride.

On occasion, the bus may arrive earlier than the 15-minute window. In these cases, you have the option of boarding early, or you may wait until the beginning of your pick-up window. It is not the dispatcher or driver's responsibility to call you on the telephone to remind you that your pick-up has arrived. If you do receive a call, it is a "courtesy call" and is not standard operating procedure.

If more than one person is traveling from your address, you will need to advise dispatch when reserving your trip so that they can schedule properly. Although the bus may not be full when it arrives at your pick-up there are other passengers along the way that have scheduled trips and so we cannot guarantee that there will be available space for additional riders from your address unless already prearranged.

Please keep in mind that the dispatchers are scheduling and monitoring hundreds of trips each day. Dispatchers also have to ensure that your trip can be accommodated without creating problems for other passengers whose trips have already been scheduled. Your Paratransit reservation will not be taken on any line other than at **(510) 724-7433**. If you call the wrong number, you will be asked to hang up and call the correct number.

You are required to book your return trip at the same time you arrange your first trip, thus ensuring you will be able to be picked up when you want to return. The system is busy and if you wait to call when you are ready to return, you may experience long wait times of up to two hours. We also ask that you please be considerate of your fellow passengers, and remember that if you keep dispatch on the line, they cannot help other callers. With this in mind, please make sure you have all of the details of your trip when you place the call. Please have a pencil and paper ready to write down the pick-up window that dispatch gives you. This will help to avoid misunderstandings.

Subscription Service

Passengers traveling to the same location on a regular basis may establish a standing reservation. WestCAT refers to these passengers as “Subscription Passengers”. A standing reservation eliminates the need to call each time the person needs to travel and requires that the person call only when trip needs to be cancelled or altered.

The schedulers will review requests for subscription service. Requests are accommodated if they can efficiently be scheduled with other trips on those days and at those times. If a request cannot be accommodated immediately, they may be added to a subscription trip waiting list. A change in the subscription trip times, origin or destination may have to be reviewed by the Dial-A-Ride schedulers.

ADA Paratransit Days and Hours of Operation

WestCAT Provides ADA Paratransit Service Directly on the Following Days and Hours:

Monday-Friday	6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays	9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Sundays	Service is provided by East Bay Paratransit

WestCAT Coordinates with East Bay Paratransit to Provide Early Morning, Late Night, and Sunday ADA Paratransit Service as Follows:

	<u>Early</u>	<u>Late</u>
Monday-Friday	4:44 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.	8:00 p.m. to 12:14 a.m.
Saturday	5:50 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	7:00 p.m. to 11:03 p.m.
Sunday	7:10 a.m. to 10:04 p.m.	

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit transportation is available during the same days and hours that WestCAT's fixed route bus service operates. You may request a pick-up within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of a fixed bus route during the days and hours of service the bus route operates.

Contact dispatch at (510) 724-7433 for information regarding holiday service availability.

Based on limited availability, same day reservations may be made between 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays. Same day reservations can also be made on Saturdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. On days that WestCAT is not operating customers may call and leave a recorded message for a reservation for the next operating day. A dispatcher will call and confirm the reservation during regular business hours.

ADA Paratransit Fares & Tickets

Regular Fare	Cash Fare \$1.25	Discount Ticket \$1.00
*Special service outside WestCAT area	Cash Fare \$3.00	Regional Discount Ticket \$2.50

One Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may travel free with each ADA passenger. One “companion” may accompany an ADA Certified customer at the same fare. Please have the exact fare ready in cash or tickets. Drivers cannot make change. WestCAT fixed route bus passes and Clipper cards are not valid for Paratransit service.

(*This service is not subject to the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act, however, ADA eligible riders may use this service on a space available basis.)

Cancellation Policy

To cancel a ride call **(510) 724-4466**. This number is only for cancellations and is answered promptly. Please do not try to use this line to book trips because you will be referred to the dispatch number. WestCAT requires that passengers call a minimum of (15) minutes before the scheduled pickup time. Cancellations must be called in before the bus is dispatched to the address. There are no penalties for cancellation as long as adequate notice is given.

Policy: No-Shows & Late Cancellations

We understand that because Paratransit requires trips to be scheduled in advance, passengers may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. We also understand that passengers may sometimes miss scheduled trips or are unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips (or failing to cancel trips in a timely way) can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains WestCAT’s No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy.

Definitions: No-Show, Pick-up Window, Late Cancellation

No-show

A no-show occurs when a passenger fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up location within the pick-up window and the driver waits at least (2) minutes.

Pick-up Window

The pick-up window is defined as: from (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time to (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. Passengers must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pick-up window. The driver will wait for a maximum of (2) minutes within the pick-up window for the passenger to appear.

Late Cancellation

A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made *less* than (15) minutes before the scheduled pickup time or as a cancellation made at the door or a refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pick-up window.

Definition: No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances beyond Passenger's Control

WestCAT does not count as no-shows or late cancellations any missed trips due to our error, such as:

- Trips placed on the schedule in error
- Pickups scheduled at the wrong pick-up location
- Drivers arriving and departing before the pick-up window begins
- Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pick-up window)
- Drivers arriving within the pick-up window, but departing without waiting the required (5) minutes

WestCAT does not count as no-shows or late cancellations situations beyond a passenger's control that prevent the passenger from notifying us that the trip cannot be taken, such as:

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

Passengers should contact the Paratransit dispatch center when experiencing no-shows (or late cancellations) due to circumstances beyond their control.

What if I am a no-show?

When a passenger is a no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the passenger specifically cancels the trips. To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, passengers are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day.

Penalties for Excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations

WestCAT reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a passenger's account. When a passenger no-shows (3) times and ten percent (10%) or more of their total scheduled trips in a 30-day period, this will be considered "excessive" and WestCAT will send a warning letter within 30-days, reminding the passenger of the policy and potential penalties. With subsequent violations, the following penalties will be implemented when no-shows exceed:

- 10% of total trips scheduled = 5-day suspension
- 20% of total trips scheduled = 10-day suspension
- 30% of total trips scheduled = 15-day suspension
- 40% of total trips scheduled = 20-day suspension

Passengers with less than three (3) no-shows in a 30-day period will not receive a penalty, even if their percentage of no-shows exceeds the percent (10%) of total trips scheduled.

All suspension notices include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows or late cancellations, and how to appeal suspensions.

Suspensions begin on Mondays. The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning letter but no suspension.

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations

Passengers wishing to dispute specific no-shows or late cancellations must do so within 15 business days of receiving a written warning notice. Passengers should contact the Dial-A-Ride dispatch center at **(510) 724-7993**, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to explain the circumstance, and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

The appeal process is available to any individual who has received a no-show or written Notice of Suspension of Services. The passenger may appeal in writing or in person at WestCAT, located at 601 Walter Avenue, Pinole, CA 94564. Appeals will not be accepted by telephone. Appeals must be received within 15 business days of the date on the written notice.

The No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy applies to both Dial-A-Ride and ADA Paratransit services.

Other Information

Special Transportation Outside of the WestCAT Service Area

Monday through Friday, WestCAT offers special curb-to-curb transportation for ADA Certified passengers traveling into the Richmond and San Pablo areas for medical appointments or other special needs. This transportation is limited to the hours of 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and trips are provided on a space-available basis. One-way fare for this service is \$3.00. Discounted tickets are available for this service.

Reservations must be made at least 48-hours in advance by calling (510) 724-7433 and are accepted Monday through Friday only, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For additional information about this service, you may call (510) 724-7993.

This service is not subject to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, however, ADA eligible riders may use this service on a space available basis.

One-Seat Regional Service Program

In an effort to make traveling across multiple public transit service areas easier and safer for paratransit riders, Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, operator of County Connection, Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority, operator of Tri Delta Transit, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, operator of WestCAT, and Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority, operator of Wheels Bus, are participating in the One-Seat Regional Service Program. With the new program, passengers can have one-seat for the entire duration of the trip, eliminating the required transfers for trips that cross multiple transit service areas.

To book a One-Seat Regional Ride, call (925) 680-2134.

The cost depends on the participating agency's paratransit fares. When you book your one-seat ride, the reservationist will tell you your final fare.

Once your reservation has been booked, you will be provided a one-seat ride with no need to transfer. A driver will pick you up from your location and take you directly to your final destination.

If either the origin or destination of your trip is outside the areas served by the four participating agencies, your Paratransit agency will assist you in booking a regular transfer trip, and coordinating all arrangements between your paratransit agency and any connecting agencies participating in your trip.

Services Not Provided by WestCAT

Passenger requests for a specific driver or vehicle will not be accepted. Passengers will be assigned to vehicles and drivers by the scheduler based on need, availability, and topography of pick-up and/or drop-off area. At the time that these assignments are made, all consideration is made for the individual passenger's needs as much as is acceptable and required under current ADA Paratransit guidelines (e.g., the need for the wheelchair lift).

Travel Training

Free group instruction is offered every third Tuesday of the month at WestCAT. This orientation is meant to aid you in learning about our Paratransit program and services. It is approximately one hour in length and is conducted in our driver's training room. It is also a great opportunity for you to ask questions of staff and to get to know some of your fellow riders.

WestCAT recommends all new passengers attend this orientation. Transportation will be provided to and from this orientation. Please call Dispatch to schedule your ride (510) 724-7993.

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

If you are certified as ADA Paratransit eligible, you may travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). A PCA is an individual who provides assistance to you during the trip or at the destination. In order to be approved to bring an attendant, you must first establish the need for a PCA during the ADA eligibility process. If a PCA is not identified during the ADA certification process and the passenger requests a trip to be accompanied by a PCA, the PCA will be allowed. You will be advised to contact WestCAT to request a review of your PCA status.

PCAs are not charged a fare. PCAs must travel with you, to and from the same locations at the same time and you must inform schedulers when you schedule your ride that he/she will be riding with you.

Companions

In addition to a Personal Care Attendant, passengers may also travel with a companion. A companion is someone riding with you, but not as a PCA. One companion is always allowed to ride with you as long as a reservation has been made for the companion and the companion travels from the same point of origin to the same destination. More than one companion is allowed if space is available. Companions pay the same fare as the passenger.

Please advise the dispatcher when the trip is booked that you will be riding with a companion(s). WestCAT reserves the right to refuse service to any individual who does not have a reservation for service.

Early Morning, Late Night, & Sunday ADA Paratransit Service

For Sundays, and for early morning and late night transportation, ADA certified passengers who reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the WestCAT Route J can call (510) 724-7993 and a WestCAT representative can make advanced reservations for East Bay Paratransit. Transportation is available only during the service hours of the WestCAT Route J. Reservations for this service will be accepted only during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday-Saturday.

Service Refusal and Service Conditions Policy

WestCAT will refuse service to any individual who engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct while on a WestCAT fixed route or paratransit vehicle, in accordance with CFR 47, Section 37.5(h) of The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This may include a person who assaults a driver or another passenger, who smokes or drinks on a vehicle in violation of established laws, or who engages in conduct that is so severe that the delivery of service is seriously disrupted.

Conduct which is related to a person's disability and which annoys or offends is not to be considered "seriously disruptive" (For instance someone with Tourette's Syndrome who may make involuntary profane statements.) However, a person who refuses to stay seated during transport could distract the driver and seriously disrupt service. In such cases, service may be refused or the person may be disallowed from riding WestCAT unattended.

Conditions may be placed on the use of service, in the cases in which WestCAT would otherwise have authority to suspend or refuse service. For example, a rider with a mental disability may have a tendency to move around the paratransit vehicle and accost other passengers. Because such behavior would be seriously disruptive to the service, WestCAT could refuse service. WestCAT could also, therefore, require that the person travel with an attendant.

Complementary ADA Paratransit Service for Visitors

ADA Paratransit service is available to visitors with disabilities who do not reside within the WestCAT service area and who present documentation that they are ADA Paratransit eligible in the jurisdiction in which they reside. Visitors with disabilities who do not have ADA eligibility documentation will be requested to provide proof of residency and, if the individual's disability is not apparent, a statement by the visitor certifying that he or she is unable to use fixed route transit.

WestCAT encourages visitors to begin the application process before they arrive, by letter, telephone or fax, so that a complete application can be processed expeditiously. Once the visitor's application has been approved, a letter will be issued to the visitor which clearly states the terms and limitations of their eligibility.

WestCAT's service will be made available to the eligible visitor for any combination of 21 days during any 365-day period beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during such 365-day period. The visitor will be treated exactly like an eligible local user, without any higher priority being given to either.

WestCAT is not required to serve someone based on visitor eligibility for more than 21 days. After that, the individual is treated the same as a local person for eligibility purposes. This is true whether the 21 days are consecutive or parceled out over several shorter visits. A visitor who expects to be around longer than 21 days should apply for regular eligibility as soon as they arrive.

Visitors returning to a region whose eligibility has expired must reapply for visitor status paratransit eligibility. Visitor status will be granted only once per year. Those planning on returning to the region within one year or to be a more frequent visitor will be encouraged to apply for standard regional

eligibility. Verification of ADA eligibility elsewhere within the nine Bay Area counties will constitute eligibility here.

ADA Eligibility Appeals Process

An individual that applies for ADA certification and is denied has the right to an appeal. This must be done in writing within 60 days from the date of the written appeal. You have the right to have your case heard in person and may bring an advocate or representative to the hearing. Please send a letter stating your reasons for the appeal to: **WestCAT ADA Eligibility Appeals, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, 601 Walter Avenue, Pinole, CA 94564.**

Once your letter is received an appeals board will assemble to process your appeal. The appeals board should render a final, written decision within 30 days or you will receive service on the 31st day until the decision is made.

The appeals process board consists of at least three persons including one “peer” to the applicant, one applicable professional expert, and one staff member from WestCAT who was not involved in the original review of your application.

You may re-initiate the paratransit eligibility process, beginning at level one, at any time that there is a change in their functional ability to use the fixed route system.

WestCAT will provide any necessary aids (e.g. interpreter, transportation, in accessible format) for you to participate in the hearing. However, you need to request any necessary aids at least one week before the meeting.

ADA Reasonable Modification

The Reasonable Modification regulation (Section 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37: Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities; Reasonable Modification) provides that transportation entities make reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that services and programs are accessible to everyone including individuals with disabilities.

The Western Contra Costa Transit Authority (WCCTA) is fully compliant with the requirements of the ADA and will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities.

Requests for modification of WCCTA’s policies and practices may be denied only on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Granting the request would cause direct threat to the health or safety of others.
2. Result in a fundamental alteration of WCCTA’s service.

3. Are not actually necessary in order for the individual with a disability to access WCCTA's service.
4. Result in undue financial and administration burden.

You may make your request for reasonable modification:

By email: rmco@westcat.org

By phone: please contact WCCTA's Reasonable Modification Coordinator at (510) 724-7993 or dial 711 for TTY.

Online: [WestCAT's contact us page \(web\)](#)

In writing:

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
Reasonable Modification Coordinator
601 Walter Avenue
Pinole, CA 94564

All reasonable modification requests will be acknowledged within three business days of receipt. The resolution and response to the person who submitted a request will be made timely, within 15 business days, and the response will explain the reasons for the resolution. The response will be documented in the Reasonable Modification log. Any requests requiring more than 15 business days to resolve must be reviewed at the General Manager level, and documented as to why the resolution requires additional time for full resolution.

Reasonable Modification Complaint Procedures

Any person wishing to file a written reasonable modification complaint with the Western Contra Costa Transit Authority may do so by calling (510) 724-7993 and asking for a complaint form from the Reasonable Modification Coordinator or write to:

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
Reasonable Modification Coordinator
601 Walter Avenue
Pinole, CA 94564

Complainant may also submit a written statement that contains all of the information identified below. The complaint will include the following information:

- a. Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant.
- b. The basis of the complaint; i.e. complainant denied request for reasonable modification.
- c. Complainant's signature and date.
- d. If the complainant is unable to write a complaint, WCCTA will assist the complainant. If requested by complainant, WCCTA will provide a language or sign interpreter.
- e. The complaint may be sent or faxed to the following address:

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
General Manager
601 Walter Avenue

Pinole, CA 94564
(510) 724-5551 (fax)

The complaint may be sent via email to rmco@westcat.org. WCCTA will begin an investigation within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of a complaint.

WCCTA will contact the complainant in writing no later than thirty (30) working days after receipt of complaint for additional information, if needed to investigate the complaint. If the complainant fails to provide the requested information in a timely basis, WCCTA may administratively close the complaint.

WCCTA will complete the investigation within ninety (90) days of receipt of the complaint. A written investigation report will be prepared by the investigator. The report shall include a summary description of the incident, findings and recommendations for disposition.

The Department Manager of WCCTA will review the report. A closing letter will be provided to the complainant. The complainant will have five (5) working days from receipt of the report to respond. If the complainant responds negatively or has additional information to provide, an informal phone meeting will be arranged by the General Manager or his designee. If the complainant does not respond, the complaint will be closed.

Advocacy Efforts

The staff at WestCAT are active participants on various advocacy committees (i.e. [Paratransit Coordinating Council \(web\)](#) and the Senior Mobility Action Committee) throughout Contra Costa County and the Bay Area, whose work includes advocacy, coordination, and improvement of the overall experience of people with disabilities and seniors who use public transportation.

In addition, WestCAT works with representatives from the disabled community who assist with ADA issues and compliance. If you are interested in helping, please contact us at (510) 724-3331 for further information.

HELPFUL HINTS & RULES TO RIDE BY

Best Time of Day to Travel

The best time of day to travel on Paratransit is between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 12 noon. This is our least busy time and rides may be available sooner.

If You Need an Immediate Ride

If you need an immediate ride, dispatch will arrange it if possible, but if they fit you in, it is your responsibility to be ready when the bus arrives. If the driver is kept waiting while the rider runs back into the house for keys, books, etc., the bus may have to leave and you will have to re-book a ride. If the bus were to wait for every passenger, it would reduce the number of people we are able to serve, and would negatively affect other passengers who are waiting to get to their appointments on time. A driver will only wait two minutes after the bus arrives to pick you up, so please be ready for the bus and come out as quickly as possible.

Boarding with a Mobility Device



WestCAT vehicles are accessible to persons with wheelchairs, electric scooters, and other mobility devices. However, due to equipment weight restrictions, we cannot accommodate passengers if the combined weight of the mobility device and passenger exceeds the lifting capacity of vehicle. If you believe that your mobility device might fall into this category, please contact us at **(510) 724-7993** prior to scheduling your trip, and we will arrange a time to meet with you personally to examine your mobility device, and we will do our best to accommodate you.

However, please keep in mind that devices exceeding these standards may not be transportable.

ADA regulations allow for wheelchair passengers whose device is operated either manually or powered, to board the bus facing forward or backward. However, if you are in a manual wheelchair, and require the assistance of the driver, they will board you backwards as a safety precaution.

As an additional safety measure, we recommend that you make sure that your mobility device is maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications and that your brakes are operable.

As per Section 37.165(c) (3) of the Department of Transportation's ADA regulations, it is WestCAT's policy that all wheelchairs and mobility devices are secured to the vehicle. Therefore, WestCAT may decline to provide service to a rider who refuses to allow his or her device to be secured. If you are concerned about being accommodated on any WestCAT vehicle, please call (510) 724-7933 and we will make arrangements to assist you in determining whether you may encounter any difficulty riding WestCAT.

If you require additional assistance in getting to or from the vehicle we recommend that you try and arrange to have someone to assist you ahead of time or plan to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). However, our drivers may provide limited assistance between the vehicle and the first doorway, but they cannot lose sight of their vehicle and cannot assist you with any heavy lifting of packages or personal items, mobility devices, and/or your person.

People using canes or walkers and other standees with disabilities that do not use wheelchairs, but have difficulty using steps (e.g., an elderly person who can walk without use of a mobility aid but cannot raise his or her legs sufficiently to climb bus steps) will be permitted to use the lift, upon request.

WestCAT vehicles are wheelchair lift equipped and WestCAT service is in full compliance with the ADA requirements.

Passenger and Driver Seatbelt Policy

All persons (passengers and driver) being transported in a WestCAT paratransit vehicle equipped with passenger safety belts (seatbelts) is required to properly don/wear the seatbelts prior to the vehicle's movement.



The safety of our passengers and drivers is WestCAT's paramount consideration and the reason for this policy, as traffic conditions may require the driver to make sudden stops, turns, or maneuvers. The wearing of a seatbelt ensures a safer ride and minimizes the potential for injuries to passengers and drivers.

Passengers refusing to wear seatbelts or seatbelt/shoulder harnesses will not be transported on vehicles where seatbelts and/or shoulder harnesses are available to all passengers. However, exception may be made for passengers whose disability prohibits them from wearing seatbelts provided the procedures set forth below are followed. Furthermore, if the vehicle does not have seatbelts or passenger restraints for all seating locations (e.g., fixed route service), the mobility device user cannot be required to use theirs, although they are strongly encouraged to do so. If they refuse in such a situation, the driver is required to report the refusal to dispatch or a supervisor, and to activate the DriveCam device (onboard digital video recorder) where available.

Passenger refusal or special request: If a passenger refuses a seatbelt or requests the belt be worn loosely because of a disability, the operator will call into dispatch and will not move the vehicle until cleared by a supervisor or dispatch. In vehicles equipped with DriveCam devices, the driver is also required to activate the DriveCam device and restate the passenger's refusal to don the seatbelt or to have the seatbelt fastened in a loose manner.

Compliance: This policy only applies to vehicles equipped with seatbelts and shoulder harnesses (e.g. WestCAT paratransit vehicles). These devices are to be used by all riders, including those who use wheelchairs as well as those who use vehicle seats, if seatbelts and/or shoulder harnesses are provided at seating locations, and subject to the limited exceptions noted above.

Transporting Animals



If you have a disability, you may travel with a trained service animal such as a guide dog or canine companion. What is a service animal? The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals are not pets. They are working animals that are specially trained to provide assistance for individuals who have disabilities.

We ask that you please inform the dispatcher at the time you book your trip that you will be traveling with a service animal. Service animals must be under the control of his or her handler at all times. Small service animals may ride on a passenger's lap; however, service animals should never ride on bus or van seats. Service animals are trained to behave well in public. A service animal should not growl, bark or bite other animals or passengers. Supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of his or her handler. If you travel with a service animal or pet, you are responsible for any damage or injury caused by the animal.

Only domesticated pets (non-service animals) may be carried on WestCAT vehicles and only in a properly secured cage or carrier (*this does not include pet strollers*). If you require clarification as to what ADA regulations have defined as a service animal please call (510) 724-3331.



To Receive a Reduced Fare on Fixed Route

To receive a reduced fare, a passenger may be asked to show one of the following to the driver:

- Driver's License (Senior Fare, Age 65+)
- Regional Transit Connection Discount Card (RTC) not available through WestCAT.
- Medicare Card (Not Medi-Cal)
- Department of Motor Vehicles Disabled ID Card
- Department of Veteran's Affairs Disabled ID Card

Possession of any or all of these articles "does not" constitute immediate eligibility for ADA Paratransit. There is an application process involved in qualifying passengers for ADA Paratransit. See page 4 for application and registration information.

However, possession of any of these articles "does" constitute eligibility for payment of a reduced fare.



Transporting Life Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life support equipment onboard as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials. In addition, all equipment must be small enough to fit into WestCAT vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits.

Transporting Packages



When you go shopping, there is a (3) three bag limit. More than (3) three bags take up space on the bus that other riders may need to use and are a potential safety hazard. The only exception to this rule would be if the passenger pays for each additional bag beyond the (3) three bag limit at the regular Paratransit fare of \$1.25. Total weight of all packages may not exceed 50 pounds and bags of any kind must not block the aisle. It is a violation of both federal and state law to block the aisles of a public transit bus.

You may request the driver's assistance loading and unloading packages, but bags must weigh less than 15 pounds. However, attendant-type services such as carrying personal baggage, or suitcases are not required of the driver and drivers cannot enter your home.

What Assistance Will the Driver Provide?

WestCAT's Paratransit service is curb-to-curb. This means that drivers provide assistance beyond the curb upon request and as long as they can maintain effective continuing control of the vehicle. This includes not losing sight of the vehicle or being gone from the vehicle for an extended period of time. It is your responsibility to advise WestCAT that you require assistance when booking your ride.

If you cannot be left unattended, and a responsible party is not at a destination to accept you, drivers will contact dispatch for instructions. Repeat instances of not having someone at the destination to accept you may be considered seriously disruptive to the service and may result in suspension of service.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Come looking for you
- Lose sight of their vehicle
- Knock on your door
- Lift or carry you
- Carry you or your wheelchair up or down steps
- Change your scheduled trip
- Bring your ticket order envelope to the WestCAT ticket sales office

Our drivers are not allowed to change your scheduled trip times or addresses. If you have a problem or complaint, please do not try to resolve it directly with the driver. In addition, please do not argue with our dispatchers about the details of your trip.

In the event that you experience a problem, we have staff to follow up the details of your situation and resolve it. Please refer to the section in this guidebook entitled “Complaint Resolution”.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Complaint Comments

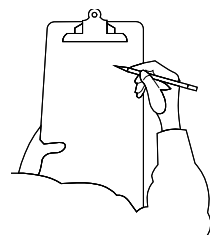
WestCAT welcomes your compliments, complaints, and suggestions. We are committed to using customer input as a tool to improve the quality of service.

It has been our experience that most problems can be easily resolved. Our entire staff wants to serve you as efficiently and professionally as possible. However, if you do not call and make us aware that you are having a problem, the problem may persist.

We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of our riders. However, please keep in mind that anonymous service complaints cannot receive responses.

See below for an explanation of WestCAT's Complaint Resolution process.

Complaint Resolution



Because it is important to us that all of our riders have a pleasant experience on our system we welcome your comments, complaints, and suggestions.

If you experienced a problem, please contact us as soon as possible. Our dispatch center is equipped with a computer system that tracks all of our rides, and the sooner you let us know about the problem, the easier it is for us to research what may have occurred and to respond back to you quickly.

To submit a general service complaint, please use the online form available on our website: [Customer Comment Form \(web\)](#). You may also call Customer Service and provide the details of your complaint to a representative at (510) 724-7993.

To submit an ADA complaint, follow the procedures outlined in the ADA Complaint Process and then mail the completed ADA Complaint Form to the address listed on the form. The General Manager will research your concerns and make a determination. WestCAT will promptly communicate its response to the complainant, including its reasons for the response.

Once you have received a response from WestCAT, if you are still not satisfied with the response, an appeal may be filed by writing a letter to the attention of the WestCAT Board of Directors at the same address. The matter will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda (meetings are generally held on the 2nd Thursday of the month), and the Board will take action and make a determination on your complaint. The Board decision is final.

Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
601 Walter Ave. • Pinole, CA 94564 • (510) 724-3331 • (510) 724-5551 Fax

ADA Complaint Process

In compliance with the U.S. Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (49 CFR Parts 27, 37, 38 and 39), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority (WestCAT) ensures its services, vehicles, and facilities are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Anyone who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability, including those denied a Reasonable Modification request, may file an ADA complaint.

To submit an ADA complaint, follow the procedures outlined in the ADA Complaint Process and then mail the completed ADA Complaint Form to the address listed on the form. The ADA Complaint Process and the ADA Complaint Form can be found on our website: [ADA Paratransit \(web\)](#) or by calling (510) 724-3331 (TTY/TDD: 711 or (800) 855-7100)

If the complainant is unable to write a complaint, a representative may file on his or her behalf, or WestCAT staff will provide assistance. Complaints must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged incident.

The ADA Specialist or other qualified staff will contact the complainant within 3 business days of receipt of complaint. Any requested information must be received by WestCAT within 5 days of the request. If the Complainant does not respond to the request for information, the Complaint may be administratively closed.

WestCAT will begin the investigation within 5 business days of receipt of complaint.

An investigation into the complaint will be conducted and documented to determine whether WestCAT failed to comply with ADA regulations.

WestCAT will complete the investigation within 30 calendar days of receipt of complaint. If additional time is needed for the investigation, the complainant will be notified.

The General Manager will research your concerns and make a determination. WestCAT will promptly communicate its response to the complainant, including its reasons for the response. The complainant will have 5 days from receipt of WestCAT's response to file an appeal. If no appeal is filed, the complaint will be closed.

Once you have received a response from WestCAT, if you are still not satisfied with the response, an appeal may be filed by writing a letter to the attention of the WestCAT Board of Directors at the same address. The matter will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda (meetings are generally held on the 2nd Thursday of the month), and the Board will take action and make a determination on your complaint. The Board decision is final.

ADA Complaint Form

WestCAT is committed to ensuring that no person is denied access to its services, programs or activities on the basis of a disability, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). To submit an ADA complaint, please provide in writing the following information:

Full Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Please describe the alleged ADA violation, including the location(s) if applicable. Provide the name(s) and title(s) of the WestCAT Employee(s), if applicable:

(Attach additional pages if necessary)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Alternate formats are available upon request. If the complainant is unable to write because of a disability and needs assistance in completing the form, WestCAT staff will assist by transcribing the complaint by phone. Please call the ADA Specialist at (510) 724-3331 or for TTY/TDD 711 or 1-800-855-7100.

MAIL, FAX OR EMAIL YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO:

WestCAT General Manager

601 Walter Ave. • Pinole, CA 94564 • (510) 724-5551 Fax

Email: info@westcat.org

Notice of Rights under Title VI

WestCAT (WCCTA) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil rights Act. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with WCCTA.

For more information on WCCTA's civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact, (510) 724-3331, email info@westcat.org or visit the administrative office at 601 Walter Ave, Pinole, CA 94564. For more information visit [WestCAT's website \(web\)](#)

A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filling a complaint with the Office of Civil rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, Washington, DC 20590.

If information is needed in another language, please contact 1-510-724-3331.

Si necesita información en Español, llame al 1-510-724-3331.

如果需要中文信息, 请致电 1-510-724-3331.

Kung kailangan ng impormasyon sa Tagalog, mangyaring tumawag sa 1-510-724-3331.

PASSENGER SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES REMINDER

WestCAT enforces all internal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free ride on WestCAT:

- Threatening the health, safety or well-being of the driver, other passengers, or any third person is prohibited.
- Opening or tampering with emergency windows, except during an emergency is prohibited.
- Tampering with or operating equipment intended for the bus driver's exclusive use is prohibited.
- Fighting, pushing or shoving other passengers is prohibited.
- Any conduct intended to or which tends to distract or interfere with the driver's operation of the bus is prohibited.
- No smoking, eating, drinking or expectorating on the vehicle.
- No obscene, threatening, offensive or "hate" speech.
- Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and any strollers.
- Respirators, portable oxygen, and/or other life support equipment may be carried onboard as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials. In addition, all equipment must be small enough to fit into WestCAT vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits.
- No uncaged pets or animals (except service animals). Domesticated pets may ride with their owner only if in a pet carrier. This does not include a pet stroller, which cannot be accommodated on WestCAT buses without being folded and safely stored. In which case, the pet is still required to be in a pet carrier to ride.
- Disregarding or disobeying the directive of a bus driver with regard to these policies and their enforcement is prohibited.
- Everyone should be able to ride without disturbance. Please be courteous to fellow passengers.

** These policies and procedures apply to the public's use of any of WestCAT's services.*

If information is needed in another language, please contact 1-510-724-7993.

Si necesita información en Español, llame al 1-510-724-7993.

如果需要中文信息, 请致电 1-510-724-7993.

Kung kailangan ng impormasyon sa Tagalog, mangyaring tumawag sa 1-510-724-7993.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service:

(510) 724-7993 (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

Para información de horarios en español. Por favor llame al número
(510) 724-7993 (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

California Relay Service/ TTY

Dial 711 or the CRS 800 number.

English: (800) 855-7100

Spanish: (800) 855-7200

Speech to Speech: (800) 854-7784

Paratransit Registration for First Time Riders

(510) 724-7993

ADA Paratransit Reservations

(510) 724-7433

ADA Paratransit Cancellations

(510) 724-4466

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit and Fixed Route Information

(510) 724-7993

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Reservations

Phone: (510) 724-7433

***Please Note:** *Do not fax applications or reservation requests to the regular WestCAT Administration fax number listed on the WestCAT transit schedule, only use the fax number listed above. Your application will take longer to process or may never get to the person responsible for reviewing the applications if you do not follow this procedure.*