



**South Bend Public Transportation Corporation**

**Transpo Access**

**PASSENGER HANDBOOK**

**1401 S. Lafayette Blvd.  
South Bend, IN 46613**

**Contact Numbers**

<b>Schedule Rides</b>	<b>(574) 234-1188</b>
<b>Paratransit Coordinator</b>	<b>(574) 234-1188</b>
<b>Transpo's Fixed-Route Bus Info</b>	<b>(574) 233-2131</b>
<b>AM Cancellations (Before 8AM)</b>	<b>(574) 239-2300</b>
<b>PM Emergency (After 5PM)</b>	<b>(574) 532-6923</b>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The South Bend Public Transportation Corporation (Transpo) is the public transportation provider for the cities of South Bend and Mishawaka. Our goal is to provide the best possible transportation service to our residents. Our vehicles are clean, safe, comfortable and well-maintained, and our drivers are trained to serve you.

Transpo is pleased to provide, for the public, transportation needs of all the area's citizens, including those with disabilities. To accomplish this goal, Transpo operates two types of service:

- Accessible fixed-route bus service; and
- ADA complementary Paratransit service

Transpo's fixed-route buses are lift-or ramp-equipped so they are accessible for people who use a mobility device or cannot climb stairs. Our drivers receive special training in assisting people with disabilities. Drivers announce stops at key destinations and upon request to assist passengers with visual or mental impairments. Our goal is to make our fixed-route accessible to the general public and convenient for everyone.

Transpo's paratransit service, referred to as "Access", ADA complementary paratransit services provides comparable service to our regular fixed-route service for citizens whose disabling conditions prevent their use of the regular bus service. The service is provided according to the guidelines set forth by the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and as outlined in this handbook. Persons who use this service must be certified as ADA complementary Paratransit eligible. A person may be eligible for all or some of their trip needs.

If you have any questions on this handbook or our services, please call Transpo Access at (574) 234-1188.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Any individual wishing to apply for ADA complementary paratransit eligibility may pick up an application at the Transpo office at 1401 S. Lafayette Blvd., South Bend, IN; or call (574) 234-1188 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to obtain an application by mail.

On the application form, the applicant, or someone on their behalf must fill out the first three pages. A social service professional, rehabilitation counselor, physician, or other health care professional who is familiar with the applicant's disabling condition, and how that condition prevents the applicant from using fixed-route service must fill out the last page, If additional information is required, a Professional Verification form will be mailed to the applicant to be completed.

Under ADA, the standard for determining eligibility is not whether a disabling condition exists, but whether (or under what circumstances) the applicant's disabling condition prevents them from using the regular fixed-route bus service. In some cases, eligibility is established for certain circumstances only.

An eligibility determination will be made, and the applicant will be notified in writing, within twenty-one (21) days after both the properly completed application form AND the Professional Verification form, if necessary, has been received. If a decision is not made within twenty-one (21) days, the applicant will be considered unconditionally eligible until a decision is reached.

If you are dissatisfied with your eligibility determination, you may appeal within sixty (60) days of the date of the letter notifying you of your eligibility status. Please review the section on how to file an appeal later in this document. If an appeals decision is not made within thirty (30) days, the applicant will be considered unconditionally eligible until a decision is reached.

## **VISITORS**

Visitors from out of town, who are certified ADA eligible by another transit provider, or provide necessary documentation of a disability, have an apparent disability, or self-certify that they have a disability that prevents them from using the scheduled fixed-route buses, may use the ADA complementary paratransit service for up to twenty-one (21) days in a year. Individuals may call Access at (574) 234-1188 to request visitor status. A visitor who needs ADA complementary paratransit service for more than twenty-one (21) days in a year must apply for eligibility. A determination on eligibility will be made within one (1) day.

## **SERVICE AREA**

ACCESS provides ADA complementary paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of our fixed route service. All trips must take place within the defined service area. Access will determine whether your trip is eligible when you call to schedule a ride.

## **SERVICE HOURS**

Transpo's ADA complementary paratransit service operates the same days and hours of service as our fixed-route service.

Monday-Friday	5:10 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.
Saturday	6:20 a.m. – 10:20 p.m.*
Sunday	No Service

\*Access will only provide service after 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays to locations within ¾ mile of Route 7.

Early morning and late night Access trips are only taken along fixed routes that are in service. Please review our fixed route rider's guide for hours of operation.

No service is provided on Sundays and the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
4 <sup>th</sup> of July	Christmas Day

## **TRIP RESTRICTIONS**

Transpo's ADA complementary paratransit service is designed to be comparable to fixed route service. Just as with our fixed route service, there are no trip restrictions or ranking of trips by trip purpose.

## **FARES**

The ADA complimentary paratransit service fare (\$2.00) is twice the fixed-route bus fare (\$1.00), as allowed by ADA regulations. A fare is charged for each leg of a trip. Payment is required at the time of boarding.

Fares may be paid with cash or with a two-ride or ten-ride punch card. Punch cards may be purchased at the Transpo office at 1401 S. Lafayette Blvd., by mail or online at [www.sbtranspo.com](http://www.sbtranspo.com). If you would like to purchase by mail, call the Access Scheduler and ask that an order form be mailed to you. If a passenger does not have cash or a punch card, service will not be provided.

## **CURB-TO-CURB versus DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE**

Transpo's ADA complementary paratransit service is curb-to-curb service. Access asks that passengers be ready for pick up at the curb.

If help is needed for the door to the vehicle, you may request door-to-door service. We will not provide door-to-door service if barriers such as stairs, ramps, doors, snow, and ice prevent us from helping you to the vehicle. Our Access department reserves that right to make an on-site examination. At the time of scheduling a ride, please indicate the need for door-to-door service.

The following guidelines will be followed to allow door-to-door service to be provided safely and efficiently:

- Drivers will provide assistance to and from the ground floor of homes and destinations.

- Drivers will not enter private homes for any reason.
- Drivers will assist passengers into and from the main entrance door of hospitals, offices, and shops. If there is a main entrance foyer with two sets of doors, the driver will assist passengers through the second door. Drivers will not assist passengers past this point.
- Drivers will not enter nursing homes, medical facilities, shopping centers, businesses, or other public buildings in an attempt to find passengers.
- Drivers will not carry passengers up or down steps.

### **PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS and COMPANIONS**

If we have determined during the application process that you require the assistance of a personal care attendant, the attendant travels with you at no charge. At the time of scheduling a ride, please indicate if you will have a personal care attendant with you. Of course, the attendant must get on and get off at the same locations as you do.

At least one companion, more if space is available may accompany you. Each companion will pay a fare. At the time of scheduling a ride, please indicate the number of companions who will accompany you. Companions must get on and off at the same locations as you do.

A person requiring the services of a personal care attendant may also be accompanied by one or more companions.

### **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals are always welcome. Passengers must have the service animal fully under control at all times so as not to disrupt other passengers or the schedule. Drivers cannot and will not assume any responsibility for service animals. At the time of scheduling a ride, please indicate if a service animal will accompany you.

### **SCHEDULING RIDES**

Rides on the ADA complementary paratransit service can be scheduled the day before the trip or up to fourteen (14) days in advance. To schedule a ride, please call (574) 234-1188. To speak to a dispatcher, call Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. A telephone answering service is available in the evenings, on Sundays, and holidays. No requests for rides are accepted on Saturdays.

Please be aware that the origin and destination of the trip may not be changed on the day of service. Any changes to your scheduled trip must be made prior to the day of service.

To help serve you better, we ask that you observe the following four (4) tips:

1. Prepare for your call.
2. Have your trip information ready and organized.
3. Schedule the return trip up front.
4. Be ready to go at the scheduled time.

### **PREPARE FOR YOUR CALL**

- Name
- Date of travel
- Origin address
- Destination address
- Desired arrival time
- Desired pick-up time
- Whether help is needed from your door to the van
- Whether you use a wheelchair or walker
- Whether a personal care attendant, one or more companions, or a service animal will accompany you

The dispatcher will let you know your pick-up and return times, or may call back later with the times. Access will make every effort to schedule your trip at the desired times. The ADA allows the ride to be scheduled up to one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the requested times.

### **NOTE YOUR TRIP INFORMATION**

Have a pencil and paper ready to write down your pick-up and return times. This will help you remember them. If you have a calendar, write the times on it.

### **SCHEDULE YOUR RETURN TRIP UP FRONT**

Access requires return trips to be scheduled at the same time original trips are scheduled. Passengers should anticipate the latest possible time needed for

their return and schedule a return trip for that time. If you are ready to return before your scheduled time, please call Access. If available, we will pick you up earlier.

## **BE READY TO GO AT THE SCHEDULED TIME**

Please be ready to go fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Access makes every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. However, Access may arrive up to fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick up time.

- Example: If you schedule a 9:30 a.m. pick-up, the vehicle may arrive between 9:15 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.

This thirty (30) minute window is called the pick-up time period.

Drivers, after arriving within the pick-up time period, will wait up to five (5) minutes. Any passenger, who is not at their scheduled pick-up point and ready to go by that time, will be considered a “no-show”, and the driver will leave to pick up other riders. The driver will not return for a second attempt. The only exception will be passengers who have been detained during a medical appointment. If you know that you will be detained during a medical appointment, please call Access at (574) 234-1188 as soon as possible. When you are ready, call Access and we will dispatch the next available van to pick you up.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

If you are unable to make your scheduled ride for any reason, please call the office at (574) 234-1188 **no later than 60 minutes prior to your ride time**. Access drivers cannot make schedule changes for you. **Cancellations made less than 60 minutes prior to the scheduled trip will be considered a “no show”**.

## **NO-SHOW POLICY**

A “no-show” occurs when:

- You fail to show up for your scheduled trip.
- You fail to cancel 60 minutes prior to your scheduled trip.
- You are not ready within five (5) minutes of the driver’s arrival during the pick-up window.

A no-show beyond the rider's control, such as hospital admission or a late medical appointment, will not be counted towards a potential suspension.

If you are a no-show for your "going" trip, your return trip will remain unless the client calls to cancel.

### **Suspension of Service for Patterns or Practice of Excessive No-Shows and Late Cancellations**

Access reviews all recorded no-shows and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording against the rider. A no-show beyond the rider's control will not be counted.

Each verified no-show or late cancellation consistent with the definitions in this policy counts for the purposes of enforcing possible suspensions of Access service. Access service may be suspended for customers with excessive no-shows or late cancellations. Such suspensions of service may occur under the following conditions:

- The rider has at least four (4) or more scheduled trips in a thirty (30) day period using a rolling calendar; and
- The rider accumulates three (3) or more no-shows during that thirty (30) day period (upon the third no-show, a written warning will be issued); and
- The rider's rate of no-shows after receiving the warning letter is twelve (12) percent or higher of all their scheduled trips in that thirty (30) day time period

If all of the above noted conditions are met, the rider may be suspended as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense – Seven (7) calendar days
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense – Fourteen (14) calendar days
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense – Thirty (30) calendar days

Suspensions will be reset to the first offense following one (1) calendar year from the previous first offense.

If you are suspended, Access will notify you by mail of the date on which the suspension will begin. The date for the beginning of the suspension of service will be no less than ten (10) days from the date the letter is sent. The letter will indicate the times and dates of the no-shows that have occurred and your right of appeal. Per ADA guidelines, if an appeal is requested, service will be provided pending appeal.

## **WHEELCHAIRS and MOBILITY DEVICES**

In accordance with the ADA, Access vehicles are designed to accommodate mobility devices. All devices must be able to be safely loaded and transported. If you have any questions, please call Access at (574) 234-1188 for an evaluation to determine if we can accommodate your mobility device.

Passengers must be in an upright sitting position for transport.

## **DRIVER ASSISTANCE**

Access drivers are specially trained to serve you. Drivers will:

- Deploy lifts and ramps for persons using mobility devices and those without mobility devices who cannot navigate the bus steps upon request.
- Secure passengers using mobility devices.

To ensure your safety and the safety of our drivers, Access has the following restrictions:

- Drivers will not assist passengers using wheelchairs up or down steps. Please arrange with someone else to assist you.
- Drivers will not carry packages.
- Drivers will not dress passengers.
- Drivers will not search a passenger's body for the appropriate fare or ticket.
- Drivers will not clear pathways of ice, snow, or other barriers.

## **GENERAL RIDERSHIP POLICIES**

Access has established the following general ridership policies for ADA complementary paratransit service. Many of the policies also apply to Transpo's fixed route.

- If a passenger uses oxygen, the tank must be portable, i.e., the passenger must be able to carry the tank into the vehicle themselves. If the passenger is in a wheelchair, the tank must be attached to the wheelchair. Once on board, the portable oxygen tank must ride in a secure location, for example, in the passenger's lap in front of the passenger on the floor between seats, or on the floor behind the modesty panel.
- All passengers must wear seatbelts where appropriate.

- All passengers using a wheelchair or scooter must use the restraint system that is used to secure the wheelchair or scooter to the floor of the vehicle.
- The number of packages a passenger can have along is limited to the number of packages that the passenger can carry and maintain in their seating area.
- Drivers cannot accept tips.
- For safety reasons, Access may request that passengers be accompanied by a personal care attendant.
- Access may suspend or refuse service to any individual whose behavior and/or actions are violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal; interrupt service; or cause safety concerns.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

You may appeal your eligibility determination or suspension from the program for violating Transpo's Access policies. In accordance with the ADA, Access allows two appeals.

### **FIRST APPEAL**

Your request for appeal may be in writing, in person at Transpo's Administrative Office, located at 1401 S. Lafayette Blvd, or by phone at (574) 234-1188. The appeal should include why you disagree with the determination or suspension. You may request to present your case in person. You or a representative of your choosing may present on your behalf. A first appeal is decided by the Operations Manager and a written decision will be made within thirty (30) days after receiving the written request for an appeal. If a decision is not made within thirty (30) days you will be considered unconditionally eligible until a decision is reached.

### **SECOND APPEAL**

Your request may be in writing, in person at Transpo's Administrative Office, located at 1401 S. Lafayette Blvd or by phone at (574) 234-1188 and describe why you disagree with the appeal decision. You may also ask to present your case in person. You or a representative of your choosing may present you on your behalf. The second and final appeal is decided by an Appeal Committee. Transpo Access will notify you of the date and time of the Appeal Committee meeting and you or a representative of your choosing may be present. A written decision will be issued within thirty (30) days of the written request of appeal.

Send appeal requests to: Transpo Access  
1401 S. Lafayette Blvd  
South Bend, IN 46613

## **ADA COMPLAINTS**

Transpo is committed to providing public transportation services fully compliant with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any person who believes there may be either a(n) **Accessibility Issue** (e.g. physical barriers) or **Discrimination Based on Disability** may file an ADA complaint in writing, over the phone by contacting Transpo's Customer Service Representative at (574) 232-9901 or by email at [businfo@sbtranspo.com](mailto:businfo@sbtranspo.com). ADA Complaint forms are available online at [sbtranspo.com](http://sbtranspo.com) or by contacting Transpo's Customer Service Representative at (574) 232-9901.