

DART Choice Reference Guide



Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
www.PSTA.net

Phone (727) 540-1800
Fax (727) 540-1916

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Meeting Our Customers' Travel Needs

This DART Reference Guide provides brief information about PSTA's 100% accessible, fixed-route bus service, as well as detailed information about PSTA's paratransit or Demand Response Service (DART) eligibility, operations, fares, and frequently requested information.

Fixed Route Bus Service

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) is committed to providing transportation services that can be used by all of our customers. All "fixed-route" buses (buses that operate on set routes and follow a published schedule) in our fleet have lifts or are low-floor vehicles with a ramp serving our passengers who use wheelchairs or have difficulty getting up or down bus steps. Our fixed-route buses are 100% wheelchair accessible.

For everyone's benefit, drivers announce major stops, intersections, and transfer points to help passengers recognize their bus stop or point of transfer. Reserved spaces with tie-down straps and driver assistance are available to provide a safe and secure ride for passengers who use wheelchairs.

PSTA has available for purchase reduced-fare bus passes, called GO Cards, for senior citizens and disabled passengers. These cards allow an eligible individual to travel at a discounted rate on the fixed-route buses. We encourage those with disabilities to take advantage of the flexibility, independence, and reduced cost that our fixed-route bus service provides.

For route and schedule information, or any questions you may have about using the PSTA fixed-route bus, please call the PSTA InfoLine at (727) 540-1900.

DART Transportation Service

For eligible clients who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on fixed-route buses, PSTA offers a shared ride, door-to-door service which is often referred to as "Demand Response Transportation" or "DART." This service is also referred to as "ADA DART Service" because it is provided as part of our efforts to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA). The service is provided with sedans, and wheelchair-accessible vans. DART service operates in the same areas and during the same days and hours as the fixed-route bus services, without trip purpose, restrictions, or priorities. DART service must be reserved at least one day in advance.

If you still have questions after reading this DART Reference Guide, please call the PSTA Demand Response Transportation (DART) office at (727) 540-1800 (then, press 2 from the main menu).

How to Apply for DART Service

Individuals interested in using DART service must first be determined eligible for the service. The eligibility review considers each person's functional ability to use fixed-route buses. If a

disability or health condition prevents a person from using fixed-route buses under any conditions, that person might be determined “unconditionally eligible.” If a person can use fixed-route buses some of the time, but not at other times, that person may be determined “conditionally eligible” for those trips that cannot be completed by bus.

There are two ways to receive applications: (1) go online at www.psta.net, click on the DART menu, then click on Demand Response Application to download the application; or (2) call PSTA at (727) 540-1800, and follow the instructions for the “DART office” and “application request.” Leave your name (spell your last name), address, and phone number after the recorded message. A DART brochure and application will be mailed within five business days.

The first section of the application is to be completed by the applicant, or a representative on the applicant’s behalf. The second section is to be completed by the doctor to verify disabling conditions. The application is designed to gather information regarding an applicant’s disability and assessment of his/her environment and functional ability to use PSTA’s fixed-route bus. Once completed and signed, the application should be returned to PSTA for processing.

If a personal interview is required, the applicant will be contacted. A personal interview is designed to review the application and discuss the applicant’s travel abilities and needs in more detail. An applicant can also ask any questions they may have about the service. If transportation to the interview is needed, PSTA will make arrangements at no charge to the applicant.

After the completion of the application process, the applicant is notified in writing of his or her eligibility status within 21 days. If you do not agree with the decision that is made, you can appeal the decision within sixty-five (65) days of the date on the letter. For more information, see the Appeal Process section in this guide.

Request for Appeal

An applicant who wishes to dispute an eligibility decision is given a copy of the appeal process with the written response to the application. All responses are to be addressed to:

DART Appellate Reviews
PSTA
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

A written copy of the appeal process may be obtained by calling PSTA at (727) 540-1800.

Who Is Eligible For DART Service?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for DART services under one of the following categories:

Category 1- Eligibility (Unconditional Eligibility)

The first category of eligibility includes those persons who are unable to use fully accessible, fixed-route bus services.

Included in this category is:

“any individual with a disability who is unable, as a 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” [Section 37.123(e) (1) of the ADA regulations].

This applies to an individual who cannot independently negotiate the fixed-route bus system (board, ride, or disembark from a bus).

Category 2 - Eligibility (Conditional Eligibility)

The second category of eligibility includes:

“any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such an individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such a system” [Section 37.123 (e) (3) of the ADA regulations].

This applies to an individual who, because of his/her disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed-route bus system, and cannot access his/her final destination after disembarking from a fixed-route bus. Two important qualifiers to this category are included in the regulations. First, environmental conditions and architectural barriers not under the control of the public entity do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. Inconvenience in using the fixed-route bus system is not a basis for eligibility.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to clients who have a temporary disability that prevents them from using the PSTA bus system. Eligibility will be provided for the expected duration of the disability.

Service for Visitors

Visitors to the areas served by PSTA can use DART for 21 days a year by providing documentation that they have been determined eligible for similar ADA DART services with a

transit agency in their home community. Visitors who do not have this kind of eligibility because they live in areas without public transit service will be asked to submit an application for PSTA's DART service.

Eligibility for Children Five Years of Age and Under

Eligibility for children 5 years of age and under will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents must be able to submit evidence that they are unable to transport their child on the fixed-route bus, which provides service to children under 5 at no charge.

Recertification of Eligibility

Each DART client must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. Clients with unconditional eligibility will only be required to update their contact information. A form will be sent approximately sixty (60) days prior to eligibility expiration and must be completed and returned to PSTA prior to the eligibility expiration date. It may also be necessary from time to time, or if the condition of the disability changes, to re-evaluate an individual's eligibility. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. A client's letter of eligibility will indicate his/her DART eligibility expiration date. It is the client's responsibility to reapply for services prior to the eligibility expiration date. If a client fails to renew DART eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the re-certification process.

DART Service Area and Service Hours

The PSTA DART service is designed to be "comparable to" (or similar to) PSTA's fixed-route bus service. For this reason, service is only available to transport clients to and from locations which are within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile of a bus stop, during the same days and hours of PSTA's existing fixed-route bus service. Points of origin and destination not within this three-quarters (3/4) of a mile corridor are not eligible for ADA DART service and could require an additional fee as determined by PSTA's provider.

To find out if the places you want to travel to and from are covered by DART service, call PSTA's DART Office at (727) 540-1800, or look at the system map on our website at www.PSTA.net.

Sunday and Holiday Service

On Sunday, DART service is provided only in those areas where fixed-route bus service operates on Sunday. To find out if the places you want to travel to and from are serviced by PSTA fixed routes, call PSTA's InfoLine at (727) 540-1900, or review specific route schedules on our website at www.PSTA.net.

PSTA operates a Sunday schedule on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day

- July Fourth
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Fares

The one-way fare for DART service is twice the full cash bus fare. The fare must be paid when boarding the vehicle. Clients who do not have fare will not be transported. Fares can be paid in any of the following ways:

Cash – Exact fare only. Drivers do not carry change. Cash fares may be paid with coins or dollar bills.

DART single trip tickets – Each ticket is considered a valid form of payment for each one-way trip. Single-trip tickets may be purchased at the PSTA Administration Building, by mail, and through the online ticket store. To purchase tickets by mail call (727) 540-1800 and ask to speak with a representative regarding DART tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the DART option.

DART 10-ride punch ticket – If you are a frequent user of DART service, or don't always have exact change available, this ticket provides a convenient method of payment for ten (10) one-way trips. 10-Ride punch tickets may be purchased at the PSTA Administration Building, by mail, and through the online ticket store. To purchase tickets by mail call (727) 540-1800 and ask to speak with a representative regarding DART tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the DART option.

An additional fare may be required if a DART client lives out of the service area, or if the destination is outside of the service area. If an additional fare is required, notification of the extra fare will be given when your reservation is made.

No other passes are allowed as valid fare payment on PSTA's DART service.

Please note that all fares are set by the PSTA Board of Directors and are subject to change.

Note: Drivers are not permitted to accept tips.

Scheduling Rides on DART

How to Reserve a Ride

Clients may select the appropriate provider from among these authorized providers, and may call the vendor directly to make a reservation:

Cab Providers

Yellow Cab (727) 471-3278

United Taxi (727) 535-5555

Wheelchair Van Providers

Care Ride (727) 536-7433

Wheelchair Transport (727) 581-0000

Alternately, clients can be automatically routed to a vendor by calling PSTA at (727) 540-1897 to make reservations for sedan trips or (727) 540-1960 for wheelchair trips.

Before calling to make a trip reservation, have the following information in hand, to avoid delays:

- Your name, address, and phone number
- The name, address, and phone number of the destination, and any point of reference that might help the driver find the location
- The date, day, and time of the appointment
- The time to be picked up from that location
- Whether the passengers will have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), a guest, a service animal or guide dog for this trip
- Any other pertinent information that would help the contract carrier safely and comfortably serve the passenger

Once a client has provided the appointment time, the reservationist will inform the caller as to when the ride will arrive for pick up; drivers are given 30 minutes from that point as being “on time.” After all this information is provided, the reservationist will summarize the reservation, repeating what was understood as the request.

Please do not schedule the same trip with more than one provider. Doing so will result in a “No Show” charge, and could potentially lead to the suspension of DART service.

Clients are encouraged to keep a record of the date and time, and the name of the reservationist. As a convenience, a log is available at the end of this manual so that a passenger can keep a handy reference of frequent destinations, addresses and phone numbers. It is helpful to use any log, calendar, or journal, as this will assist the passenger, PSTA, and the provider in researching any concern regarding scheduling errors that may occur.

When to Reserve a Ride

A reservation for a DART ride can be made from one (1) to thirty (30) days in advance of a trip. The DART Scheduling office takes trip requests every day. Ride requests are accepted from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, trip requests are accepted from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Please do not schedule a trip several days in advance if there is any doubt of actually going or the exact time to leave. Reserving rides that are later cancelled reduces efficiency and can significantly increase the cost of the service, and could potentially lead to the suspension of DART service.

Please do not schedule the same trip with more than one provider. Doing so will result in a “No Show” charge, and could potentially lead to the suspension of DART service.

Scheduling Tip: During the busiest scheduling times of the day (early mornings and late afternoons), a caller may be placed on hold until there is a reservation agent that can assist. It is preferable, if possible, to place your trip requests during the middle of the day, when the phone lines are less busy.

“Ready Time” and “Ready Window”

After providing the above trip information, the reservation agent will inform the client of the trip options. Because DART is a shared-ride service, and other clients may need to be scheduled on the same vehicle, it may be necessary to get to the appointment a little early or pick up for return a little later than requested. The provider will make every effort to offer a pick-up and drop-off time that is as close as possible to the times requested.

The actual pick-up time that is offered and accepted will be the “Ready Time.” The reservation agent will then note that a DART vehicle might arrive up to 30 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. This is to accommodate unexpected traffic conditions, weather conditions, or other delays and schedule changes. It is important that a client is ready to meet the DART vehicle within five (5) minutes of the driver’s arrival, to avoid delays in the carrier’s schedule.

To ensure that the scheduling options that are offered will meet your needs, PSTA has established the following guidelines for the DART scheduling process:

- Trip reservations can be made up to 30 days in advance. In order to accommodate as many clients as possible, pick-up times will be negotiated up to one hour before or after the pick-up time requested by the client. Pick-up times in excess of one hour however, must be agreed to by the client (i.e., the client has the right to require a pick-up time within an hour before or after his/her requested time).
- Reservations are to be made no later than 5:00 PM the day before the trip.

- If a ride must be changed, the client will be notified within 2 hours in advance of the original confirmed time.
- To cancel transportation services, clients must call at least two hours in advance of the scheduled pick-up time, or the trip will be deemed a “no-show”.

Out of courtesy for other DART clients who are scheduled in the same vehicle, the driver will wait no longer than five (5) minutes after arriving. The vehicle will depart when the five-minute period is up. You are encouraged to check your clock with the reservation agent when calling in a trip request to make sure the times match.

Clients must be ready to depart at any time during the thirty (30) minute “Ready Window” described when the reservation is made. If a client has not boarded the vehicle within five (5) minutes after the vehicle arrives, the vehicle will depart and a “no show” will be assessed to the passenger’s record. If the trip is the originating trip of the day (first trip of the day), a vehicle will not be sent back. Exceptions are made if there was an error in the provider’s scheduling or the driver was at the wrong location.

Requesting Rides Outside the Service Area

If a client needs to travel outside the DART service area (for example, from Pinellas County to Hillsborough or Pasco Counties), the trip will require an extra cash fare. Please call the provider to determine the charges for transportation outside the service area.

Scheduling Multiple Trips

DART clients can schedule up to three (3) round trips per call. If a client has more than three round trips to schedule, please call back to schedule the other trips. This limit on scheduling has been set to minimize the telephone hold times for all customers. It can sometimes take 5 to 8 minutes to schedule each trip, or even longer if a client has conditional eligibility and the trip requires a transfer to regular fixed-route service.

Subscription Service

If a client needs a ride to the same place, at the same time, at least once a week, and the trip is for acute medical treatment (e.g., dialysis or chemotherapy) or employment, subscription service is available. This service allows a client to schedule these recurring trips with one call and be automatically placed on the schedule each week. Ask the reservationist about this option.

If a client is receiving Subscription Service, it is important to let the reservation agent know immediately if a ride is not needed on a particular day. This way, the provider can make a change in their schedules. For example, if a client has scheduled a Subscription Service to work, keep the provider updated on holiday or vacation times, to avoid drivers making unnecessary trips.

Depending on demand, it may sometimes be necessary to limit the overall number of subscription trips. This is to ensure that there are drivers available to meet all clients’ needs.

Feeder Service (Conditional Eligibility)

If a conditionally eligible DART client is capable of using fixed-route buses, but has difficulty getting to and from the nearest bus stop, “feeder service” may be provided which takes the client to and from a nearby bus stop. Feeder Service trips must be scheduled at least one day in advance. Feeder Service registrants may receive a free PSTA 31-Day Unlimited Ride bus pass each month. If needed, travel training can be provided in order to determine the best pick-up/drop-off point, and bus routes that take a client to their destination.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

Clients needing to change an existing reservation must call the provider before 5:00 PM, the day before the scheduled trip.

Tell the reservation agent that a change needs to be made in the scheduled trip. The reservation agent will ask you:

1. First and last name
2. The date and time of the trip that is being changed
3. The new date and time you would like to schedule

The reservation agent will always try to accommodate a client’s needs, but changes to the original order may result in adjustment to the pick-up times.

Note: The provider cannot change pick-up times, or pick-up/drop-off locations on the day of the ride.

If an Appointment is Running Late

Everyone has occasional circumstances outside of their control that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If the appointment is running later than was expected, and there is a chance that the client will not be ready for a scheduled return trip, call the provider as soon as possible. The request will be coordinated with the Dispatchers, who stay in radio contact with drivers. The caller will be asked:

1. The client’s name, and
2. The time of the scheduled return trip pick-up.

Every effort will be made to adjust the return trip pick-up time. Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of up to two (2) hours before another vehicle is available to accommodate a client’s adjusted trip.

Remember to allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending another vehicle.

NOTE: If a vehicle is sent and the client is not ready, a “No Show” will be assessed. If a client calls to change an appointment because they are running late, an assessment may occur in accordance with the “No-Show Policy” for the scheduled trip.

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

Late cancellations are costly to the provider and affect their ability to provide that trip opportunity to other clients. If a ride is scheduled that is no longer needed, please call the provider as soon as possible to cancel, but no later than 5:00 PM the day before your scheduled trip. Trips cancelled at least 2 hours in advance of the scheduled pick up time will not be assessed “No Show” penalties.

During regular business hours, trip cancellations can be taken by the provider’s reservation agents. After business hours, the dispatcher will take the call.

No Show Policy

“No Shows” cost thousands of dollars each year and inconvenience other clients since they cause delays that affect the drivers’ schedules. To emphasize the importance of avoiding “No Shows,” PSTA, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) implementing regulations, developed the following policy, which is included with every eligibility letter:

No Shows

The efficiency of demand response service is dependent upon clients being ready for their scheduled rides and operators making every effort to arrive at the pick-up location in a timely manner. To provide timely service, accommodate as many clients as possible, and ensure that the cost of the service does not exceed available funding, operators are not permitted to wait longer than five (5) minutes past the scheduled pick-up time.

“No Shows” typically occur when an operator arrives at the scheduled time and location, announces his arrival, but the client is not present and did not cancel the trip. Operators must wait at least five (5) minutes for any client who cannot be located.

The provider will automatically cancel the return trip if the passenger is a “No Show,” unless the client calls within 30 minutes of the “No Show” stating that the return trip should be maintained.

Scheduling the same trip with more than one vendor, known as double booking, is prohibited. Passengers will be billed for a “No Show” for the duplicated trip.

Failing to cancel a trip at least two (2) hours in advance of the scheduled pick-up is considered a “No Show.”

Billing for “No Shows”

Clients are billed within 30 days for each “No Show” occurrence. The billing letter will identify a contact person with the provider who can provide additional information in the event a client believes the “No Show” billing is in error. Every effort is made to consider special circumstances or events beyond the control of the client. Service can be discontinued if a client is in arrears for “No Show” billings.

Suspensions for Repeated “No Shows”

PSTA DART clients may be suspended for a pattern or practice of repeated “No Shows.” Each “No Show” will be counted and the corresponding actions will occur:

- Three “No Show” occurrences in any three month period will result in a Suspension Warning Letter and follow-up phone call.
- Six “No Shows” in any 6-month period will result in a two-week suspension.
- More than 6 “No Shows” in 6-month period will result in a one-month suspension.

Resolving Disputes

Every attempt will be made to informally resolve disagreements concerning specific “No Shows” by encouraging clients to discuss with the provider any details of a “No Show” occurrence. Suspension of service for repeated “No Shows” will include the opportunity for the client to submit a written appeal, which must describe how the “No Show” occurrences that resulted in the suspension were outside the control of the client.

Appeal Service Suspension or Termination

A client who wishes to dispute any suspension or termination of service may do so in writing, addressed to:

DART Appellate Reviews
PSTA
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

“No Show” Summary

A “No Show” occurs:

- If a client neglects to cancel a scheduled pick-up within two (2) hours of the scheduled pick-up time, or
- If a client is not ready to board the vehicle within five (5) minutes of the driver’s arrival, or
- If a client double books the same trip with multiple carriers.

If a client is declared a “No Show” by the driver at their point of origin (e.g., home), another DART vehicle will not be dispatched to pick up the client. If the client is declared a “No Show” by the driver for the return trip, the provider will schedule a return trip upon request, and as schedule permits. NOTE: It may require up to a two (2) hour wait for the next available vehicle. If a client has been taken to a destination by a DART vehicle, and a return trip has been scheduled, the provider will make sure that the client is taken home.

Failure to cancel rides that are no longer needed will result in assessments as outlined by the “No Show” Policy. Each trip that is a “No Show” is assessed independently in accordance with ADA regulations. Clients are assessed for each “No Show” occurrence, even if there are multiple “No Shows” for that day. Efforts are made by the providers to decrease the “No Show” occurrences by cancelling any other scheduled trips following a “No Show,” unless the client has notified the provider within 30 minutes of the “No Show” that they want the other trips scheduled for that day.

When the DART Vehicle Arrives

The DART driver will park in a residential driveway, or a parking lot, as space allows. The vehicle may arrive before a scheduled pick-up time; however, the client is not required to leave the location until the scheduled pick-up time. The driver will announce his/her arrival, but must stay within sight of his vehicle. If a client lives in a multi-floor unit, they must come to the ground floor prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Please be ready to go when the vehicle arrives, so that the driver can stay on schedule for all clients. (Passenger should be visible to the operator.) Wait in an area where one can see or hear the vehicle arrive, or where the driver will be able to see the client.

NOTE: The vehicle may arrive anytime within the 30-minute “Ready Window.” Drivers will only wait five (5) minutes after arrival. If a client is not ready, the driver may leave after the 5-minute wait, resulting in a “No Show” charge.

Example: A client is scheduled for a 9:00 AM pick-up time. This means that the client should be ready for the vehicle to arrive between 9:00 AM and 9:30 AM. If the vehicle arrives at 9:05 AM, the driver will wait for the client until 9:10 AM. If the vehicle arrives at 8:50 AM, the passenger is not required to board the vehicle until 9:00 AM.

Driver Assistance

Drivers are not permitted to lose sight of their vehicle.

Drivers will

- assist clients to and from the threshold of a location
- assist clients in boarding and de-boarding a vehicle
- operate a wheelchair ramp or lift
- assist with the securement of wheelchairs and mobility devices
- assist with fastening of seat belts

It is the client's responsibility to carry his/her own belongings. If the client is unable to carry these items, a personal care attendant (PCA) may travel with the client, at no charge. Clients are limited to three (3) grocery bags which they can carry on their laps when seated.

If a client brings more than three (3) grocery bags, or causes the delay of the departure of the vehicle due to the extra baggage being carried, the client will be assessed a "No Show."

Drivers do not provide assistance in loading and unloading packages. If you need assistance getting packages to the door of your destination, arrange to have someone assist upon your arrival at the destination. A rolling cart waiting by the destination's door is also helpful.

Paying the Fare

Fares must be paid upon boarding the vehicle. Exact fare is required; the drivers do not make change. If the correct fare is not paid, the driver may refuse to provide the ride, and a "No Show" will be assessed.

DART single-ride and multi-ride tickets are available for purchase at PSTA. To purchase tickets by mail call (727) 540-1800 and ask to speak with a representative regarding DART tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the DART option.

To Check on a Ride

Unexpected delays occur due to road construction, traffic conditions, inclement weather, or occasional mechanical problems. If a DART vehicle has not arrived within 30 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, call the provider. A reservationist will speak with the dispatcher, who will radio the driver and provide an estimated time of arrival. While making your call, stay within sight of the pick-up location since the vehicle may arrive while you holding.

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who assists a DART client with travel, appointments, or activities. One (1) PCA may travel with a client at no charge. When making a reservation, inform the provider that a PCA will be traveling with the client. This assures that there will be room in the vehicle for the client, the PCA, and other scheduled clients. PCAs must have the same origin and destination as the client.

NOTE: A DART client cannot travel as a PCA for another DART client. Both will be required to pay the DART fare.

Guests/Companions

A guest/companion is someone travelling along to share the trip, not someone brought to assist the DART client. Guests/companions must pay a fare when accompanying a DART client, and would board and de-board the vehicle at the same place and time as the DART client.

Passengers using DART service are entitled to bring one guest/companion. Additional guests/companions are accommodated and pay the DART fare only if there is enough space in the vehicle. When making a trip request, tell the reservationist that you will be traveling with a guest/companion. Drivers cannot add guests who do not have a reservation.

Children

All children under five (5) years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Children under 5 years cannot ride unattended. If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, one child under 5 years travels at no charge.

Children under 5 years of age are considered for DART eligibility based on the functional ability of both the accompanying adult and child (as a team) to use fixed-route bus service. When an eligible child is traveling with an adult who is serving as a PCA, a fare is paid for the child, and the adult attendant rides at no charge.

The adult accompanying a child is responsible for the child. Drivers can assist with securing a child's seatbelt, but drivers will not secure a child's car seat. They are also not permitted to carry a child on or off the vehicle. If assistance with the child is needed, please bring someone else along to help you.

Wheelchairs, Scooters, and Other Mobility Devices

DART vehicles are designed to accommodate "common" wheelchairs and mobility devices. "Common" wheelchairs are 3- or 4-wheeled mobility devices which meet the following criteria:

- Maximum 30 inches wide, measured two inches from the floor, including hand-wheels;
- Maximum 48 inches long, measured two inches from the floor, including footrests, baskets, and oxygen tank holders, and

- When occupied, weigh no more than 600 pounds.

If your wheelchair or mobility device exceeds these dimensions, transportation with DART service will be denied until you are able to obtain a mobility device that meets these criteria. An assessment may be necessary if there is a question regarding the compliancy of a mobility device.

Wheelchair Securement and Seat Belt Policy

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that mobility devices are properly secured. All wheelchairs and scooters must be secured in the vehicle's four point securement system at all times during the ride. All clients are required to wear a seat belt in accordance with Florida law. (If a client's mobility device has a built in lap belt, an additional lap belt is not required. The lap belt should be secured before the client boards the vehicle, and may be removed after the client de-boards at their destination.) Any client who refuses to use the required securement devices will not be transported, and the client will be assessed a "No Show" for the trip.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on all PSTA vehicles. The driver will assist in securing this equipment in the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to assist client in the use of the equipment. If assistance with portable life-support equipment is necessary, please arrange to have a PCA on the trip.

Service Animals

Clients may travel with a service animal. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals that are individually trained to work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Please inform the reservationist if traveling with a service animal.

The client is responsible for the care and supervision of a service animal while on board. If a client is traveling with a service animal:

- The animal must be on a leash or in a container, remain under the client's control and behave appropriately. The animal cannot display aggressive behavior toward other people or animals.
- The service animal must remain at the client's feet or lap. The animal may not sit on a client seat.
- The client is responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well groomed.
- DART drivers do not handle or secure service animals.
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians, and rodents are not considered service animals and must be kept in enclosed carriers/containers.

Packages and Personal Items

DART service allows clients to carry up to three (3) grocery bags, or a load comparable to the size and weight of three grocery bags that could be held on a client's lap. The limitations are the same as for those who ride on the bus. Because drivers are not required to assist clients with loading and unloading of these packages and/or personal items, it is important that a client unable to manage the packages themselves travel with a PCA.

Personal, two-wheeled, collapsible grocery carts are permitted. The client must unload the packages into the trunk before loading the empty cart. Please tell the reservationist if a client will bring a cart on the scheduled trip, in order to allow for room in the vehicle. Clients in wheelchairs will often have their PCA hold the cart in the back of the van.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency, please remain calm and follow the instructions of the driver.

A client who becomes ill, or notices another client who may be ill, should inform the driver immediately.

If a client, due to their disability, is supposed to be met when the client reaches their destination, and the person meeting the passenger is not there, the driver will notify the dispatcher, who will make a call to the client's emergency contact. If the emergency contact cannot be notified, the proper authorities will be notified.

Service and Inclement Weather

PSTA reserves the right to suspend, modify, or cancel DART service during times of hazardous weather conditions. If severe weather is imminent, clients will be notified if DART service may be suspended.

Community Disaster Emergency Procedures

Preparing for a community emergency such as a major storm event, may result in trip prioritization. If PSTA's fixed-route bus service is suspended, modified, or cancelled, DART service may be suspended, modified, or cancelled. If a client is at a location away from home during the suspension of service, every effort will be made to get the passenger home.

By keeping emergency contact information up-to-date, PSTA and our providers are able to provide better service to our clients in times of emergency. As part of our emergency preparations, reservationists will periodically ask you to update your emergency contact information, including telephone and cell phone numbers, and the emergency contact's name and phone number(s).

Passenger Courtesy and Conduct

These common-sense rules ensure the safety of all clients and drivers:

- No smoking in the vehicles.
- Clients shall maintain appropriate and reasonable personal hygiene.
- Shirts and shoes are to be worn.
- No eating or drinking on board (unless required for health reasons).
- Abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions are not allowed.
- Fares are paid before the passenger boards the vehicle.
- Service animals are the responsibility of the owner. Drivers and other clients must refrain from touching the service animal.
- Parents are responsible for the children in their care.
- Use of radios or other music players is prohibited.
- Strollers and two-wheeled grocery carts are to be loaded and unloaded by the client, or a personal care attendant (PCA).
- Clients are limited to no more than three (3) grocery bags. Clients or their personal care attendant (PCA) are responsible for loading and unloading the groceries.

Clients, PCAs, or travel companions may be subject to suspension of service if they violate these rules of courtesy and conduct; engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to a driver or client; engage in any other illegal activities; engage in activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of DART services; or engages in violence, illegal conduct, or seriously disruptive behavior.

Any client, PCA, or travel companion who is suspended from service will be notified in writing, and will be given the opportunity to appeal the suspension. PSTA reserves the right to *require* that a personal care attendant (PCA) travel with a client, in lieu of suspension.

Comments and Complaints

PSTA welcomes feedback, comments, and complaints regarding Demand Response (DART) service. Please call (727) 540-1900, visit our website www.psta.net, or write to:

PSTA
ATTN: Demand Response Transportation
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

To allow us to follow-up on your comment or complaint, please be specific and provide us with the following information:

- Your name, address, and phone number
- The date, time, and location of the incident
- The vehicle number and/or driver's name

- If concerning office staff, please provide the employee's name, the date, and the time of your conversation
- A detailed explanation of the incident or suggestion

Follow-up is conducted on each comment received. The person offering the comment will be contacted by phone or in writing.

Frequently Asked Questions

I live in subsidized housing, and I receive a reduction in my rent if I can prove that part of my income goes to transportation. Why can't I get a printout of the rides I take with DART?

The DART service provided by PSTA is heavily subsidized. The fare clients pay is only a co-payment; the balance of the cost of the trip is paid by PSTA. PSTA does not provide receipts or printouts to either bus or DART clients.

Ten of my closest friends and I live in a nursing home and we want to go as a group on an outing sponsored by our nursing home. When we try to make a reservation, the trip is refused. Why?

Whether or not clients are calling in the trips individually or as a group, this outing would be considered a charter service trip. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations clearly establish that charter service trips are the purview of private, for-profit transportation companies. As a public transit system that is funded by taxpayers, PSTA is prohibited from operating in a manner which competes with private providers that operate without public subsidies. This prohibition includes Demand Response Transportation (DART) service.

Pinellas County has several transportation providers that are willing and able to accommodate residents for group outings. You can find them listed in your telephone book and should contact them for group rates.

I go to the store twice a month. Why can't I bring home more than three bags of groceries?

DART service is a multi-load service, and it is essential that there is adequate space to accommodate all clients for each vehicle trip.

If you have more than the three bags allowed, you should make other arrangements for your return trip (pay full cash fare by cab, or arrange for a ride from a friend or family member).

When I go to the pharmacy or the bank, it only takes five minutes to get what I need. Can't the driver wait for me and take me home, or go through the drive-thru?

DART clients are picked up at a prearranged point-of-origin and dropped off at the point-of-destination. Drivers are responsible for picking up other clients throughout the day on a

Important Phone Numbers

For applications, and eligibility verification (727) 540-1800

PSTA fixed route and schedule information: (727) 540-1900

For comments or complaints: (727) 540-1900

For trip reservations:

Cab Providers

Yellow Cab (727) 471-3278

United Taxi (727) 535-5555

Wheelchair Van Providers

Care Ride (727) 536-7433

Wheelchair Transport (727) 581-0000

Alternately, passengers can be automatically routed to a vendor by calling PSTA at (727) 540-1897 to make reservations for sedan trips or (727) 540-1960 for wheelchair trips.

DART Quick Reference

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) travels with passengers who require special assistance or cannot travel independently.

Fares are paid when boarding, and exact change is required. Checks and credit cards are not accepted.

Operators/drivers do not carry packages, parcels, luggage, or groceries.

Driver assistance is limited to boarding and leaving the vehicle and to/from building entrances, if necessary.

You are limited to 3 bags of groceries that you must handle yourself.

Operators are not permitted to wait more than 5 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Failing to cancel a trip at least 2-hours in advance of scheduled pick-up results in a "No Show."