

ACCESS Reference Guide



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Meeting Our Customers' Travel Needs

This ACCESS Reference Guide provides brief information about PSTA's 100% accessible, bus service, as well as detailed information about PSTA's ADA paratransit service called ACCESS: eligibility, operations, fares, and frequently requested information. Reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures will be made on all services to ensure accessibility to passengers with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.

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.

Designated 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 Flamingo Cards, for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. These cards allow an eligible individual to travel at a discounted rate on the fixed-route buses. These fares are also available for cash and card tap riders. 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 or request free travel training by calling (727) 540-1888 option 4.

ACCESS Transportation Service

For eligible individuals 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 "ACCESS." 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. ACCESS 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. ACCESS service must be reserved at least one day in advance.

If you still have questions after reading this ACCESS Reference Guide, please call the PSTA mobility office at (727) 540-1888 option 4.

How to Apply for ACCESS Service

Individuals interested in using ACCESS 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) call 727-540-1888 option 4 and request a mailed application. If you call and receive voicemail, leave your name (spell your last name), address, and phone number, staff will call back to explain the different mobility options so you can apply for services we offer that meet your needs. (2) Request an application be emailed to you by e-mailing access@psta.net.

The application is to be completed by the applicant, or a representative on the applicant's behalf. You must fill out the application completely, making sure to add your medical professional's information on the medical verification page. 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.

A personal consultation 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.

PSTA ACCESS Application Process

Apply to see if you are eligible for PSTA Access. This process is designed to be simple!

Step 1: Call (727) 540-1888, Option 4 to request an application, which is sent via email, mail, or fax.

Step 2: Complete and sign the application and return it to PSTA.

Step 3: Once PSTA has received your completed application, (7 business days if mailing the application back, 1-2 business days for returning the application by email), please call the same phone number, 727-540-1888, Option 4, to schedule a 30-minute mobility phone consultation. Request relay service or language translation service if needed. You may have a designated representative join you for the consultation.

Step 4: PSTA staff will call you at the scheduled time for your mobility phone consultation. Be sure the applicant or designated representative is ready to answer the call and provide thorough, current information about your mobility. If more information is needed, PSTA staff will then send a request for medical verification and/or in-person assessment.

Step 5: Once the steps above are complete, an eligibility determination letter will be mailed within 21 days. If this should not happen, you will be given Presumptive Eligibility until a decision has been communicated to you.

Eligibility for PSTA Access service is based on how a person's disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) affects daily life activities. PSTA Access does not make eligibility decisions based on the type of disability you have, your medical history, or a specific diagnosis by a physician. Rather, PSTA Access determines if you can travel to a bus stop, board a bus, and navigate the system. We encourage people to use the regular PSTA bus service whenever possible to ensure that PSTA Access will only be used by those who truly need the service.

Who is Eligible for ACCESS Service?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for ACCESS 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.**

With conditional eligibility, the customer is determined to be able to ride the bus when the bus stops to be used can be reached by the customer, and to use PSTA Access when the stops cannot be reached.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to individuals 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. Eligibility will be reevaluated when the duration is complete.

Service for Visitors

Visitor Eligibility is available 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. Residents of counties other than Pinellas can use their 21 days of non-consecutive ACCESS service by completing one of the following:

- A. Provide documentation that they have been determined eligible for similar ADA paratransit service by a transit agency elsewhere in the United States; or,
- B. Provide a signed letter stating they need ACCESS service during their visit to Pinellas County due to the limitations of their disability by email ACCESS@PSTA.NET

This information can be faxed to PSTA at (727) 540-1916. Please include a Pinellas County address and phone number (or cell), along with the dates they are planning to visit. Visitors requesting more than 21 days' service per twelve-month period will need to submit an ACCESS application for non-visitor eligibility consideration.

Eligibility for Children Eight Years of Age and Under

Children under age nine are considered for ACCESS 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.

Eligibility for children under age nine 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 ACCESS individual must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. Individuals with unconditional eligibility will only be required to update their contact information. A call will be sent approximately forty-five (45) days prior to eligibility expiration and must be recertified with 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. An individual's letter of eligibility will indicate his/her ACCESS eligibility expiration date. It is the individual's responsibility to reapply for services prior to the eligibility expiration date. If an

individual fails to renew ACCESS eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the re-certification process.

Request for Appeal

If an applicant does not agree with the decision that is made, the applicant can appeal the decision within sixty-five (65) days of the date on the letter. An applicant who wishes to dispute an eligibility decision should refer to the appeal process section within their written eligibility determination response letter, which states the following process:

1. Those persons who have been denied ADA paratransit (Access) service and wish to appeal, must submit a written appeal. Persons with disabilities which prevent them from providing a written appeal may submit an appeal by calling 727-540-1888.
2. The period for an appeal lasts for a total of 65 days from the date of the denial letter. Persons who are current ADA paratransit (Access) users will be permitted to continue to utilize paratransit service for a period of 30 days from the date of the denial letter. For this reason, persons who wish to appeal should begin the process as soon as possible.
3. Persons who submit documented appeals shall have their appeals reviewed by an independent third-party Appellate Review Board. All appellants are invited to appear in person to present their appeal, and to bring an advocate with them if desired. The person will receive a call and written notification of the appeal hearing, which will be scheduled within 30 days of receipt of the appeal request. Transportation is available to the appeal hearing, if required. Staff may choose to reinstate these persons prior to the full hearing, should sufficient information be provided to warrant a reversal of the denial. Information may also be gathered informally through in-person assessments arranged by PSTA.
4. Each appellant is notified in writing within 30 days after the appeal as to the outcome of their appeal and the reasons for the decision.
If this should not happen, you will be given Presumptive Eligibility until a decision has been communicated to you.

Please note that the appellate process does not automatically result in a reversal of the original denial of eligibility, unless there is clearly a condition which prevents an individual from utilizing the PSTA bus system.

All appeal requests are to be addressed to:

Mobility Dept. Appellate Reviews
PSTA
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
Access@psta.net 727-540-1888, Option 4

ACCESS Service Area and Service Hours

The PSTA ACCESS 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 individuals to and from locations which are within three-quarters 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 of a mile corridor may not be eligible for PSTA ACCESS service.

To find out if the places you want to travel to and from are covered by ACCESS service, call PSTA’s ACCESS Office at (727) 540-1888 option 2, or use the PSTA Access app.

Public demand responsive service is available in several regions where bus service is not available. These services are fully accessible. Visit www.psta.net or call 727-540-1888 for details.

PSTA coordinates with Hillsborough and Pasco Counties upon request for ADA paratransit riders to transfer at the county line between their equivalent services and ours: Tarpon Mall, the Sponge Docks, and Publix in Oldsmar. PSTA also offers a service called TD Tampa Bay which provides one-seat rides from anywhere in Pinellas to anywhere in Pasco or Hillsborough, for PSTA’s ADA paratransit eligible individuals who apply for and are found eligible for this service.

Sunday and Holiday Service

On Sunday, ACCESS 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 ACCESS service is twice the full cash bus fare. The fare must be paid when boarding the vehicle. Individuals who do not have fare will not be transported. Fares can be paid in any of the following ways:

Cash – Drivers will make change for up to a \$5.00 bill, if necessary. Cash fares may be paid with coins or dollar bills.

ACCESS 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) 540-1888 option 5 and ask to speak with a representative regarding ACCESS tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the ACCESS option.

ACCESS 10-ride punch ticket – If you are a frequent user of ACCESS 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) 540-1888 option 5 and ask to speak with a representative regarding ACCESS tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the ACCESS option.

Credit or debit card can be used to pay for Access rides if saved in the confidential computer system or PSTA Access app. Once entered, the card will be saved to your ACCESS profile for future use at your direction.

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

Scheduling Rides on ACCESS

How to Reserve a Ride

Call PSTA ACCESS at 727-540-1888, OPTION 2

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

- Your name, address, DOB, and phone number, advise if riding with wheelchair or scooter
- 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 trip, and whether the preference is to have an on-time pick-up, or an on-time drop-off (when you need to arrive by a certain time),
- The return trip time to be picked up from that location
- Whether the passengers will have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), one or two guests, or a service animal, or a child seat for this trip (maximum of two other people per trip)
- Any other pertinent information that would help the contract carrier to safely and comfortably serve the passenger

The reservationist will inform the caller as to when the ride will arrive for pick up, expressed as a 30-minute window of time. If the requested time is not available, a time will be offered that is within one hour before or after the requested time. The reservationist will summarize the reservation to confirm your trip.

Individuals should record the date and time of the trip and enter it into their calendar. Rides can be tracked in the PSTA Access app, or by calling PSTA.

When to Reserve a Ride

A reservation for a ACCESS ride can be made from one (1) to six (6) days in advance of a trip. The ACCESS 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.

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 (10:00 AM to 2:00 PM), when the phone lines are less busy. For twenty-four (24) hour service, use the **PSTA ACCESS app**.

Downloading the PSTA ACCESS App

- **DO NOT** click Register.
- **ALWAYS** click Login, your information is already in the app system.
- You can ask for the PSTA Access App Guide to show you how to schedule, see trip, and cancel your ride.

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

- Trip reservations can be made up to six (6) days in advance. In order to accommodate as many individuals as possible, pick-up times will be negotiated up to one hour before or after the pick-up time requested by the individual. Pick-up times in excess of one hour however, must be agreed to by the individual (i.e., the individual 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.
- To cancel transportation services, individuals must call at least two hours in advance of the scheduled pick-up time, or the trip may be deemed a “no-show”.
- You can also cancel trips two (2) hours in advance and see cancelled trips on PSTA ACCESS app.
- You can also receive notifications on your rides.

Individuals must be ready to depart at any time during the thirty (30) minute “Ready Window” described when the reservation is made. If an individual has not boarded the vehicle within five (5) minutes after the vehicle arrives, the vehicle will depart and a “no show” may 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 later for this trip. Exceptions are made if there was an error in the provider’s scheduling or the driver was at the wrong location.

Travel Time

“Travel time” is how much time passes from the actual pick-up time to the actual drop-off time. For ADA paratransit service (Access), travel time is meant to be compared with the time the same trip would take by bus. In order to accommodate additional riders, the following travel time guidelines are provided to assist reservationists and passengers. When scheduling a trip, first allow for the 30-minute “Ready Window”. Then allow for enough travel time for yourself and other passengers along the route, based upon trip distance and time of day, using the following maximum travel time criteria:

Up to 3 miles = 1 hour 30 minutes, 1 hour 45 minutes during rush hour
4-7 miles = 1 hour 45 minutes, 1 hour 67 minutes during rush hour
8-11 miles = 2 hours, 2 and a half hours during rush hour
12-15 miles = 2 and a half hours, 2 hours 45 minutes during rush hour
More than 15 miles = 3 hours, 3 and a half hours during rush hour

Scheduling Multiple Trips

ACCESS individuals can schedule up to three (3) round trips per call. If an individual 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 an individual has conditional eligibility and the trip requires a transfer to regular fixed-route service.

Subscription Service

If an individual needs to take the same trip at the same time one or more times every week, then subscription service also known as “standing orders” is available. This service allows an individual to schedule these recurring trips with one call and be automatically placed on the schedule each week. Ask the reservationist about this option.

If an individual 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 an individual has scheduled a Subscription Service to work, keep the provider updated on holiday or vacation times, to avoid drivers making unnecessary trips.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

Individuals needing to change an existing reservation must call PSTA before 5:00 PM, the day before the scheduled trip at 727-540-1888 option 2.

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

1. The individual's name and DOB.
2. The date and time of the trip that is being changed.
3. The new date and time you would like to be scheduled.

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

Note: PSTA 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 individual 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 individual's name and DOB
2. Client needs to call as soon as they know the rider will be late.
3. The time of the scheduled return trip pick-up.
4. Team will adjust the pick-up time accordingly.

No-Show Policy

A No Show occurs when the Access vehicle arrives on-time but the rider does not board the vehicle within five minutes of its arrival. The No Show will only be considered towards No Show notifications and suspension if the No Show is not beyond the passenger's control.

Circumstances Beyond Passenger Control

There are several circumstances where an ACCESS passenger is a No-Show for a scheduled trip. Each No-Show is to be carefully reviewed to ensure that a No-Show is not credited to a passenger, due to circumstances beyond the passenger's control. In fact, it is important to review No-Shows on a case-by-case basis. The following are situations that are deemed to be beyond the control of the ACCESS passenger:

- Family emergency
- Sudden personal illness
- Personal Care Attendant (PCA) did not arrive or was too late to assist the passenger
- Passenger's mobility aid failed

Other situations where ACCESS service provision resulted in a "missed trip" **are not** counted as an ACCESS passenger No-Show. Such situations include the following:

- Late ACCESS vehicle arrival (after the 30-minute pickup window)
- ACCESS vehicle never arrived.
- ACCESS driver did not follow proper procedures to locate the passenger.
- Timely trip cancellation: however, the cancellation was not recorded correctly or was not transmitted to the ACCESS driver in a timely manner.
- Other circumstances independent of the passenger where service provision did not occur, resulting in a "missed trip."

Each ACCESS passenger is encouraged to contact PSTA any time that they receive a No-Show notification and identify all No-Show trips that are beyond the passenger's control. It is important for PSTA staff to carefully investigate No-Show trip occurrences and ensure that they are legitimate, particularly if the passenger has a pattern or practice of repeated No-Shows and a service suspension could be imposed. No-Show information will be conveyed to ACCESS passengers in No-Show notifications as follows:

- 1st month of three or more No Shows = No Show Warning
- 2nd consecutive month of three or more No Shows = Pre-Suspension
- 3rd consecutive month of three or more No Shows:
 - Pre-Suspension if No Shows total < 10% of total Access trips that month;
 - Suspension if No Shows total 10% or more of all Access trips that month.

The first service suspension will be for one week. The second service suspension within a 12-month period will be for two weeks, and the third service suspension within a 12-month period will be for a month.

Trips After No-Show

If an ACCESS passenger misses a scheduled outbound trip, the rider still has the right to take Access trips scheduled for later that day. PSTA has a No Stranding policy, so even if the rider got to their destination on their own, PSTA will honor their return trip reservation to get them home. Each leg of a trip is treated separately.

Since many valid No Shows are due to the passenger being unable to travel as planned, riders are strongly encouraged to follow PSTA's ride cancellation policy. After a No Show, it is recommended for the rider to contact PSTA as soon as possible to either confirm or cancel remaining trip legs that day as needed. Even without such notice, these later trip legs will be available for the rider to take.

No-Shows are Different than "Missed Trips"

The ADA distinguishes between trips where the passenger is not available at the pre-scheduled pick-up time and location (No-Shows) and trips where the passenger is available, and service was not provided by PSTA contract carriers (Missed Trips).

It is the responsibility of PSTA to ensure that scheduled trips are provided to ACCESS passengers. If, for instance, the ACCESS vehicle arrives outside the 30-minute pickup window, and the passenger cannot complete their trip, it is not a No-Show. This is also true if the ACCESS vehicle never arrives, or if the vehicle arrives outside of the 30-minute pickup window and the passenger is not there or decides not to take the trip.

No-Show Procedures

PSTA and PSTA's contract carriers will continue to work with riders in a positive way to reduce no-shows. The PSTA No-Show administrative procedures include these steps:

1. At the end of each month, PSTA staff will generate a report identifying riders with three or more no-shows that month.
2. These ACCESS passengers with 10% or more No-Show rate will have their No-Show trips thoroughly reviewed to exclude trips that were actual coding errors, "missed trips," or already identified as beyond the rider's control.
3. After removing the exclusions, if there are three or more No Shows, the rider may receive a No-Show notification with how to contact PSTA to dispute the No-Shows. This can provide an opportunity to identify any remaining No-Show occurrences that were outside the control of the ACCESS passenger.
4. Any suspension will be done in writing (accessible formats used as needed) with phone call verification. Each suspension notice will also include the opportunity for an appeal, with instructions on how to initiate an appeal.

PSTA will continue to alert riders about No-Show trips as they occur, restate the No-Show policy and inform passengers that they can contact PSTA if any of the No-Shows were not in their control and/or were charged to the passenger in error.

Written Notification Before Suspensions

Before any suspension of service due to No-Shows, PSTA will notify the individual in writing, citing specifically the full reason for the proposed suspension and its length, including the exact No-Show occurrence dates, times, and pickup locations on which the proposed suspension is based, using accessible formats when necessary. Also, each suspension will include the information about the appellate process, including how to file an appeal.

None of the No-Show occurrences from which the suspension is proposed will include No-Shows beyond the passenger's control, nor any "missed trips" that are the responsibility of ACCESS contract carriers. Again, passengers will have the opportunity to contact PSTA about No-Shows beyond their control. PSTA will allow sixty (60) days to appeal the suspension from the date that the notice of a proposed suspension of service is sent.

Appeal Service Suspensions or Termination

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

PSTA
Mobility Dept. No Show Appeal
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

When the ACCESS Vehicle Arrives

The vehicle may arrive before a scheduled pick-up time; however, the individual 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 an individual 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 individuals. (Passenger should be visible to the driver). The individual should wait where the vehicle's arrival can be detected, or where the driver will be able to see the individual.

NOTE: The vehicle may arrive anytime within the 30-minute "Pick Up Window" regardless of the time estimates received via text and the app. Drivers will only wait five (5) minutes after arrival. If an individual is not ready, the driver may leave after the 5-minute wait, resulting in a "No Show."

Example: An individual is scheduled for a 9:00 AM pick-up time. This means that the individual 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 individual 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 individuals to and from the threshold of a location, when the thresholds are within sight of the vehicle.
- assist individuals 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 individual's responsibility to carry his/her own belongings. If the individual is unable to carry these items, a personal care attendant (PCA) may travel with the individual, at no charge. Individuals must limit their number of packages to only what they can carry when boarding a vehicle without affecting seating capacity.

If an individual brings more than they can carry, or cause the delay of the departure of the vehicle due to the extra items being carried, the individual 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 prior to departing the vehicle. The driver will make change for up to a \$5.00 bill, if necessary. If the correct fare is not paid, the driver may refuse to provide the ride, and a “No-Show” will be assessed.

ACCESS single-ride and multi-ride tickets are available for purchase at PSTA. To purchase tickets by mail call (727) 540-1888 and ask to speak with a representative regarding ACCESS tickets. To purchase tickets online, go to <http://store.psta.net/> and click the ACCESS option.

Fares can also be paid for by your debit/credit card that is saved in your profile or on the app.

To Check on a Ride

Unexpected delays occur due to road construction, traffic conditions, inclement weather, or occasional mechanical problems. If an ACCESS vehicle has not arrived within 30 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, contact 727-540-1888 option 3 to check ride status. 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 your holding. Ride status, minutes to pick-up, driver and vehicle information can be viewed in the PSTA Access app.

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone who assists an ACCESS customer with tasks the customer needs assistance to perform due to their disability during the trip, at a destination, or with an activity. A PCA may travel with an Access customer at no charge. It is the Access customer who determines who will serve as their PCA and when the individual will accompany them, not PSTA. When making a reservation, inform the reservationist that a PCA will be traveling with the customer. This assures that there will be room in the vehicle for the individual, the PCA, and other scheduled individuals. PCAs must have the same origin and destination as the customer. This can also be done using the PSTA Access app.

Guests/Companions

A guest/companion is someone travelling along to share the trip, not someone brought to assist the ACCESS customer. Guests/companions must pay the same fare when accompanying an ACCESS customer, and would board and de-board the vehicle at the same place and time as the ACCESS customer. When making a reservation, inform the reservationist that a guest(s) will be traveling with the customer. This can also be done in the PSTA Access app.

PSTA Access riders are allowed a total of two individuals to accompany them, including PCA's and guests.

Children

All children under nine (9) years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Children under 9 years cannot ride unattended. If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, a child under 9 years of age travels 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. The driver is 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

PSTA ACCESS includes vehicles which are designed to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility devices. Wheelchairs are mobility aids belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, used indoors. As long as the passenger is able to safely navigate the manual or motorized mobility aid on and off of the ramp or lift without exceeding the lift manufacturer's maximum sized weight limit, PSTA can transport the device.

If your wheelchair or mobility device exceeds the size that can be accommodated on a wheelchair lift or ramp, you will need to travel with a different device that meets these criteria. Customers who use a wheelchair or mobility device can choose to transfer to a vehicle seat if they prefer. Non-wheelchair users who cannot safely utilize a sedan or van using steps can be a standee on the lift of the wheelchair vehicle.

Wheelchair Securement and Seat Belt Policy

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that mobility devices are properly secured. All wheelchairs and scooters occupied during travel must be secured in the vehicle's four-point securement system at all times during the ride. Folding manual wheelchairs, walkers, and canes will be stowed elsewhere in the vehicle by the driver while the customer uses a vehicle seat unless otherwise requested at the time of reservation.

All individuals are required to comply with Florida's seatbelt law. (If an individual's mobility device has a built-in lap belt, an additional lap belt is not required. The lap belt should be secured before the individual boards the vehicle and may be removed after the individual deboards at their destination). All passengers are required to wear a vehicle safety belt unless a waiver is signed and received. Passengers are urged to allow the driver to remove securements and provide directions for safely navigating a motorized/self-propelled device on and off of the lift to ensure safety.

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 individuals 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

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

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

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

Packages and Personal Items

ACCESS service allows individuals to bring packages and personal items. The load they bring, however, must be limited to what they can carry themselves without affecting seating capacity. Because drivers cannot assist individuals with loading and unloading of these packages and/or personal items, it is important that an individual unable to manage the packages or personal items themselves travel with a PCA.

Personal, two-wheeled, collapsible grocery carts are permitted. The individual must unload the packages from the cart before the driver loads the empty cart into the trunk. Please tell the reservationist if an individual will bring a cart on the scheduled trip, in order to allow for room in the vehicle.

Emergency Procedures

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

An individual who becomes ill, or notices another individual who may be ill, should inform the driver immediately.

If an individual, due to their disability, is supposed to be met when the individual 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 individual's emergency contact. If the emergency contact cannot be notified, the proper authorities may be notified.

If your vehicle is in an accident on your trip, as long as you are not injured, your driver will request another car to pick you up as soon as possible.

Service and Inclement Weather

PSTA reserves the right to suspend, modify, or cancel ACCESS service during times of hazardous weather conditions. If severe weather is imminent, individuals will be notified if ACCESS 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, ACCESS service may be suspended, modified, or cancelled. If an individual 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 individuals 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 rules ensure the safety of all individuals and drivers:

- No smoking in the vehicles.
- Individuals 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 vehicle departs.
- Service animals are the responsibility of the owner. Drivers and other individuals must refrain from touching the service animal.
- Parents are responsible for the children in their care.
- Use of radios or other music players which other passengers can hear is prohibited.
- Contents of strollers and two-wheeled grocery carts are to be loaded and unloaded by the individual, or a personal care attendant (PCA).
- Individuals are limited to packages and personal items that they can carry themselves without affecting seating capacity. Individuals or their personal care attendants (PCAs) are responsible for loading and unloading the packages and personal items.
- Front passenger seat occupancy is on a first-come, first-seated basis.
- Respect the rights of other passengers.

Individuals, 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 individual; engage in any other illegal activities; engage in activity that disrupts the safe or effective operation of ACCESS services; or engages in violence, illegal conduct, or seriously disruptive behavior.

Any individual, PCA, or travel companion who is suspended from service will be notified and will be given the opportunity to appeal the suspension.

Comments and Complaints

PSTA welcomes feedback, comments, and complaints regarding ACCESS service. Please call (727) 540-1888 option 7, submit a Public Comment Form through our website www.psta.net, or write to:

PSTA
ATTN: Mobility Dept.
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, date of birth and phone number
- The date, time, and location of the incident
- The vehicle number/description and/or driver's name, if known
- If concerning office staff, please provide the employee's name, the date, and the time of your conversation along with the phone number from which you called.
- A detailed explanation of the incident or suggestion

Follow-up is conducted on each comment received. Complaints are retained for at least one year, and the complaint or a summary thereof is retained for at least five years.

Important Phone Numbers

For applications, and eligibility verification (727) 540-1888 option 4

ACCESS complaints or commendations (727) 540-1888
PSTA bus information: PSTA Info-Line (727) 540-1900

For trip reservations: 727-540-1888 option 2