



Norwalk Transit District ADA Paratransit Services Rider's Guide

Introduction

Paratransit transportation services consist of a variety of door-to-door service for the elderly and/or person with disabilities.

All paratransit services are a shared ride service. It is not emergency medical transportation nor is it a personal taxi service. To ensure the greatest level of operating and cost efficiency you should expect to be traveling with other riders who are going in the same direction as yourself. Each service has its own rules of operation including service area and hours of operation. Please review each section below, for the program that you are eligible to travel under for specific program requirements.

Service Areas

Dispatch-A-Ride / Norwalk ADA – is available for travel within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of a Norwalk Transit bus route within Norwalk, during the same hours that the route operates. Service outside this $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area in Norwalk is not provided. This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

Easy Access / Stamford ADA – is available for travel within the city of Stamford and within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of an operating CT Transit bus route within Greenwich, Darien, Norwalk and limited areas of New York, during the same hours that the route operates. Service outside this $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area in New York, Greenwich and Darien is not provided. This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

Westport Elderly & Disabled / Town of Westport – is available for travel within the Town of Westport to anyone 65 years of age and older, or 64 years of age and younger that has a disability and/or impairment.

Town to Town Westport – is available for travel to qualified ADA residents of Westport, within the following cities: Norwalk, Wilton, Weston, New Canaan, Darien, Stamford and Greenwich.

Town to Town Wilton – is available for travel to qualified ADA residents of Wilton, for medical purposes only, within the following cities: Norwalk, Westport, Weston, New Canaan, Darien, Stamford and Greenwich. Wilton to Wilton trips are prohibited.

Becoming Eligible

You may be eligible for Paratransit services if:

Dispatch-A-Ride / Norwalk ADA – This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

Easy Access / Stamford ADA – This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

Westport Elderly & Disabled / Town of Westport – is available for travel within the Town of Westport to anyone 65 years of age and older, or 64 years of age and younger that has a disability and/or impairment.

Town to Town Westport – This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

Town to Town Wilton – This service is available to anyone with a disability and/or impairment that prevents them from using a city bus.

The disability guidelines for all programs are: As a result of a physical or mental impairment, and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift), you are unable to board, ride or disembark from any public bus; As a result of a specific impairment-related condition you are prevented from traveling to or from a bus stop on the public bus system; or The interaction of your disability and barriers (architectural and environmental, such as curb cuts, distance, terrain or weather) prevent you from traveling to or from the public bus stop.

**For Westport Elderly & Disabled program only – an additional eligibility criteria is anyone 65 years of age or older.*

For your disability to be the basis for eligibility, the disability/health conditions **must prevent** you from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location. The word “prevent” is very important. For anyone, going to a bus stop and waiting for a bus is more difficult and less comfortable than waiting for a vehicle at one’s home. This is likely to be all the more true for an individual with a disability. But for many persons with disabilities, in many circumstances, getting to a bus stop is possible. If an impairment-related condition only makes the job of accessing transit more difficult than it might otherwise be, but does not prevent the travel, then the person is not eligible for paratransit.

Eligibility Process:

Before using this paratransit service, all programs require you to complete an ADA Eligibility Certification Request form and mail it to our office to begin the review process.

ADA Eligibility Form:

[Download ADA Eligibility Form>>](#)

It is important that you complete the entire form so we can provide you with the best possible service. Your eligibility certification will be based on the programs eligibility guidelines noted above. Mail the completed form to:

Norwalk Transit District
275 Wilson Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut 06854

Upon receipt of your completed form we will contact you to schedule a face-to-face interview. Free round-trip transportation will be provided for all individuals within the ADA Paratransit service area when traveling to the office to start the in-house application process if requested. We may also seek professional verification of your disability during the process. If you are approved, you will receive your identification card in the mail.

The entire process may not exceed 21 days. The 21-day time frame begins at submission of the completed application. Applications are considered complete at the conclusion of the interview process and assessments, not when applications are received. After you become eligible, the Norwalk Transit District will recertify you every three years based upon eligibility.

When a transportation eligibility determination is made, several outcomes are possible:

- Individuals may be found to be unconditionally eligible for all their trips
- Individuals may receive temporary eligibility based on a temporary circumstance, such as a broken leg or chemotherapy treatments
- Individuals may be conditionally eligible for service when other conditions (such as weather or terrain) affect their ability to access the regular bus
- Individuals may be denied service entirely

Appeals Procedure

If it is determined that you are not eligible for service; you will receive a letter along with information on how to appeal the decision. You may submit your appeal within 60 days in writing to the Norwalk Transit District to the attention of the CEO. If the CEO denies your appeal, you may re-submit your appeal to the attention of the Commissioners of the Norwalk Transit District. Free transportation will be provided to appeals hearing if requested.

Requests for appeal should be made in writing to:

NTD Chief Executive Officer
Norwalk Transit District
275 Wilson Ave
Norwalk, CT 06854

Fares

Fare trips can be purchased in advance through the Finance department at Norwalk Transit District. You can also add your credit card information to your Wheels2U account. Your card will only be charged for the rides that you take. Drivers do not accept cash. Transportation will not be provided without the proper fare balance available OR a credit/debit card is associated with the account.

If you would like to add your card to the Wheels2U App

- Open either the IOS App store or Google Play store
- Search for "Wheels2U" and download the app.
- Enter your phone number and input the code that will be text to you.
- You may be able to edit some specific details if you would like, those are:
 - o Name
 - o Email
 - o Primary phone number
- Once your account is logged in, click the button with three horizontal bars on the top left of the screen.
- Select payment methods, and click add credit card.
- Here you may enter your card details to associate your card with the account.
- You may also continue to call Norwalk Transit District's finance department to do a one time deposit to fund the account.
- If you need assistance, please contact the Norwalk Transit District at info@norwalktransit.com or 203-299-5180.

When Boarding the Transit District Vehicle

Your driver will confirm your trip and your attendant(s) and/or guest(s) and deduct the fare automatically from your account through the in-vehicle tablet.

Norwalk ADA / Westport Town to Town / Westport Elderly and Disabled / Wilton Town to Town – Fare trips are valued at \$3.50 individually; crossing 2 towns will require \$7.00 and crossing 3 towns will require \$10.50 one way. Town-to-Town passengers must have the appropriate balance prior to taking any town to trips.

You may also contact the Town of Westport for assistance with the Wheels2U system:

Westport Town Hall, Human Services Department

203-341-1050

humansrv@westportct.gov

Westport Center for Senior Activities

203-341-5099

seniorcenter@westportct.gov

Stamford Easy Access – Fare trips are valued at \$2.80 individually. You can also contact the City of Stamford for assistance with the Wheels2U System: **Stamford Government Center:** 203-977-4050

Reservations and Scheduling

Reserve Your Ride

Call: 203-299-5180 (Voice)

Reservation Hours:

Monday-Friday: Between 8 am and 5 pm

Saturday: Between 8 am and 5 pm

Sunday/Evening: Between 8 am and 5 pm, Leave a voice message and your call will be confirmed the next morning by a dispatcher.

All rides must be reserved in advance; we do not book same day trips. A same day trip is considered a trip reserved after 5 pm Monday-Friday, and after 5 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Scheduling Your Ride

Norwalk Transit will make every effort to ensure on time service through proper scheduling of trips. Norwalk Transit will book the trip based on your requested drop off time or pick up time. Listed below are the definitions of the two types of bookings. You must pick one of these two options which will serve as the service parameters for your trip booking. Only one option can be chosen per one-way trip.

Drop Off Time — the time you need to be at your destination.

Pick Up Time — the time you need to be picked up.

Every effort will be made to honor your request. If the time requested is not available, the reservationist may negotiate with you up to one hour before your requested drop off time or one hour after your requested pickup time. If you are offered a trip within the one-hour window but you do not wish to take the offered time, this will be recorded as a trip refusal. If we are unable to offer you a time within the one-hour window it will be recorded as a denial unless you accept an alternative time.

Preparing for Your Travel

Trips Scheduled by Drop-Off Time

1. You should be prepared to travel 75 minutes prior to the drop-off time. However, if you wish to have a specific scheduled arrival time for the bus, you may call dispatch at 203-299-5180 after 7:00 pm the evening before your trip or the morning of your trip to get a 30-minute bus arrival window.
2. Drivers are considered on time if they arrive 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the scheduled bus arrival time. As an example, a rider with a 9:00 am bus arrival time may be picked up anytime between 8:45 am and 9:15 am. Please remember that Norwalk Transit District will make every effort to be on time as we know your trip is very important. Please see “Delays” below.
3. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers arriving within the 30-minute arrival window can only wait 5 minutes before proceeding on to their next trip. If the Driver arrives prior to the 30-minute window they will wait until the beginning of the 30-minute window plus five minutes before departing. Drivers arriving after the arrival window will contact the dispatch office and every effort will be made to contact the passenger. If we are unable to contact, you and the trip is not performed it will be recorded as a missed trip due to the Norwalk transit District and will not go against the passengers’ record. Due to the large volume of calls received daily we respectfully request that you hold your call looking for your ride until the 30-minute arrival window has expired.

Trips Scheduled by Pick Up Time

1. You should be prepared to travel at the pick-up time agreed to when you made your reservation. However, if you wish to have a specific scheduled arrival time for the bus, you may call dispatch at 203-299-5180 after 7:00 pm the evening before your trip or the morning of your trip to get a 30-minute bus arrival window.
2. Your 30-minute pick-up window begins with the pick-up time up to 30 minutes after the pick-up time.
3. Drivers are considered on time if they arrive within 30 minutes after the scheduled bus arrival time. As an example, a rider with a 5:00 pm pick-up time may be picked up anytime between 5:00 pm and 5:30 pm. Please remember that Norwalk Transit District will make every effort to be on time as we know your trip is very important. Please see “Delays” below.
4. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers arriving within the 30-minute pick-up window can only wait 5 minutes before proceeding on to their next trip. If the Driver arrives prior to the 30-minute window they will wait until the beginning of the 30-minute window plus five minutes before departing. Drivers arriving after the arrival window will contact the dispatch office and every effort will be made to contact the passenger. If we are unable to contact, you and the trip is not performed it will be recorded as a missed trip due to the Norwalk Transit District and will not go against the passenger’s record. Due to the large volume of calls received daily we respectfully request that you hold your call looking for your ride until the 30-minute arrival window has expired.

Delays

Traffic delays or other problems may sometimes result in an unavoidable late pick-up. Please wait at least 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time before calling us to inquire about your ride. We will make every effort to pick you up on time.

Trip Changes

Trip changes or requests for service cannot be made with the driver. All trip scheduling and destination changes must be made by calling the dispatcher prior to your trip.

Service Standards

Visitor Policy for ADA Service

Individuals that other transit agencies have determined to be ADA paratransit eligible can present documentation of eligibility. NTD will give ‘full faith and credit’ to the ID card or other documentation from the other transit agency. NTD accepts this documentation directly from the individual.

NTD may require proof of residency or visitor status from: (a) any individual with a disability who does not have documentation of ADA paratransit eligibility from another transit agency because they reside in areas without public transit, or (b) they have not applied for eligibility in their home area to provide proof of residency or visitor status.

For a visitor whose disability is apparent NTD will not require additional documentation. For a visitor whose disability is not apparent (e.g., cognitive disability or cardiac condition), NTD

may require documentation of disability, such as a letter from a medical professional or eligibility for other services based on a determination of the disability. Once this basic documentation is provided, NTD will make service available under the visitor provision on the basis of the individual's statement that he or she is unable to use the fixed route transit system.

NTD provides visitors with complementary paratransit service for any combination of 21 days during a 365-day period beginning with the visitor's first use of the service. However, for visitors requesting service beyond the 21 days in the 365-day period, NTD requires the visitor to apply for paratransit services through our eligibility process.

Cancellations

You must notify us of your cancellation at least 2 hours before your scheduled pick-up time so that our vehicles will be free to serve other passengers.

Refusing Paratransit Service Due to Behavior

Paratransit service may be refused to a rider who engages in "violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct." Seriously disruptive conduct does not include behavior or appearance that only offends, annoys, or inconveniences other riders or drivers. An example of seriously disruptive conduct would be a verbal outburst directed at the driver or other passengers. This behavior may start out as seriously disruptive but become so threatening as to prevent a driver from safely operating the vehicle and, therefore, rise to a direct threat as well.

Ice and Snow

If at all possible, please keep your entry way and driveway clear of ice and snow. This will make it safer for our vehicles to get to you.

Courtesy

As a courtesy to others, smoking, eating or drinking on vehicles is prohibited at all times.

Tipping

Please help us by not offering tips to drivers as they cannot be accepted.

Trip Purpose

Certified passengers may use the door-to-door service to travel around the outlined service areas for any reason...medical, employment, education, shopping or social. (*Wilton Town to Town, may only use the service for medical trips out of Wilton only.)

Passenger Assistance

Reasonable Modification

Norwalk Transit District is committed to serving persons with disabilities. We back this commitment by providing services that make public transportation both easy and affordable for persons with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifically provides that transportation entities are required to make service related reasonable modifications and accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures, to avoid discrimination and to ensure that any individual's disability does not preclude her/him from having full access to our services. If you would like to request a reasonable modification or if you want to find out more about reasonable modifications please call the Transportation Manager at 203-852-0000 ext 175 and follow the process below:

- Indicate you are requesting a reasonable modification to use a Norwalk Transit District service
- Give your name and any other pertinent contact information
- Tell us which service you are using (bus, shuttle or door-to-door services) or access to our facility
- Provide the specific details of the modification request

Once we have gathered this information, it will be reviewed for final determination by:

Chief Operating Officer
ADA Officer
203-299-5175

Driver Assistance

The paratransit service has a diverse fleet of vehicles and drivers receive intensive training in defensive driving and sensitivity to the special needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities. However, they do not enter homes and do not go beyond the front door of a building.

Guidelines for Wheelchairs and Other Mobility Devices

A wheelchair is defined in the regulations as “a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more- wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.”

The definition is consistent with the legislative history and intent to accommodate the wide range of devices used by individuals with mobility impairments. The definition does not include devices not intended for indoor use (e.g., golf carts or all-terrain vehicles) or devices not primarily designed to assist individuals with mobility impairments (e.g., bicycles or tricycles).

ADA operators must carry any wheelchair and occupant regardless of size and weight if the lift and the vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements. Legitimate safety requirements include such circumstances when “a wheelchair was of a size that would block an aisle, interfering with safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.” A wheelchair user's request to board a paratransit vehicle separately from his or her device when the occupied weight of the device exceeds the design load of the vehicle lift should generally be granted.

ADA operators are also not required to permit wheelchairs to ride in places other than designated securement locations in the vehicle. NTD's safety policy requires a 4-point securement for wheelchairs. Riders using three-wheeled scooters are strongly encouraged to

transfer out of their scooter into the seat of the Paratransit vehicle whenever possible. Scooters cannot always be adequately secured and may present a safety hazard to the user, the driver and other riders if individuals are transported seated in the scooter. Riders who are transferable are able to move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle, and back with a minimum of assistance from the driver. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the rider transfers. Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying riders. Also use of the shoulder and lap belt, while not required, is recommended for the rider's maximum safety.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) and Companions

Personal Care Attendants are individuals whose assistance is needed by a rider to travel. Anyone who is involved in the "helping process" required by the rider to travel, either while riding on the service or after reaching a destination, is considered a PCA. Some riders may require a PCA on all trips or may only require one on some trips. A rider is entitled to use different PCAs rather than the same one at all times. If you have a personal attendant/aide accompanying you on a trip, please let us know when reserving your ride. That person may ride for free. They must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you.

Additional individuals accompanying you shall be provided service. These individuals would be known as Companions. Companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as you and must pay the appropriate fare for the trip.

Service Animals

Service animals are always welcome on the ADA Paratransit vehicles. Service animals are defined as, Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items."

Service animals are animals that are "individually trained to work or perform tasks." This training can be by an organization or by an individual, including the individual with a disability. Transit agencies are not required to transport animals that have not been individually trained to perform specific work or tasks.

Our drivers may ask riders two questions: (1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability? And (2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

When you are reserving a trip, please let our Reservationists know if you will be traveling with a service animal. ADA riders with a service animal must maintain control of their animal at all times. The Paratransit driver will refuse to transport a service animal if it demonstrates disruptive behavior such as growling, being threatening, or lunging towards passengers or other animals on the ADA vehicle.

Shopping Bags/Carry-Ons

Please limit the number of shopping bags/carry-ons to no more than five (5). Shopping bags/carry-ons should not take up more than one seat. Drivers will be happy to assist you with grocery/shopping bags which are durable and weigh no more than twenty (20) pounds. A driver will not assist with any boxes. If you need assistance with a box, the box must be in a bag as described above. The driver will not be able to assist with cases of soda, water, soup, etc. Although the driver will assist you with bags from the designated safe entrance of a store

to the Paratransit vehicle, under no circumstances will a driver go into a store or a paratransit rider's residence. If a rider is traveling with a personal care attendant (PCA), friend, escort or companion and they choose to carry additional bags for the rider, the additional bags are only allowed if there is room on the vehicle.

Safe Riding and Seatbelt Policy

For safe riding, passengers are required to use seatbelts / and or shoulder harnesses. If you need assistance, ask the driver.

Service Days and Hours

Norwalk ADA: Service is available every day of the week. Norwalk Transit operates many routes in the Norwalk service area; however, each route operates different days of the week and different service hours. Passengers are encouraged to go to the Norwalk Transit website to review the service map to learn which route operates where you may need to travel. Once you have found the appropriate route, you can go to the schedules for the operating hours. We will be happy to help you navigate this process.

Easy Access: Service is available every day of the week. CT Transit operates many routes in the Greenwich, Stamford and Darien service area; however, each route operates different days of the week and different service hours. Passengers are encouraged to go to the [CT Transit - Stamford division website](#) and review the service map to learn which routes operate where you may need to travel. Once you have found the appropriate route, you can go to the schedules for operating hours. We will be happy to help you navigate this process.

Westport Elderly & Disabled: Service is available Monday through Friday, 8 am to 6 pm.

Town to Town Westport (or) Wilton: Service is available Monday through Saturday, 8 am to 6 pm.

For more any information on any of the above-mentioned services please call 203-299-5180 (Voice) or 203-299-5173 (TTY).

Comments and Complaints

We want to ensure that your ride with us meets your travel needs and is safe and reliable. We welcome your comments, complaints and compliments.

To learn more about our services or to let us know of any problems you experience or questions you may have **email us** at info@norwalktransit.com.

Or you may **write us** or visit us at:

Norwalk Transit District
275 Wilson Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut 06854
Or You can also *call us* at 203-299-5180 (Voice) or 203-299-5173 (TTY).

We will log all your comments and follow-up with a response, if one is required, within a reasonable period of time. If your complaint is related to the Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA) or your civil rights under Title VI, please go to the ADA Complaint Form or the Title VI Complaint process on our website norwalktransit.com and follow the directions.

Rev. 4/24/2023

Free Language Assistance

English: For language assistance or other accommodations, contact Norwalk Transit at info@norwalktransit.com. Please include a phone number so that an interpreter can call you back.

Spanish: Para asistencia lingüística u otras adaptaciones, comuníquese con Norwalk Transit a: spanishinfo@norwalktransit.com. Favor de incluir su número de teléfono para que un intérprete le devuelva su llamada.

Portuguese: Para assistência com idiomas ou outras dúvidas, entre em contato com a Norwalk Transit através do: portugueseinfo@norwalktransit.com. Por favor, você poderia incluir o seu número de telefone para que um intérprete possa retornar a chamada.

French: Pour obtenir une assistance linguistique ou d'autres types d'aides, contactez Norwalk Transit à: frenchinfo@norwalktransit.com. S'il vous plaît, veuillez indiquer un numéro de téléphone pour qu'un interprète puisse vous rappeler.

French Creole: Pou jwenn asistans nan Lang oswa lòt éd, tanpri kontakte Norwalk Transit nan: frenchcreoleinfo@norwalktransit.com. Tanpri mete yon nimewo telefòn pou yon entèprèt ka rele ou.

Chinese: 如需语言协助或其他帮助，请联系 Norwalk Transit: chineseinfo@norwalktransit.com。请留下您的电话号码，口译员稍后会和您联络。

Italian: Per assistenza linguistica o altri tipi di aiuto, contattare Norwalk Transit al seguente indirizzo: italianinfo@norwalktransit.com. Per favore includi un numero di telefono in modo che un intérprete ti puo richiamare.

Polish: Aby uzyskać wsparcie językowe lub inny rodzaj pomocy, należy skontaktować się z Norwalk Transit pod adresem: polishinfo@norwalktransit.com. Proszę podać swój numer telefonu aby tłumacz mógł do Pani/Pana oddzwonić.

German: Für sprachliche Unterstützung oder sonstige Unterkünfte wenden Sie sich bitte an Norwalk Transit germaninfo@norwalktransit.com. Bitte geben Sie eine Telefonnummer an so dass ein Doimetscher Sie zurückrufen kann.

Greek: Για γλωσσική βοήθεια ή άλλη διευκόλυνση, επικοινωνήστε με την Norwalk Transit στο greekinfo@norwalktransit.com. Προσθέστε έναν αριθμό τηλεφώνου και ένας διαμερηνέας θα σας καλέσει πίσω.

Russian: Для получения языковой помощи или других услуг, свяжитесь с Norwalk Transit по адресу russianinfo@norwalktransit.com. Пожалуйста, предоставьте свой номер телефона чтобы переводчик мог перезвонить Вам.

Japanese:

日本語でのサービスやその他のご用件が必要な場合はノーウォーク交通局へご連絡ください。
japaneseinfo@norwalktransit.com 通訳が折り返しお電話致します。

Tagalog: Para sa tulong sa wika o ibang mga bagay (tirahan), makipag-ugnay sa Norwalk Transit sa tagaloginfo@norwalktransit.com. Pakiusap la mang na isama ang numero ng iyong telepono para matawagan kang pabalik ng tagasaal sa wikang tagalog.

Urdu:

اگر آپ کو آپکی زبان میں ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہیئے یا کسی طرح کی کوئی اور سہولت درکار ہے تو اس ای میل پر نرواک کی ٹرانزٹ سے رابطہ کیجیے

urduinfo@norwalktransit.com

برائے مہربانی اپنا فون نمبر بھیجیئے تاکہ کوئی ترجمان آپ کو واپس فون کر سکے

Hindi:

भाषा सहायता या अन्य आवास के लिए, नार्वाक ट्रांसिट hindiinfo@norwalktransit.com पर संपर्क करें | कृपया एक फोन नंबर शामिल करें ताकि एक दुबाराया आपको वापस बुला सकें |