



## **ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES GUIDE**



**Under the Americans  
With Disabilities Act of  
1990 (ADA)  
November 2007**

# ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES GUIDE

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# PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

## ADA Paratransit Services Guide

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) provides a shared-ride, door-to-door Paratransit service according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Transportation is provided utilizing lift-equipped vans. Requests for special vehicle types cannot be accepted. Paratransit service is for individuals with disabilities which prevent them from riding the fixed route bus service. Customers who are unable to climb steps can enter vehicles utilizing the lift.

## Service Area

PVTA services 24 member communities. The map (Attachment #1) identifies the Pioneer Valley Transit District and the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor that surrounds the fixed route system. The following 24 communities are members of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority: Agawam, Amherst, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, Palmer, Pelham, South Hadley, Springfield, Sunderland, Ware, Westfield, West Springfield, Wilbraham, Williamsburg.

Trip Purpose  
ADA transportation  
services may be  
used for any  
purpose.

Under the ***Americans with Disabilities Act***, transit systems are required to provide service within  **$\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed route**, so the parameters could change, if a route changes. A fixed route is defined as a specific route with timed stops. If a fixed route enters an adjoining town, the paratransit vehicles will serve individuals who are  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the fixed route in that town. If a customer lives outside of the service area they may apply for eligibility for Paratransit services. If they are approved for ADA service, they will be responsible for providing transportation to and from a location within the service area in order to utilize PVTA's ADA services.

# ADA CERTIFICATION PROCESS

## Eligibility Criteria

ADA Paratransit eligible individuals are:

- (1) Individuals who cannot independently board, ride, or disembark a fixed route accessible (lift-equipped) vehicle. This includes persons who cannot determine where to get on or off a fixed route.
- (2) Individuals with a specific impairment related condition which prevents them from getting to or from a boarding location or disembarking from such location.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES

1. Call 413-732-6248 x214, and request an application form.
2. Read the instructions and fill out every question to the best of your ability.
3. Send the completed application to:  
Pioneer Valley Transit Authority  
Atten: ADA Coordinator  
2808 Main Street  
Springfield, MA 01107

## Application Process

The PVTA determines eligibility for paratransit services using the guidelines for the Americans with Disabilities Act. An individual must complete an application and return it to PVTA.

Eligibility determinations will be made on an individual basis, unconditional, conditional and temporary. There are three types of eligibility:

**Unconditional** – an individual is eligible for all trips on Paratransit service.

**Conditional** – an individual may be eligible for certain trips on Paratransit service.

**Temporary** – an individual is eligible for Paratransit service on a temporary basis. The length of time varies depending on medical necessity.

Applicants will be notified of their eligibility determinations within 21 days of receipt of the application. Temporary eligibility will be given if the process exceeds 21 days. If you have any questions, call PVTA at 413-732-6248.

## Re-certification Process

All customers, regardless of eligibility type, will need to reapply for Paratransit service on or before the expiration date on their eligibility approval letter. Two months prior to the expiration date, PVTA will notify customers via U.S. Postal Mail. It is the customer's responsibility to report to PVTA or the Call-Center when their condition changes. Often an individual's illness progresses and mobility aids are needed that were not needed when they were first certified for services. **The general rule is that an individual is certified for a period of three (3) years for unconditional eligibility, and less time for temporary eligibility.**

## HOURS OF ADA PARATRANSIT OPERATION

PVTA's paratransit program operates the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service. Currently the fixed route bus service operates 7 days per week, hours vary from community to community. Call the paratransit Call-Center toll-free at 1(866)277-7741 or (413)739-7436 to inquire about hours of service for the communities you may need to travel to.

### Holidays

No service is provided on the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Fourth of July  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

# SCHEDULING ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE

## Reservations

Reservations can be made between the hours of 8:00AM and 4:30PM seven (7) days a week. Reservations may be made up to fourteen (14) days in advance, but no later than the previous day before 4:30PM.

**If you are traveling to an appointment, be sure to tell the Reservation Staff what time you must arrive at your destination.** Then a correct pick-up time can be determined.

All service is “shared-ride” your total travel time will allow time for others to board and ride in the same vehicle. Your paratransit ride will take approximately the same amount of time a similar trip on the fixed route bus would take and may not follow a direct route between your pick up and drop off location.

If you have multiple trips on the same day, they need to be scheduled at least sixty (60) minutes apart. This will allow for travel time and the utilization of the 20-minute window (see definition below). This policy is in place to prevent the return trip from arriving before the original trip has been completed.

Occasionally we may need to ask a customer to change the requested pick-up time in order to accommodate their request for a reservation. The ADA allows PVRTA to negotiate a pick-up with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pick-up time.

**Example:** If you request a pick-up time of 9:00 a.m. the negotiated time could be one hour before or after that time without making you late for an appointment. Negotiating pick-up times with customers gives a better estimated arrival time.

When you call to schedule your trip, keep a record of the Reservation Staff person you spoke with, along with the date and time.

## Door-to-Door Service

Drivers will meet customers at the entrance of the pick-up or drop-off location. Drivers do not enter the home, or drop-off and pick-up locations.

## 20-Minute Window

When reserving your ride, the call-center representative will give you a 20-minute pick-up window. Customers should expect the vehicle to arrive within the pick-up window. Customers are expected to be ready at the beginning of the pick-up window; drivers will only wait five (5) minutes.

## 5 Minute Rule - Be Ready!

The driver is allowed to wait only five (5) minutes for you. It is your responsibility to be ready to take your trip. If you cannot be located or choose not to start boarding within five (5) minutes, the driver may leave and continue to the next pick-up.

## Early Pick-ups

Sometimes your vehicle will arrive before the beginning of the window because of a cancellation or especially light traffic. If your vehicle arrives before the 10-minute pick-up window, you may wait to get on the vehicle until the start of your confirmed pick-up window, or you may get into the vehicle and leave right away. It's your choice. The **5 Minute Rule** doesn't start until the beginning of your pick-up window.

## Shared-Ride Service

All service is "shared-ride" your total travel time will allow time for other passengers to board and ride in the same vehicle. Your paratransit ride may take approximately the same amount of time a similar trip on the fixed route bus would take, and may not follow a direct route between your pick up and drop off location.

### Helpful Suggestions When Making Reservations

- When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:
- Your first and last name.
- Date when you want to travel.
- Pick-up address: number, street, suite number, city, zip, entry code for any security entrances and telephone number; be specific about pick-up directions. (Example: North Entrance, South Entrance, etc.). Please make sure the location requested is accessible to lift vehicles, to ensure lift vehicles can enter and exit without having to back up. The house, apartment or mobile home number must be visible.
- Reminder: it is not possible for our vehicles to be parked for long periods of time at the entrance. Our vehicles cannot block any other vehicle or customer traffic. If you are waiting for a vehicle at an entrance, be sure you are ready and waiting at the beginning of your pick-up window.
- Your requested pick-up or appointment.
- Your requested return time if you want a round trip.
- Where you want to go; number, street, suite number, city, zip, etc.
- If you will be using a wheelchair or other mobility device.
- If you will be accompanied by a personal care assistant (PCA) and/or companion (including children), and if they use a mobility device.
- Any other information the paratransit driver should know to help you travel.

**Calls May Be Monitored For Quality Assurance.**

## Trip Cancellations

Trip cancellations are required no later than 1 hour before a scheduled pick-up. Trip changes are considered cancellations. Failure to cancel trips at least 1 hour before the scheduled pick-up will result in a late cancel (see No Shows).

## Senior Service

PVTA's paratransit program includes transportation for Seniors. Anyone 60 Years of Age or older can call the reservation number (**Toll Free at 1-866-277-7741 or 413-739-7436**) at least one day in advance to schedule a ride. Let the Reservation staff know you are calling for the Senior Service, they will take your trip information to schedule the ride.

The following 24 communities are members of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority:

Agawam, Amherst, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hampden, Holyoke, Leverett, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, Palmer, Pelham, South Hadley, Springfield, Sunderland, Ware, Westfield, West Springfield, Wilbraham, Williamsburg.

### Senior Service

is available

within the PVTA service area

Monday – Friday 8:00AM – 4:30PM.

## PVTA Customer Service Center

The PVTA welcomes your compliments, complaints, suggestions and feedback. We are committed to using customer input as a tool to improve service quality. All comments may be submitted by mail, fax, phone or through the PVTA website:

**Pioneer Valley Transit Authority**  
**Atten: Customer Service Manager**  
**1341 Main Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**Phone: (877)779-7882**  
[www.PVTA.com](http://www.PVTA.com)

## Service Complaints

If you have experienced a problem with a specific ride, you may wish to file a formal service complaint. All formal complaints are investigated and receive responses.

To file a formal service complaint customers can contact the Customer Service Office toll free at 1-877-779-7882 or online at [www.pvta.com](http://www.pvta.com)

The PVTA is committed to protecting the confidentiality of its riders. However, anonymous service complaints cannot receive a response.

## RIDING PARATRANSIT SERVICE

### Door-to-Door Service

The PVTA provides door-to-door service comparable to the fixed route. Customers must be ready and waiting at the beginning of the pick-up window. Drivers will meet customers at the door of the pick-up or drop-off location. Drivers do not enter the home, or drop-off and pick-up locations.

The PVTA operates within a 20-minute pick-up window. Drivers are allowed to wait only 5 minutes for the customer to board the service vehicle, so it is very important for the customer to be ready and waiting at the beginning of the pick-up window.

### Riders will be given a 20-minute pick-up window when reserving their ride

For the driver to easily locate them, customers should wait in a safe area as close as possible to the pick-up location. Please tell the customer service representative exactly where you will be waiting for the vehicle when scheduling your transportation. We do not advocate unsafe practices such as backing up, and our drivers have been instructed to avoid these types of situations. Due to the weight of our lift vehicles, drivers are not allowed to pull into the private driveways of our customers.

Customers who cannot travel independently, or enter/exit a facility should be accompanied by a Personal Care Attendant (**PCA**). This service is not provided by PVTA and is the responsibility of the customer. PCAs travel free with the customer but must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the customer. ***If the customer intends to have a PCA accompany them, they must inform the Call Center staff person when the transportation is scheduled to guarantee space on the vehicle.***

## Wheelchairs

Transportation providers are required to transport “common wheelchairs”. A common wheelchair is defined in the ADA Department of Transportation regulations as “a device that doesn't exceed 30-inches in width and 48-inches in length measured two inches above the ground and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.” Devices not meeting these criteria may not be transported. For additional information on the transportation regulations call PVTA at 413-732-6248 x 214

The driver must be able to safely secure the mobility device. Customers who use a 3-wheeled scooter may be asked to transfer to a regular seat. These type of chairs are difficult to secure. However, the choice to transfer to a regular seat is the discretion of the customer.

**The American Safety Council recommends that customers in wheelchairs board by backing onto the lift for safety purposes.**

## Disruptive Behavior Policy

The PVTA reserves the right to refuse transportation or service to anyone whose conduct is or has been known to be obnoxious, offensive, intimidating, violent, disorderly or hazardous, and could result in the disruption of vehicle operations or serious impairment to the health and safety of others.

## Transporting Children

- ADA eligible children must pay the full fare.
- Children, age 5 and over, traveling as companions must also pay the full fare.
- Children under 5 years old or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be secured in an approved child safety seat provided by the customer.
- Strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the customer. Non-collapsible strollers are prohibited.
- For safety reasons, children capable of sitting on their own must sit in a seat and not on an adult's lap.

## Transporting Animals

- Service animals are welcome and ride free-of-charge.
- A disruptive animal will be treated like a disruptive passenger.
- Service animals must sit on the floor or on the passenger's lap. They may not occupy a passenger seat.

## Inclement Weather

In the event of severe weather, including snow, ice, flooding, etc., the ability to provide transportation may be hampered. If you do not have to travel on those days, please call the reservation office to cancel your trips in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to provide transportation, but, safety considerations may prevent trips being provided.

## PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER ACCOMMODATIONS

### Personal Care Attendants

PCAs traveling with a customer must be able to provide assistance to the customer. PCAs must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the customer. In most cases, those individuals listed below will not be considered a PCA:

- Young children or family members of the customer who cannot act in the capacity of a PCA.
- A family member who is also a PVTA ADA eligible customer when both parties travel independently, without the aid of a PCA the majority of time.

When it is noted that a customer cannot be left alone, PVTA will contact the customer (or caregiver) to determine what difficulties they may be experiencing. If suitable arrangements cannot be made to ensure the customer will have a caregiver waiting at the drop-off location, the customer will be notified we will be unable to transport them without the assistance of a PCA. Service could be suspended for those customers who have been notified of their need to travel with a PCA and continue to try to travel without a PCA present. PVTA's concern is the well-being of the customer having difficulty after the driver leaves that could create a safety hazard for them. PVTA is committed to providing our customers with the safest transportation possible.

## **Companions**

Customers may have one (1) companion accompany them. If you will be traveling with a companion, you must notify the reservationist at the time you schedule your ride. Companions are charged the same fare as the customer and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location. Additional companions can travel with a Paratransit customer on a “space available” basis and will pay the same fare as the customer.

## **Visitors**

Any visitor who presents ADA eligibility documentation from another jurisdiction will be provided service. If a visitor does not have ADA eligibility documentation, we will request proof of residency, and if the disability is not apparent, proof of disability. We will accept a certification by the visitor that he or she is unable to use fixed route transit. The visitor will be provided 21 days of service within a 365-day period.

Any restrictions on their ADA eligibility in their residence city will be enforced here. For example, if the individual’s eligibility states they can use the service only in winter months, they would not be eligible here for service during summer months. If a visitor needs services beyond the 21 days in a 365 day period, the individual will be required to apply for Paratransit eligibility locally.

## **Subscription Reservations**

PVTA customers are eligible for subscription service if they are “unconditionally eligible” for ADA service, traveling to the same destination at the same time and the same day of the week. A subscription eliminates the need for advance reservations for each trip. There is a limit to the number of subscription trips we are allowed to schedule, and there may be a waiting list for subscription service.

## **Parcels & Packages**

### **Grocery Bags**

Passengers are limited to three (3) standard size carry-on packages per person. This is for the safe transportation of multiple passengers. Drivers will assist with the loading and unloading of packages provided the cumulative weight is no more than twenty-five (25) pounds.

# No Show Policy

It is the responsibility of the customer to utilize Paratransit service in a responsible manner. Customers not using the service responsibly will be subject to suspension from Paratransit service. If the customer receives a valid no-show at their home another vehicle will not be dispatched and the return trip will be cancelled. If the customer travels to their destination by some other means and wishes to keep the return trip, they must phone the CallCenter within one (1) hour of the no-show being reported.

The no-show policy for PVTA states any customer receiving three (3) or more valid no-shows in a ninety (90) day period is subject to a thirty (30) day suspension from paratransit service.

**Following is a list of incidents that would result in a no-show being charged.**

## No-Show

A customer who is not at the scheduled point of pick-up during the 20-minute window in order to board within five minutes of the vehicle arriving.

## Cancel at Door

A customer who cancels at the door or “waves” away the driver who has arrived at the scheduled pick-up time and location. This is considered a no-show as the vehicle arrived at the scheduled pick-up.

## Late Cancel

When the customer calls to cancel a previously scheduled trip less than one (1) hour prior to their scheduled pick-up. This is considered a no-show as the vehicle is already in route for the pick-up. The only exception to this rule is for trips that are scheduled prior to 9:00 a.m. when there is no staff to receive the cancellation.

## No-Show at Drop off

Occurs when a customer cannot be dropped at the destination because the caretaker is not there to receive them.

***When this occurs, drivers will notify a member of their management staff. Based on circumstances, the PVTA Director of Transit may be contacted, as well as other authorities that may include Adult Protective Services or the police. Management will attempt to locate a family member. If we are unable to make contact, the customer may be taken to the nearest police station and Adult Protective Services would be notified.***

## Notification Process

Warning letters will be mailed to customers notifying them they have been charged with a **No-Show**. If notification must be made in an alternative accessible format, please contact our office. Warning letters and an appeal form with instructions will be mailed to the customers using the following timelines:

### Warning Letter #1

- Sent when one (1) valid no-show has been charged.

### Warning Letter #2

- Sent certified when two (2) valid no-shows have been charged.

### Warning Letter #3

- Sent certified when three (3) valid no-shows have been charged. This letter will include suspension notification. If the customer does not appeal, the suspension will begin fourteen (14) days later.

**No Show Appeal Process:** Customers have ten (10) calendar days from the date when the letter was mailed to respond to any no-show they feel was charged to them in error. Customers must address no-shows in a timely manner. After the ten (10) days have elapsed without a request for an appeal, the no-shows in question will become part of the customer's permanent ridership history and cannot be appealed at a later date.

## Suspensions

When three (3) no-shows have been charged in a ninety (90) day period, the customer will be suspended from service for thirty (30) days. If the customer receives a second suspension, the customer will be suspended from service for sixty (60) days. A third suspension will result in a ninety (90) day suspension.

Please be considerate of your fellow paratransit customers. Failure to cancel trips in a timely manner causes a waste of resources. When making your reservation, keep a record of the scheduled trip so you will not miss it.

## Customer Responsibilities

The PVTA realizes there may be times when a no-show is charged in error. We need your help to ensure these charges do not become part of your permanent ridership history. You can help by following the procedures listed below:

- It is the responsibility of the rider to inform the PVTA of address changes, changes in emergency phone numbers or any other information regarding accessibility needs or changes.
- When the customer is no-showed at their home on the first pick-up of their trip, their return trip is cancelled. However, if the customer uses alternative transportation to go on to their appointment, the return trip can be provided if they phone within one (1) hour of the no-show.

By following the above listed guidelines, customers can maintain a good ridership history. We all share the responsibility to help improve the service.

Customers can help ensure their trip runs smoothly by being ready and waiting for each scheduled trip for the entire 20-minute window. A service vehicle is only allowed to wait five (5) minutes and the customer must be ready to board the vehicle as soon as the driver arrives within the window.

**Customers Responsibilities:  
PVTA has a short list of responsibilities designed to ensure safety  
and comfort for all riders as well as drivers and caregivers.**

### Customers have a responsibility to

- Read all sections of the Paratransit Services Guide carefully.
- Make reservations at least one day in advance.
- Be at pick-up locations on time.
- Provide entry if the pick-up address is located inside a gated community or other place with special access. If a vehicle is unable to enter the pick-up area and the rider fails to meet the vehicle, the rider will be considered a “no show” for the trip.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the “20-minute window”.
- Call to cancel unneeded rides to avoid “no shows”.
- Pay the correct fare in cash or tickets (drivers do not make change). \*\*\*You will not be transported if the fare is not paid prior to leaving your pick-up location.\*\*\*
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in a safe condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.

- Expect “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after, or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene.
- Follow these common rules of courtesy
  - No eating, drinking or smoking on board.
  - No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
  - No littering in the vehicle.
  - No physical abuse of another customer or driver.
  - No operating or tampering with any equipment on the Paratransit vehicle.
  - No radio or other sound generating equipment is to be played aboard the vehicles without the use of a headset.
  - No willful destruction of vehicles.

**Customers who violate these rules of conduct are subject to penalties up to and including suspension of service.**

Drivers have the responsibility to;

- Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of the riders.
- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Wear a uniform and an ID badge.
- Carry a single small load of packages to the vehicle such as two grocery bags.
- Operate the vehicle and lift in a safe manner and safely secure wheelchairs on the vehicle.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle if riders are aboard.
- Collect the fare listed on their schedule.
- Go only to the destinations listed on the manifest or as notified by the dispatcher.
- Offer assistance to riders.

### **Assistance includes**

- Get out of the vehicle and let the rider know they have arrived.
- Offering ambulatory passengers a steadying arm or other appropriate guidance or assistance while getting into the vehicle.
- Helping individuals in wheelchairs to maneuver onto the lift.
- Ensuring all riders are appropriately secured.

## **Drivers are not allowed to:**

- Enter the rider's residence or go past the lobby of a public building.
- Leave passengers in the vehicle unattended.
- Perform any personal care assistance such as assisting riders to dress.
- Smoke, eat, or drink in the vehicle
- Use a cell phone for personal calls, play loud music, or wear headphones
- Be rude or harassing to passengers
- Take information from the rider about cancellations or changes in reservations.
- Accept tips, lift or carry riders, or carry wheelchairs up and down steps.

All drivers are trained in first aid but they are not medical technicians. If there is a medical or health emergency on-board, such as a rider having a seizure or a dialysis patient bleeding, the driver will pull over, call 911, and wait for trained help.

## **Caregiver Responsibility**

Some riders are mentally or cognitively impaired or have severe memory problems such that they cannot be safely left on their own at either the pick-up point or the drop-off point. It is the responsibility of the rider's caregiver or family to clearly identify these riders to PVTA so that PVTA can inform the driver and take appropriate precautions. The driver cannot act as an attendant for these riders. Cognitively impaired riders will be allowed to travel without an attendant only as long as they exhibit safe behavior in the vehicle.

An attendant or caregiver must be present at the pick-up point and at the drop-off point for riders who cannot be left alone. If a responsible attendant or caregiver is not present when the driver attempts to pick-up or drop-off these riders, it can seriously disrupt the driver's schedule. If PVTA paratransit encounters absences of an attendant or caregiver, service to the rider may be suspended and the situation reported to adult protective services.

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS & ADDRESSES

**PVTA's ADA Eligibility Office** 413-732-6248 ext 214

**PVTA Customer Service Center** 1-877-779-7882 or  
**Comments, complaints** 413-781-7882  
**Ticket Sales**

### Paratransit Call-Center

**Trip Reservations** 1- 866-277-7741 or  
**Dispatch** 413-739-7436

**PVTA Administrative Offices** 413-732-6248  
**2808 Main Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01107**

## PARATRANSIT FARE INFORMATION

<b>One-Way Trip (within 1 town)</b>	<b>\$2.00</b>
<b>Out of town</b>	<b>\$2.50</b>
<b>Out-of-county</b>	<b>\$3.00</b>
<b>PCA*</b>	<b>No Charge</b>
<b>Companion</b>	<b>Same fare as Rider</b>
<b>Children (5 and under)</b>	<b>No Charge</b>

\*Customer eligibility file must designate that the customer requires a PCA.

## Coupon Books

Coupon books for Paratransit customers are available to all riders. They come in books of 20 coupons (\$2.00 per coupon) for \$30.00 each. We also have .50 coupons available. A book of 10 coupons (.50 per coupon) costs \$4.50 per book. They can be purchased in person or by mail at the address listed below. To purchase by mail, send a check or money order to:

**PVTA Customer Service Center  
1341 Main Street  
Springfield, MA 01103**

Tickets may also be purchased in person at other locations in the PVTA service area. Please contact **Customer Service Center** for locations in your area **1-877-779-7882**.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### **Q: Who do I call if I leave something on the vehicle?**

**A:** Phone the [Paratransit Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741](tel:1-866-277-7741) and they will contact the appropriate driver.

### **Q: What if my ride is late?**

**A:** You may call the [Paratransit Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741](tel:1-866-277-7741) to check on rides that are not on time or have not arrived by the end of the 20-minute window. Be sure to wait until the end of the 20-minute window or the vehicle could arrive while you go inside to make the call; and you could be charged with a No Show.

### **Q: I am changing from using a walker to using a wheelchair, is that a problem?**

**A:** No, but it is important for you to phone the [Call-Center at 1-866-277-7741](tel:1-866-277-7741) and update the information on your mobility device.

### **Q: Can a driver refuse to help me enter my destination?**

**A:** Drivers will meet customers at the door of the pick-up or drop-off location. Drivers do not enter the home, or drop-off and pick-up locations. The driver must stay within sight of the vehicle; there are some situations when the driver cannot assist passengers to/from an entrance that is out of sight of the vehicle.

**Q: May I take a friend with me on my shopping trip?**

**A:** Yes, you may take a companion, who will pay the same fare as you. Companions are charged the same fare as the customer and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location. Additional companions may travel with on a space available basis. You will need to tell the Reservationist at the Call-Center whether you will have a companion with you so space may be reserved.

**Q: Why does the driver ask me to back my wheelchair onto the lift, when it is easier for me to go on facing the vehicle?**

**A:** The American Safety Council and the Passenger Assistance Training programs train drivers to board customers by backing onto the lift for safety reasons. There is less chance of an accident with this method.

**Q: What if the driver shows up before the 20 minute pick-up window and I'm not ready?**

**A:** Don't Rush! Drivers should not arrive early, but if they do they cannot leave until 5 minutes within the pick-up window have passed.

**Q: Why won't the driver take a tip from me?**

**A:** Drivers are not allowed to take tips.

**Q: When I have had a good or bad trip and I want to comment, who do I call?**

**A:** All comments may be submitted by mail, fax, phone or through the PVTA website:

**Pioneer Valley Transit Authority  
ATTN: Customer Service Manager  
1341 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103  
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