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COMPLEMENTARY
PARATRANSIT
SERVICE GUIDE



RTS

CITY OF
GAINESVILLE
every path starts with passion
FLORIDA

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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide our community with a safe, courteous and reliable transportation alternative.

INTRODUCTION

All demand response service is provided through the Community Transportation Coordinator or “. MV Transportation is the Alachua County CTC. MV Transportation provides transportation for residents and visitors in Alachua County under the following major programs:

- The American’s with Disabilities Act or ADA Program: Gainesville urban area only
- Transportation Disadvantaged or TD Program: Rural transportation provided
- Medicaid Program
- Vocational Services
- Foster Grandparents
- Elder Care and the RSVP Program

For more information on these and other services, please call MV Transportation at 352-375-2784.

In an effort to explain the services offered, RTS has prepared this rider’s guide to help you plan and make your trip trouble free. Throughout this guide, you will find helpful customer information regarding:

- Eligibility
- Important Telephone Numbers
- Hours of Operation
- How to Make a Reservation

WHAT IS THE ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA is a federal law that guarantees people with disabilities full and equal access to the same services and accommodations available to people without disabilities. Under the ADA, public buses that run on regular schedules along specific routes (called fixed-route service) must be accessible to people with disabilities. When fixed-route service is not accessible or when a passenger with a disability is not able to use the fixed-route system, ADA mandates that transit systems operate complementary paratransit service. The purpose of the trip is not a factor considered when scheduling your ADA service.

WHAT IS COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE?

For eligible riders who have a disability that prevents them from making some or all of their trips on the fixed-route buses, RTS offers a shared ride door-to-door service called Paratransit. This service is available to Gainesville citizens who live within the city limits or within three quarters of a mile from a fixed route. This service is called “ADA Paratransit Service” because it is provided as part of RTS’ efforts to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Paratransit service must be reserved at least one day in advance. The service is provided with lift-equipped accessible vehicles. Paratransit service operates in the same areas and during the same days and hours as fixed-route buses. Paratransit service is also provided within the City of Gainesville city limits.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ADA PARATRANSIT

The ADA specifies three categories of eligibility. To qualify for Paratransit service, a person must meet the criteria of at least one category. Eligibility for Complementary Paratransit Service is directly related to the inability of a person with a disability to use the existing fixed-route service.

Category 1:

Paratransit eligibility under Category 1 includes those persons that are unable to use fully accessible fixed-route services. This would include any person who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including vision), and without the assistance of another individual to access, board, ride and disembark from the fixed-route system.

Category 2:

Eligibility under Category 2 includes individuals who need the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and are able with such assistance to board, ride and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible.

Category 3:

Eligibility under Category 3 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.

Any of these categories include temporary or permanent disabilities that can be verified by a qualified health care professional or rehabilitation professional. This includes having a disability that prevents you from doing

things such as identifying your bus, following or understanding directions, waiting outside unassisted at a bus stop, moving from one bus to another or recognizing your destination.

You must begin and end your travel within the RTS ADA Service area. This area is within the Gainesville city limits or within three quarters of a mile from fixed-route service outside the city limits. Persons whose travel destinations are outside this area are not eligible for ADA service. There are other funding sources available for trips outside the ADA service area.

Please visit <http://www.go-rts.com/ada.html> for more information.

Eligibility depends on the nature of the disability and the routes you wish to travel. Eligibility may be permanent or temporary depending on the disability and whether or not you can learn to use the fixed-route system by participating in travel training.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ADA CERTIFICATION AND PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Individuals interested in using Paratransit must first be determined eligible for the service. The eligibility review considers each person's functional ability to use the fixed-route bus. If a disability or health condition prevents you from using the fixed-route bus under any condition, you might be determined "fully" eligible. If you can use the fixed route buses some of the time, but not at other times, you will be determined "conditionally" eligible for those trips that you cannot make by bus. To receive information

about the ADA eligibility process or start the process, call the Center for Independent Living (CIL) at 352-378-7474 and ask to make an ADA certification appointment. If there is enough time before your appointment, ask to be mailed or faxed a "Professional Verification Form." This form is used to help the CIL decide whether your disability will qualify you to be ADA certified and must be signed by a health care professional.

The appointment will take approximately one hour. If the Professional Verification Form was sent to you before your appointment and you have had your doctor complete the form you will need to bring it with you to your appointment. You also need to bring a current picture ID if available. If you are not able to get the Professional Verification Form filled out and signed prior to your appointment, the CIL staff can fax or mail it to your health care provider. Once you have made the Certification appointment with the CIL, call MV Transportation at 352-375-2784 and tell the reservationist you have a certification appointment at the Center for Independent Living. Be prepared to give them your address and phone number and the date of your trip. RTS will provide one round trip on paratransit at no charge to the Center for Independent Living (CIL).

When the health care provider returns the form and the application is completed, the CIL staff will determine your ADA eligibility. The CIL has up to 21 days after your application is completed, a professional verification form is signed and your disability is verified, to determine your ADA eligibility. Most of the time it does not take the full 21 days to complete the eligibility process, however, if it takes

longer than 10 business days, the professional verification is usually the reason. Once the CIL has determined your eligibility, they will mail you a written notification, and if you are determined eligible, your identification card. This card will specify your expiration date and whether you are eligible for a personal care attendant (PCA). The CIL Transportation Program Director makes the final determination of eligibility in all cases.

Applicants are granted presumptive eligibility if a determination of eligibility has not been made within 21 calendar days of the submission of a completed application and completed professional verification form. Service for the applicant will be provided and the applicant will be presumed eligible until and unless the determination is complete and the person is found to be ineligible. An application is considered to be complete once the person has provided all of the information required and the applicant's health care provider has completed the professional verification form. Once all information has been received, the twenty-one day review process will begin.

IF YOU ARE NOT ADA ELIGIBLE

You may appeal any decision that declares you ineligible. Instructions for filing an appeal will be included in your notification letter. All appeals will be heard by an independent appeals committee.

You may also call MV Transportation at 375-2784 to see if you are eligible for Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) or Medicaid transportation services.

ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE TIMES

ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is available through MV Transportation weekdays from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm, Saturdays from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm and Sundays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. RTS provides service after 9:00 pm to the areas where the fixed-route bus provides late night service. Call the RTS ADA coordinator at 334-2650 to find out if your trip qualifies for late night service.

HOW TO SCHEDULE AN ADA PARATRANSIT TRIP

- Call MV Transportation at 375-2784.
- Reservations may be made up to 14 days in advance but no later than the day prior to service being needed. Reservations are taken during regular office hours 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, 7 days a week.
- Tell the reservationist that you wish to schedule an ADA Complementary Paratransit Trip.
- Be sure to include any personal care attendants (PCA) or companions that will be accompanying you on your trip. You are allowed to have two accompanying riders, a PCA and a companion or two companions. The companions are charged the same co-pay as the ADA client and there is no charge for a PCA.
- Make the reservationist aware if you are traveling with a service animal or a pet.
- Let the reservationist know your mobility status (i.e. If you need a mobility aid, Wheelchair or walker, etc.) If you usually travel with a wheelchair but decide not to take your wheelchair, let the reservationist know you will be an ambulatory rider.

- When you book your trip, make sure to allow enough time between trips. Remember you must be at your destination at least one hour prior and you could be on the van for at least one hour within the city limits/service area. Consecutive trips must be scheduled a minimum of 90 minutes apart.
- Additional Tip: Give yourself a 5 to 10 minute buffer before your actual appointment time when scheduling medical appointments to ensure your on time arrival.

EXAMPLE: TAKING A TRIP

- The first leg of the trip: the appointment time is 9:00 am. The pick up window opens at 8:00 am and MV has until 9:00 am to get you to your appointment.
- You have to be at your appointment for at least one hour before MV can come back to pick you up.
- MV Transportation has a 30 minute window for a pick up. So for a requested 10:00 am pickup, MV could pick you up as late as 10:30 AM and still be in the window.
- At no time should you be on a vehicle for more than 60 minutes while traveling within the ADA service area.

TAKING A TRIP

MV Transportation provides a shared-ride, paratransit service. Drivers will meet you at the front door of any private residence or at the ground floor door of a public building. Drivers are prohibited from entering any private residence so please be ready and waiting to board the vehicle at the start of your scheduled "pick-up window". Drivers may go into the first floor lobby of a public building, but are not required to search

for clients or go to the second floor of a building. The pick-up window starts 60 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time for clients who are traveling within the Gainesville city limits. For clients living within the Gainesville city limits, but traveling outside the city limits, the window opens 90 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment time. This trip reservation would no longer be funded as an ADA trip, but either a Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) trip or a Medicaid trip. This would depend on which you are eligible for and the reason for the trip, i.e. medical appointment or a trip to see a friend.

The driver will only wait five minutes for you to board from the beginning of the pick-up window. If you do not board within five minutes, the driver will depart without you and you will be a no-show. If your disability makes it impossible for you to board the vehicle in five minutes, then please notify MV Transportation so the five minute boarding requirement can be modified for you. When being dropped off for your appointment, you may be dropped off up to 30 minutes prior to your appointment/requested time. The correct fare is required at the time of your trip. Drivers are prohibited from making change. Drivers are also prohibited from accepting gifts or gratuities of any kind.

Once at your destination, you must be there at least one hour from the time you were dropped off before MV Transportation can return to pick you up.

RIDER TIPS:

- Make sure that your address is clearly visible from the street, especially at night.
- If you are being picked up at the mall or a large building, make sure when you schedule

your ride to tell the reservationist at what entrance you will be waiting.

- Carry necessary medication with you in case MV Transportation is delayed and your trip takes longer than expected.
- If you use oxygen, bring an adequate (extra) supply.
- If you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, please bring a small snack with you in case the trip takes longer than expected.
- Additional Tip: Give yourself a 5 to 10 minute buffer before your actual appointment time when scheduling medical appointments to ensure your on time arrival.

WHEN THE PARATRANSIT VEHICLE ARRIVES

The Paratransit driver will pull up to the pick-up address you provided and, unless something is preventing them from doing so, they will park as close as possible to the location. The vehicle might arrive before your pick-up window opens; you are not required to leave earlier than your requested pick-up time. The driver may come to the door and let you know they have arrived. If you are ready, you may accompany them to the van. If you are not ready and the driver is early, the van will wait and the driver will come to the door when your window opens. The driver is required to get out of the vehicle and come to the door to escort you to the van. The driver is not permitted to honk the horn to let you know that he/she has arrived. Please report such incidents to either the RTS ADA Transit Coordinator or MV Transportation.

PLEASE NOTE: The vehicle may arrive at any time within the hour window to pick you up for

your trip. The driver is only permitted to wait 5 minutes after arrival in the pick-up window. If you are not ready, the driver may have to leave to avoid inconveniencing other riders.

ASSISTANCE ADA PROVIDES

ADA Paratransit is a door-to-door-service; therefore drivers are required to escort riders to the van. Drivers will assist riders, upon request, in getting to, on, off and from the vehicle. This assistance may include:

- Drivers may lend a supporting arm, guide, and/or assist up or down steps.
- Drivers will operate the wheelchair lift and will assist riders with the securement of wheelchairs or mobility aids and with seat belts.
- Drivers may not assist riders in wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Drivers may carry packages as determined by MV Transportation. Riders are allowed to bring small shopping carts with them on the van to handle groceries.
- Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying passengers and/or their children.

Passenger property that can be carried by the passenger and/or PCA in one trip and can be safely stowed on the vehicle shall be allowed to be transported with the passenger at no additional charge. Passenger property does not include wheelchairs, child seats, stretchers, secured oxygen, personal assistive devices, or intravenous devices. These items are considered necessary equipment and will be transported without question.

If you need assistance once the driver has taken you to the door, please arrange to have someone other than the driver assist you, as the driver needs to depart after delivering you to your destination in order to pick up other passengers.

NOTE: If you bring more groceries than can be carried on or off the van and you delay the departure of the van beyond 5 minutes, you will be assessed a no-show.

HOW TO CHANGE A SCHEDULED RIDE

If your plans change and you need to adjust your ride times, call MV Transportation at 375-2784 by 5:00 pm, the day prior to your trip. Reservations are open until 5:00 pm daily and will always try to accommodate your needs, but changes to your original ride request may result in adjustment to your pick-up times.

On the day of your trip MV Transportation cannot change pick-up times or pick-up/drop-off locations. This is considered same day service and MV Transportation is not required to accommodate such requests. These changes create an inconvenience to other riders.

WILL CALL: IF YOUR APPOINTMENT IS RUNNING LATE

Everyone has occasional circumstances outside of their control that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If your appointment is running later than you expected and there is a chance you will not be ready for your scheduled

return trip (or if you have missed the van), call MV Transportation as soon as possible. Your request will be coordinated with the dispatch office which stays in radio contact with drivers. Every effort will be made to adjust your return pick-up time and assign another bus to pick you up at a later time. Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.

REMEMBER: *Allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle.*

NOTE: *If a bus is sent and you are not ready, you will be considered a will call. If you call to change your appointment because you are running late, you will be considered a will call and MV has two hours to provide another pick-up.*

HOW TO CANCEL A SCHEDULED RIDE

Late cancellations cost RTS and taxpayers thousands of dollars each year and affect our ability to provide that trip opportunity to other riders. If you have scheduled a ride that you no longer need to take, please call MV Transportation **as soon as possible** to cancel, with **required notice prior to 9:00 pm the day before** or two hours prior to your scheduled pick-up time. You can cancel all trips up to fourteen (14) days in advance, or put subscription service on hold for longer periods of time.

During regular business hours, call MV Transportation at 352-375-2784 for trip cancellations. Dispatchers will take next day cancellations until 9:00 pm the day prior. After hours, a recording will ask you to state your name and the date and time of the trip(s) you wish to cancel.

THE "NO-SHOW" POLICY

Q: WHAT IS A NO-SHOW?

A: No-Show is when you schedule a Paratransit trip, but then you:

- Without any notice to MV Transportation, fail to take your trip.
- Cancel the trip too close to your scheduled pick-up time (2 hours or less) to allow the trip to be rescheduled for someone else.
- Without any notice to MV Transportation, delay your scheduled trip.
- The driver arrives at a drop-off location and the rider delays the van by not getting off the van, or when no one is at the location to receive the rider and the rider cannot be left unattended.

Q: WHY DO WE NEED A NO-SHOW POLICY?

A: No-Show usually results in a wasted trip. This is very expensive and takes away a trip that could have been scheduled for someone else.

Space on the paratransit system is limited and costly to provide. MV drivers will wait for passengers for five minutes within the on-time pick-up window (defined as being sixty (60) minutes prior to the appointment time (within the city limits) and thirty (30) minutes after the requested pick-up time.) MV drivers are required to make reasonable attempts to locate and alert riders who may not be able to identify a waiting vehicle. MV Transportation is required to ensure that the

special instructions for alerting riders are included on run manifests or electronic trip transmissions and are available to drivers and dispatchers.

If the driver is not able to make in-person contact with the customer, they will notify dispatch and will make a reasonable effort to locate and alert the customer by telephone. If contact is not made with the customer and at least five minutes has elapsed from the time of the driver's arrival, the dispatcher will instruct the driver to leave a "no-show" door hanger, depart the pick-up location and record the customer as a "no-show" on the manifest.

Riders who are located or contacted by driver's dispatcher and who indicate they are not ready or will not be traveling as scheduled will also be recorded as no-shows. Dispatchers must enter notes into the trip record related to each no-show approved. Riders who do not call and cancel at least two hours prior to the negotiated pick-up time will be recorded as "late cancels," which is considered a form of no-show.

The ADA regulation allows paratransit service to be suspended, for a reasonable period of time, when a rider consistently misses scheduled trips. The RTS administrative process for suspending paratransit service is as follows:

A rider may be subject to suspension for a predetermined length of time based on review of scheduled trips that shows the rider no-showed more than 10% of their scheduled rides (10% being twice the system average). Riders will be assessed points for same day cancellations, not being ready to travel and/or canceling at the door. The point system is as follows:

- **Same Day Notice** is charged to the rider's record if they cancel their ride after 9:00 pm

the day before or less than two hours before the pick-up window opens. The client will be assessed 1 point.

- **Late Notice** is charged against the rider's record if they cancel their ride between 30 minutes and two hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time. The client will be assessed 2 points.
- **No Notice/Cancel at the Door** is charged to the client's record if they cancel the ride less than 30 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, or they notify the driver when the driver arrives at the door they are not going, or the vehicle has waited five minutes and the client is not ready to go. The client will be assessed 3 points.

Twelve points within 30 days will trigger a review of the rider's trip record. The review must clearly show the no-shows and late cancels were the rider's fault and not due to system no-shows.

If a rider is shown to have abused the no-show policy and is suspended from the service, the following suspension times will be utilized:

- First Suspension..... 14 days**
- Second Suspension 21 days**
- Third Suspension or more 30 days**
(Could lead to loss of Subscription Service)

Before suspending service, MV Transportation must notify the rider in writing, by certified mail, of the proposed suspended service, citing specifically the basis of the proposed suspension and describing the proposed sanction.

The suspended rider must be given a chance within 10 business days to be heard and to present information and arguments.

MV Transportation must provide the suspended rider with written notification of the decision, the length of time for suspension and the reasons for it.

Q. HOW DO I APPEAL MY SERVICE SUSPENSION?

A. You can appeal your service suspension by making a **verbal or written appeal** of suspension to the RTS ADA Transit Coordinator within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the Letter of Suspension, and no later than the date listed in the body of the letter. Verbal request can be made by calling 352-334-2650, Monday through Thursday 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Or you can **send a written request** to the RTS ADA Transit Coordinator at: Station 5 P.O. Box 490, Gainesville, FL 32602-0490. Or **via email** to crawfordma1@cityofgainesville.org and ask for an appeal review of the service suspension.

In accordance with DOT ADA regulations, Part 49 CFR 37.131(b), when a “no-show” occurs on the first leg of a trip, **all later rides for the day will not automatically be canceled**. It is the rider’s responsibility to cancel rides (service) they no longer need.

Failure to cancel rides that are no longer needed will result in the assessment of points from the current no-show policy. Each trip that is no-showed is assessed independently in accordance with ADA regulations. Riders will be assessed no-show points for each trip they no-show regardless of whether there are multiple no-shows for the same day.

If a schedule delay, bad weather, or breakdown causes MV Transportation to be late and you decide to find another way to your appointment after waiting 30 minutes from your scheduled time, please let MV Transportation know you

secured another ride so MV does not send the van or assess points for a no-show.

If you feel you were charged with a no-show in error, call the ADA Transit Coordinator at 352-334-2650 so an investigation can be completed.

ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE FARES

- Fares must be paid when you board the vehicle. If you do not pay the correct fare, including the use of the correct pass, the driver will refuse to provide the ride and you will be assessed a no-show.
- The ADA allows transit agencies to charge twice the fixed-route fare. ADA Certified riders using MV Transportation pay \$3.00 per trip.
- Personal Care Attendant or PCA: A PCA may travel free with a certified rider. Please mention that a working PCA is traveling with you when you reserve a ride. Also, a working service animal may accompany you at all times on fixed-route and paratransit service.
- Other companions: ADA passengers are allowed to have two riders accompany them on an ADA trip. If one is a PCA, the other is considered a companion; if you are not authorized to have a PCA, you may travel with up to two companions. You must tell the reservationist when booking your trip that one or two companions are traveling with you. Companions are required pay the full \$3.00 fare. MV may allow more than two accompanying riders to travel with you if space permits and prearrangements have been made.

CHECK ON YOUR RIDE

Unexpected delays can occur because of road work, traffic conditions, bad weather, or on occasion, mechanical problems with the vehicle. If a MV Transportation vehicle has not arrived 30 minutes after your pick-up window opens, call MV Transportation at 352-375-2784 for a "Where's my ride update." Dispatch will radio the driver and give you an update on your trip. Stay close to the pick-up location if at all possible, in case the van arrives while you are calling.

VISITOR POLICY

If you are a visitor to the Gainesville area and have been determined ADA eligible by another transit or public agency, your eligibility determination will be honored while you are visiting the City of Gainesville. You will need to provide proof of eligibility before you arrive or when you arrive prior to using the ADA paratransit service. Contact your local certifying agency and they can aid you in notifying either RTS or the CIL of your ADA eligibility. For Gainesville residents wishing to visit other cities contact the CIL for help with notifying your destination of your ADA certification; this will allow you to use public transportation (if available) in the area you are visiting. Length of time will depend on local policy. For visitors to Gainesville you will be able to use the paratransit service for a total of 21 days during the calendar year. If you are in need of service beyond the 21 days, you will need to apply for local certification.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone you may bring with you to assist you with traveling or with your personal care or activities. One (1) PCA may ride for free when traveling with you. A PCA must get on and off the van or fixed-route bus at the same places and times as you. To be able to have one PCA ride free with you, you must be registered with a need for a PCA. This is completed as part of the eligibility process. If you did not indicate the need for a PCA when you first applied for Paratransit eligibility and you are now in need of a PCA, call the Center for Independent Living (CIL) at 378-7474 and the staff will work with you to change your status and include a PCA.

NOTE: *When scheduling a trip you will need to tell the reservationist that you are traveling with a PCA. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders.*

GUEST/COMPANION

A guest/companion is someone you want to bring along to share the trip, not someone you must bring to assist you. Guest/companions must pay a fare when accompanying you and must get on and off the vehicle at the same places and times as you.

When scheduling your trips, you will need to tell the reservationist that you will be traveling with one or more guests/companions. Drivers cannot add riders who do not have a reservation.

If you make a reservation for them, you are always entitled to bring up to two guest/companions with you unless you have a PCA, then you are entitled to one guest/companion and one PCA. Additional guests/companions will be accommodated if there is enough space on the vehicle only if prearrangements have been made with reservations.

WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER MOBILITY AIDS

Paratransit vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. MV Transportation requires wheelchair riders to wear a Posey belt and it is recommended that you allow the driver to use the lap belt for your safety.

The ADA Act of 1990 defines Common Wheelchair dimensions as:

- 30 inches wide
- 48 inches long (Measured 2 inches above the ground)
- And when occupied does not exceed 600 pounds

If you weigh more than 800 lbs (chair and rider combined), MV Transportation does not have vehicles or lifts that can accommodate you.

SCOOTERS

Some three-wheeled scooters are difficult to secure on Paratransit vehicles. Some scooters also come with a warning from the manufacturer that they should not be used as seats in moving

vehicles. Because of this, the driver may recommend that you transfer to a vehicle seat if you are able to do so. While the driver will not require you to transfer, we strongly recommend that you do so, so we can provide you and other customers with the safest ride possible.

WHEELCHAIR SECURITY AND SEAT BELT POLICY

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that mobility devices are properly secured. Wheelchairs/scooters are required to be secured into the four point securement system at all times during the ride. RTS and MV Transportation request that riders allow operators to secure the lap belts to ensure the customer's safety. "Secure Here" stickers are available for riders to place on their mobility aid to assist the driver in placing the securement devices.

RESPIRATORS AND PORTABLE OXYGEN EQUIPMENT

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on paratransit vehicles. The driver will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to assist you when using this equipment. If you need assistance with portable life support equipment, please arrange to bring a qualified attendant along with you.

SERVICE ANIMALS

A service animal is any guide dog, service dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Riders may travel with a service animal. Be sure to inform the reservationist when you are scheduling your trip that you will be traveling with a service animal.

You are responsible for the care and supervision of your animal while on board. If you are planning on riding MV Transportation with a service animal, please follow these guidelines:

- Service animals are to be properly leashed and/or harnessed and under the control of their handlers at all times.
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians and rodents must be kept in an enclosed carrier/container.
- The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The animal may not sit on a vehicle seat.
- The animal must not be aggressive toward people or other animals.
- You are responsible for any damages or soiling caused by the animal.
- The animal must be clean and well groomed.
- No proof is required of an animal's training.
- The animal can be prohibited from boarding if that particular animal poses a threat to the driver or other passengers.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

MV Transportation is required to transport children in the following manner:

- Children who are between the ages of birth and four (4) years old inclusive, and/or

children who weigh less than forty (40) pounds must travel with a responsible guardian and must ride in a child safety seat which complies with Section 316.613 F.S.

- Children under eight (8) years of age inclusive must travel with a responsible guardian. This requirement may be modified by City as it deems appropriate.

If your child is required by Florida law to be in a child safety seat, it is your responsibility to provide that safety seat and ensure it meets requirements set by Florida statute for child restraint devices. (Section 316.613, F.S.)

TRANSPORTING PETS

Pets are not to be confused with Service Animals. (See section on Service Animals, page 14)

MV Transportation will transport the pets of riders as long as such pets are completely enclosed in commercial pet carriers which fit on the rider's laps or beneath their seats.

For safety reasons drivers are not permitted to carry cages or kennels on or off of Paratransit vehicles. If you need assistance with a pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you.

You must inform MV Transportation that you wish to travel with a pet at the time you request your trip. Riders scheduled to travel with pets will be identified on the Manifest or Schedule. MV Transportation may refuse to transport your pet if it causes a disruption to service for you or any other rider.

TRANSPORTING PACKAGES

MV Transportation will transport packages belonging to riders as long as the rider is on board with his/her package and the package fits on the rider's lap or beneath his/her seat. Riders are also permitted to utilize hand pulled collapsible shopping cart/baskets. These carts/baskets will be secured by the driver to ensure they do not roll or tip over while the vehicle is in motion. If you are bringing a shopping cart with you, let the reservationist know when you request your trip to assure an accessible vehicle that will better accommodate the collapsible carts.

Package limitation: Drivers may help to carry packages for the ADA passengers per MV Transportation guidelines. However, drivers are not required to assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items, so please do not plan to bring more than you and/or the assistant who is traveling with you can manage without delaying the vehicle. Delaying the vehicle occurs when you bring more items than you can carry on the vehicle at one time. If you are not ready to go, you can be deemed a will call and a no-show will be assessed to your record.

MV Transportation is prohibited from transporting illegal controlled substances (excluding prescription medication), hazardous materials, fire arms or explosive devices.

COMPLAINTS AND COMMENDATIONS

A **Complaint** is defined as "A report by an eligible rider or representative of a rider which

identifies an incident or action by a driver or a member of MV Transportation's Staff which detracts from the positive image, service quality, and/or non-compliance with the requirements of the paratransit services covered by contractual agreement.

A **Commendation** is defined as "A report by an eligible rider or representative of a rider which identifies an action by a driver or a member of MV Transportation's Staff in which the staff member or driver has gone above and beyond what is required to provide outstanding service.

When MV Transportation receives a complaint directly from the clients they are required to track and investigate those complaints. At the end of the month, MV Transportation is required to report the client's name, the nature of the complaint and the resolution to the City.

MV Transportation is then required to investigate and provide a response to RTS as to how the complaint has been addressed, as well as what corrective actions, if any, have been taken to avoid future complaints of the same nature. MV Transportation has ten (10) business days to respond to service complaints.

If the complaint involves safety or serious misconduct, MV Transportation is required to respond to RTS within twenty-four (24) hours or less.

RTS will review responses to complaints, and if it deems the response to be inadequate, will redirect the complaint to MV Transportation for further action.

In all cases, RTS is the final arbiter as to whether or not complaints have been adequately resolved by MV Transportation.

MV Transportation may discuss complaints with ADA paratransit riders or their representatives. MV Transportation is prohibited from taking any actions against any individual who has reported a complaint in connection with the service.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A formal grievance is a written complaint to document concerns regarding the operation of administration of ADA Paratransit service. A formal grievance may also be a service complaint that has been left unresolved for more than 45 days.

Formal Grievances include but are not limited to:

- Chronic, recurring or unresolved Service Complaints
- Violations of specific rules governing ADA paratransit service
- Suspension of Service

Riders who wish to file a formal grievance should contact the RTS ADA Transit Coordinator at 352-334-2650 and request the forms required to file a grievance. They can be mailed or emailed to the person wishing to file the complaint/concern.

DISASTERS, PUBLIC EVACUATION

Riders who need help evacuating in the event of a disaster or need to go to a shelter in the event of a storm are asked to enroll with the Alachua County Special Needs Registry. The Special

Needs Registry maintains a list of residents who, because of their disability, have special requirements (i.e. life support, oxygen, special diet, visually impaired) and are in need of transportation or shelter in the event of a storm or disaster. If time allows planning for an upcoming critical event, these riders will be contacted prior to (i.e. Tropical Storms, Hurricanes) and asked if they desire transportation to a special needs shelter. Depending on the situation, riders will be transported to a special needs shelter or evacuated. To register with the Alachua County Emergency management call: 352.264.6500, ext 311.

RIDER COURTESY AND CONDUCT

- Riders must depart the transit vehicle upon demand of an Authorized RTS or MV representative including the van/bus operator.
- No Smoking on the vehicles
- Riders shall maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene
- No eating or drinking on-board (unless required for health reasons)
- No riding with open containers of alcohol or with illegal drugs
- No abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions
- No deliberate fare evasion
- No physical abuse of another rider or the driver
- No petting guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner
- No playing of radios, cassette tape players, or compact disk players (without headphones), or other noisy equipment

FIXED-ROUTE SYSTEM

ACCESSIBILITY OF RTS FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

RTS fixed-route service buses are also accessible to disabled passengers. Drivers are trained to assist you by using a lift and by securing wheelchair passengers on the bus. RTS buses have lifts and ramps for people who use wheelchairs and others who cannot climb stairs. Buses with lifts are equipped to transport common wheelchairs or scooters. A common wheelchair is one that does not 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. The RTS fixed-route bus lifts are rated to the ADA standard of 600 pounds and therefore will not be used to lift wheelchair clients that weigh more than 600 pounds (client plus wheelchair.) This is a safety and liability issue. Clients who exceed the weight limit when combined with the weight of the wheelchair, must use the paratransit service. If the bus arrives at your bus stop and the lift is inoperable for some reason or if the bus is full, the bus driver will call for a wheelchair accessible bus or van. In addition, all drivers are trained to announce major stops and transfer points to make sure you do not miss your stop. Simply tell the driver to let you know when you are at your destination. Drivers can also assist you in determining which the correct stop to help you get to your destination or transfer point.

The Regional Transit System has large print schedules, compact discs and Braille versions of the fixed-route bus schedule. You can also access the RTS website at www.go-rt.com for route information and the RTS and MV rider's guides. For more information, please call the RTS ADA

Coordinator at 334-2650 or the CIL at 378-7474. You may also call the RTS Administration at 334-2609.

Personal Care Attendants and Companions: The same rules apply to the fixed-route when traveling with a PCA or Companion. See page 12.

FARES ON FIXED-ROUTE SYSTEM

Individuals who are ADA certified ride for free on fixed-route buses. Simply show your ADA ID card to the RTS driver. Do not lend your ADA card to family and friends. RTS drivers will confiscate ADA cards in possession of individuals who are not entitled to use the card and who are not pictured on the card.

LATER GATOR SERVICE

RTS fixed-route offers Later Gator service for patrons on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Service starts between 8:00-8:30 pm for all Later Gator routes and ends at 3:00 am. Please see the regular schedule for exact route directions. If you are unable to access the fixed-route, but would like to travel along the later Gator route, please contact MV to schedule your ride. RTS will deliver your ride and perform all ADA paratransit services after 9:00 pm. Travel must be within three quarters of a mile from a fixed-route corridor for late night service.

PERSONAL INSTRUCTION FOR TRAVELING ON FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

Learn to navigate Gainesville like a pro!! CIL offers personal training to any customer wanting to learn how to use the fixed-route system. Training involves classroom and on-the-road instruction. It provides riders with the skills needed to use Gainesville's public transportation system safely and independently; instruction

is free to any individual with a disability. For information or to register for classes, call the Center for Independent Living (CIL) at 378-7474.

RTS FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE HOURS

RTS fixed-route service is provided from 6:00am to 3:00am on weekdays, depending on the route; and 6:00am to 7:00pm on Saturdays. Sunday service is available from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED OR TD PROGRAM

WHAT IS TD? **Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program or TD Program**

The Florida legislature adopted legislation creating Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program in 1979 to provide transportation services to disadvantaged individuals. The Transportation Disadvantaged are defined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, as "those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent on others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities or other life sustaining activities or children who are handicapped or high-risk or at-risk as defined in section 411.202, Florida Statutes."

Eligibility criteria fall under the following categories:

- **Age** - Applicant is 60 years of age or older, is unable to use the city bus or to provide or purchase transportation.
- **Disability** - Applicant has a disability that prevents them from using the city bus and is unable to provide or purchase transportation.

- **Low Income** - The applicant's household income is at or below the federal poverty level, the ride cannot be accommodated by the city bus and is unable to provide or purchase transportation. It must be shown that transportation is unavailable to the applicant in addition to having a low income.

TD BUS PASSES

Riders who have access to the city buses and qualify under TD guidelines may purchase a TD bus pass from the MV office. Bus passes may be purchased Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. TD subsidized bus passes are \$3.00. Please do not lose your bus pass. MV will not be able to replace any lost bus passes. Bus passes will not be mailed to the applicant's home. Once a rider is issued a TD bus pass they are not eligible to use TD demand response for the month they obtain the bus pass. Transportation Disadvantaged Program trips are funded through the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust fund.

TD TRIP PRIORITIES

Trip priorities have been established and are listed by order of importance:

- Vital Care - Medical
- Other Medical
- Shopping - Pharmacy and Grocery
- Employment
- Education
- Social Service Agencies
- Recreational

TD certified riders may travel with one escort if it is deemed medically necessary by the applicant's doctor. Escorts, companions and personal care attendants will pay the \$3.00 co-pay under TD funded trips.

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

For information about ADA door-to-door paratransit or fixed-route service, call the RTS ADA Transit Coordinator at 334-2650. For ADA Paratransit certification or travel training, call CIL-NCF at 378-7474.

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA OR CIL-NCF

The **Center for Independent Living** or **CIL** is a nonprofit private organization dedicated to creating equal access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities who live as they choose in the community.

William Kennedy, *Executive Director*
Staci Graff, *ADA Transportation Program Director*
222 SW 36th Terrace
Gainesville, FL 32607
(352) 378-7474

MV TRANSPORTATION

MV Transportation has been contracted by RTS to provide ADA Complementary Paratransit trips. Call 375-2784 to make a reservation Monday through Sunday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. MV Transportation also provides Transportation Disadvantaged and door-to-door Medicaid transportation.

3713 SW 42nd Ave.
Suite 2 and 3
Gainesville, FL 32608
(352) 375-2784

REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM RTS ADA COORDINATOR

Station 5 Box 490
Gainesville, FL 32601
(352) 334-2650
Monday - Thursday: 7:00am - 6:00pm
Closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday

The Regional Transit System or RTS retains all rights to set and enforce policies with respect to ADA Paratransit service, eligibility for such service, public transit fixed-route service, fares, public transit equipment and personnel, and grievances related to any of these elements of public transportation.

THE ROSA PARKS RTS DOWNTOWN STATION

Corner of SE 3rd Street and Depot Avenue
(352) 334-2600
Monday - Friday: 7:00am - 7:00pm
First and last Saturday of the month:
8:00am - 12:00pm
Closed Sunday

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

THE DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES

(352) 955-2075
Provides: Independent living skills training for persons with visual impairments

REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM DISPATCH

(352) 334-2605
Provides: Fixed-route bus service and ADA Paratransit service information

Do you have **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS** or **SUGGESTIONS?**

Call (352) 334-2650



OUR MISSION

*To provide our
community with a safe,
courteous and reliable
transportation alternative.*