

Scheduling Rides

Negotiating Ride Times

The ADA allows a transit agency to negotiate pickup times, but the transit agency cannot require the rider to accept a trip more than one hour before or after the needed departure time. This is called **the scheduling or negotiating window**.

Comparable Service

The goal of ADA Paratransit is to provide accessible service that is comparable to the fixed-route system.

Negotiating a 4pm pickup knowing that a rider works until 5pm would not be comparable service.

Offering a 9am pickup time for a rider who has an appointment at 8am would not be comparable service.

Scheduling Window

When there is a latest arrival time (for example, arrival to work), the scheduling window should be used on the early side to ensure that the rider arrives on time. When there is an earliest departure time on a return trip (for example, a doctor's appointment), the scheduling window should be from that time to one hour after.

Example: James

James gets off work at 5pm, changes out of his uniform, and often chats with co-workers after his shift ends. James requests pickup at 5:15pm to ensure that he is ready. James is given a pickup window of 5:15pm–5:45pm.

Scheduling Changes

If a transit agency wants to change the originally-negotiated time (for example, to maximize driver schedules), riders should be called for a new time to be negotiated. If a rider cannot be reached to re-negotiate the pickup time, the original time should not be changed. Per the ADA scheduling window, any changes may not be more than one hour from the rider's requested time.

Driver's Manifest

The agreed-upon time should appear on the driver's manifest.

Travel Time

To determine if ADA Paratransit travel time is excessive, the FTA looks to the travel time of the corresponding fixed-route system. ADA Paratransit is to be comparable to the fixed-route public transportation system. ADA Paratransit is the accessible counterpart to the public bus system. ADA Paratransit cannot operate under the same time and convenience factors as private transportation. Private transportation options, such as owning a vehicle, taking a taxi, or using services like Uber or Lyft are more convenient for the user; however, they are also more costly.

Travel Time Parameters

The FTA recommends that paratransit agencies implement a graduate travel time parameter. For example: 30 minutes for trips under 3 miles, 45 minutes for trips that are 3–5 miles, 60 minutes for trips that are 5–7 miles, etc..

Pickup Window

Riders should be given a pick-up window of thirty minutes during which they should be ready to depart.

Scheduling Rides

Example: James

James gets off work at 5pm, changes out of his uniform, and often chats with co-workers after his shift ends. James requests pickup at 5:15pm to ensure that he is ready. James is given a pickup window of 5:15pm–5:45pm. **He is ready to depart anytime during that window.**

The pickup must occur during the window, not earlier or later, to be considered on time. The FTA found instances when drivers arrive well before the announced pickup window and passengers who are not ready are given a no-show. **This practice is not consistent with the ADA.**

Example: Amal

Amal calls to schedule ADA Paratransit for a 10am job interview. The reservationist looks at the distance and tells Amal “We can pick you up between 9 and 9:30am.” On the day of his interview, Amal is ready to leave at 9am. The driver knows that Amal has an interview at 10am.

Will-Call Pickups

Will-call pickups are not required by the ADA. If a transit agency provides will-call pickups, it is a good practice to establish a window for the anticipated pickup. Riders must understand the implications if they ask for will-call return trips rather than scheduled return rides.

Role of the Rider

Call to cancel if you won't be taking a trip, as soon as you can.

Be aware of your 30-minute pickup window and be ready.

Understand that ADA paratransit service is an extension of the city's fixed-route bus system and is a shared-ride, public transportation experience.