

**LIBERTY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS/LIBERTY COUNTY TRANSIT
ADA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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LIBERTY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/LIBERTY COUNTY TRANSIT ADA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Basic Requirements

The main tenet of ADA transportation regulations is that:

"No entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service."

Service Delivery Requirements

Access to information: All print material made available to the users of transportation services will also be available in accessible formats for persons with disabilities.

Access to communications: Liberty County Transit utilizes the Florida Relay System which allows persons with speech and/or hearing impairments access to information provided by telephone. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at no cost to the caller. Please see the attached information regarding the Florida Relay System.

Employee training: ADA regulations require that:

"Each public or private entity which operates a fixed route or demand responsive system shall ensure that personnel is trained to proficiency, as appropriate to their duties, so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly and treat individuals with disabilities who use the service respectfully and courteously, with appropriate attention to the differences among individuals with disabilities."

Liberty County Transit requires that all employees be trained according to ADA regulations and that this required training is incorporated into the overall training program of all employees. This training shall include passenger sensitivity and disability awareness training.

Equipment maintenance: It is the policy of Liberty County Transit that all lifts, securement systems, and other access-related equipment must be maintained in safe, operating conditions. If damaged or out of order, this equipment will be repaired promptly. When equipment is out of order, reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate riders who would otherwise use the equipment.

Lift and securement use: It is the policy of Liberty County Transit that all people using wheelchairs and other powered mobility devices must be allowed to ride the entity's vehicles. A "wheelchair" is defined 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. A lift conforming to ADA requirements has a platform measuring and least 30" x 48". Transportation operators must carry a wheelchair and occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them. If a lift has a minimum design load of 600 pounds, there is no requirement for an agency to transport a heavier-occupied device. However, if the vehicle lift has a design load of 800 pounds, the agency would need to transport an 800-pound wheelchair/passenger combination, but not a combination exceeding 800 pounds. An operator may deny transportation if carrying the wheelchair and its occupant would be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements, as when, for example, the wheelchair is so large it would block an aisle or interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency. Where necessary or upon request, Liberty County Transit personnel must assist individuals

with disabilities with the use of securement systems and ramps/lifts. If the driver must leave their seat to provide this assistance, they must do so. Liberty County Transit requires that all wheelchairs be secured during transport. Drivers are responsible for safely operating the lift and properly securing the wheelchair in a forward-facing position using the securement system in the vehicle.

It is the policy of Liberty County Transit that all passengers, both ambulatory passengers and those who use mobility aids, must wear seat belts.

When transporting users of three-wheeled wheelchairs or other mobility devices that pose securement problems, Liberty County Transit drivers can request that the user transfer to a vehicle seat. It is not a requirement that the rider makes this transfer. Drivers can explain to riders the reasons for requesting a transfer but must allow them to make the final decision on whether a transfer is appropriate given their particular disability. Liberty County Transit drivers will be provided training on the proper techniques for assisting passengers in transferring from their three-wheeled wheelchair to a vehicle seat.

Liberty County Transit policies require that a person who cannot enter a vehicle using the stairs but who does not use a wheelchair must be allowed to use the lift. All lifts must be properly equipped with handrails on both sides of the lift.

Accommodating mobility aids and life support systems: Liberty County Transit policies permit ADA paratransit eligible riders to travel with service animals. Service animals are animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Liberty County Transit drivers may ask if an animal is a service animal or what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal or ask about the person's disability. A service animal may not be excluded unless the animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it or the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

In addition, Liberty County Transit policies allow riders to travel with respirators and portable oxygen. Travel with this equipment can only be denied if it would violate rules concerning the transportation of hazardous materials. In general, the transport of common types of portable life support equipment is not prohibited. Cylinders of oxygen passengers use for health reasons, for example, are not subject to the Hazardous Materials Regulations.

Attendant policies/refusing service: Personal care attendants (PCAs) must be permitted to accompany riders and are not considered companions. PCAs are not charged a fare. Liberty County Transit requires that individuals indicate the need to travel with a PCA when they request paratransit eligibility certification.

Liberty County Transit cannot require that an individual travel with an attendant. If Liberty County Transit feels that a rider would benefit from the aid of an attendant, this can be suggested. Service cannot be refused, however, if the person decides to continue to travel independently.

Service can only be refused if a rider 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 employees.

Additional charges: Special fares and charges, beyond those required of other riders, will not be imposed on persons with disabilities even if additional services are required.

Boarding/disembarking time: Adequate time must be provided for persons with disabilities to board and disembark from vehicles.