

# **WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE**

## **Our priorities are:**

- Safety
- Customer Service
- Effective scheduling

**City of Winchester  
Department of Public Transportation**

301 East Cork Street  
Winchester, VA 22601  
(540)662-3982

**WHAT IS ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE?:** The Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into Federal law in 1990. This is a civil rights law that requires all public entities operating fixed route transit to provide complementary paratransit to persons with disabilities. Eligibility is to be strictly limited to individuals who, because of a disability, are unable to ride fixed route service for some or all of their trips.

**WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT GUIDELINES:** Our services are designed for the rider. We use special equipped vehicles and skilled drivers and dispatchers to provide the safest and quickest transportation possible. Our guidelines incorporate the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and many Federal, State, and City requirements.

Paratransit passengers are encouraged to use fixed route transit whenever possible.

**WHAT IS FIXED ROUTE SERVICE?:** Fixed route buses provide service within the City of Winchester. Service is at designated bus stops on set schedules along specific routes. Fixed route buses have features to make riding easier, including wheelchair lifts and automated stop announcement systems.

**WHAT IS WINCHESTER PARATRANSIT?:** Paratransit service is a public transportation service that operates within the City of Winchester for people whose disability prevents them from riding fixed route transit some or all of the time. Paratransit is a curb to curb, shared ride public transportation service, in which the cooperation of each patron is essential to accommodate all riders. Wheelchair accessible vans and buses serve the patron. You must call at least a day in advance to make an appointment. Drivers are not allowed to enter homes or assist passengers with packages. However, paratransit drivers must provide assistance from the vehicle to the first doorway for customers who need additional assistance to complete their trip.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?:** Any person living in or visiting the City of Winchester who has a disability preventing them from using the fixed route transit, who is

certified eligible for Paratransit Service. An application must be filled out and completed by a doctor.

**TYPE OF ELIGIBILITY:**

- Unconditional eligibility- persons whose disability prevents them from using fixed route service in all situations. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).
- Conditional eligibility- person who can use fixed route service in certain conditions, but requires Paratransit service for some trips. Conditions may include: extreme weather, an inaccessible bus stop, steep terrain, or distance from bus stop to the trip origin or destination. Certification with no expiration date (as indicated by doctor).
- Temporary eligibility- persons, who have recently undergone surgery or other medical treatment, has a medical condition such as a broken leg or someone with a cognitive disability expected to be resolved over time with medication or therapy. If a temporary disability is indicated, the certification will be for the expected duration of the condition (as indicated by doctor).
- Visitors- persons who are visiting the City of Winchester and present documentation of ADA Paratransit certification from another public entity will be provided service for up to 30 days.

**HOW TO APPLY:** Applicants will complete the application for ADA Paratransit. Simply call (540)662-3982 for an application to be mailed. Application instructions will be given within the application. Applications are also available online at [www.winchesterva.gov/transit](http://www.winchesterva.gov/transit).

**COST:**

- \$1.00 per one-way trip for adults who do not have a half-fare bus pass or Medicare card.
- \$.50 per one-way trip for adults who have a half-fare bus pass or Medicare card. Applications for half-fare bus passes can be obtained by calling the Winchester Transit office at (540)662-3982 or online at [www.winchesterva.gov/transit](http://www.winchesterva.gov/transit).

- Personal Care Attendants (PCA) who assist at home and at the destination ride at no charge.
- One companion may travel for the normal fare if a seat is available. Additional riders will be allowed on a space available basis if notice is given when the reservation is made.
- You must have the **exact** fare; drivers are unable to make change.
- Half-fare ticket books are sold in books of twenty for \$10.00.

**HOURS OF SERVICE:** Paratransit hours are the same as fixed route buses.

Monday-Friday: 6 AM - 7:58PM

Saturday: 8:50AM – 4:55PM

Winchester Transit is closed on the following holidays: New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Winchester Transit is closed on Friday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, Winchester Transit is closed on Monday.

**LEVEL OF SERVICE:** The Para-transit Service provides curb-to-curb service. Passengers are to be ready at the curb at their designated pick-up time. Drivers will pick up passengers as near to the scheduled time as possible. Drivers are **not** permitted to carry packages, groceries, or run errands for patrons. Therefore, passengers should only bring as many packages on the van/bus as they can handle/carry on their own. Additionally, drivers are **not** permitted to enter the rider's residence to provide assistance to or from the van. However, paratransit drivers must provide assistance from the vehicle to the first doorway for customers who need additional assistance to complete their trip.

Drivers are not trained Personal Care Attendants (PCA) and are not allowed to assist passengers requiring assistance. Therefore, any patron requiring assistance from their residence to the van or with a first-aid apparatus or mobility aid will be required to have a PCA. The Winchester Transit reserves the right to require a PCA for riders needing assistance.

**HOW TO SCHEDULE A TRIP:** Once you have been certified eligible for ADA Paratransit service, you should become familiar with how to arrange a trip. Trips must be scheduled at least the day before service is requested. Eligible riders may request service by calling (540) 662-3982. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8AM to 5PM. Should you need to schedule an appointment after hours, the office phone is equipped with voice mail, which works the same as an answering machine. Trips may be scheduled by leaving a message. Riders will receive a call to confirm their trip request. Trips are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and are not based on priority.

All trips, except medical “will call” trips, must be scheduled as a “to” and “from” trip. We will not schedule “wait” trips; all return trips must be scheduled at the same time the original trip is scheduled. A “will call” is when the rider is ready to be picked up from a medical trip. They must call the Transit Dept. at (540) 662-3982 and they will be accommodated as soon as time permits in the schedule.

Please note that if the van is in an area when a will-call occurs, the van will pick up the will-call while in that area. This may result in a short delay in arrival time to and from a destination.

There are several pieces of information that we will need from you when scheduling your trips:

1. Name, address and telephone number to verify that we have your correct information;
2. The time of your scheduled appointment;
3. Where you are going. This will require the name of the location as well as the address. If you are going to a doctor’s office, we will require the name of the doctor, the name of the practice the doctor is associated with and the address of the doctor’s office (including suite number);
4. If you will be a will call (for medical appointments only) or if you will require a return trip;
5. The purpose of your trip (i.e., medical, recreation, shopping, etc.)

Please note that the office uses an automated computer scheduling program to schedule appointments. Because the automated system does not provide us

with exact pick-up times until the actual schedule is printed, all riders will need to be ready to board the bus approximately **1 hour** prior to the requested appointment time on the original leg of the trip and at the exact time of the requested return trip; however, the bus may arrive any time within a **30 minute** window on the return trip.

- For example – Joe Rider calls to request a ride to Wal-Mart for 10:00 a.m. with a return at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Rider will need to be prepared for boarding to Wal-Mart any time from 9 a.m. to 9:59 a.m. Mr. Rider will need to be prepared for boarding back home at 1:00 p.m.; however, the bus may arrive to pick him up any time from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

All patrons should be ready at the curb to board the van upon arrival. Please note that our driver's do not "blow the horn" to alert a passenger of the van's arrival. We request that all passengers be at the curb when the van arrives for their scheduled pick-up.

Trips may be scheduled up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Since scheduling is done on a first-come, first-served basis, some adjusting of times may be required in order to accommodate all riders. The cooperation of each patron is essential in enabling us to provide efficient transportation for all riders.

**SERVICE AREA:** Paratransit operates in the City limits of Winchester and to destinations that are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from any fixed route bus stop sign.

**NO SHOW POLICY:** A "no-show" is when a rider fails to notify the transit office of a cancellation and the van arrives to pick them up. It is also considered a "no-show" when the rider is not ready to board the van at the scheduled pick-up time and the driver must leave in order to continue on schedule (the driver will wait a maximum of 5 minutes).

Riders with a pattern or practice of no shows may be suspended. No-shows will be considered excessive if the person's travel history indicates a percentage of no-shows that exceeds two times the system average. When no-shows occur, and before they become excessive, the dispatcher will contact the rider by phone. The person will be advised of the no-show policy. If no-shows continue, a letter will be sent to notify the person that their eligibility

will be temporarily suspended. Eligibility will be suspended for one week for a first violation and one month for a second or subsequent violation. The suspension of service will become effective 14 days from the date of the letter of notification, in order to allow the individual to appeal the suspension.

If you feel you have been considered a “no- show” in error, you may contact the Transit Office at (540)662-3982 to contest your “no-show.”

If your rider privileges are suspended, you may contact the Transit Office at (540) 662-3982 or at Winchester Transit, Attn: Renee Wells, 301 E. Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601, to exercise your right to appeal.

**APPLICATION APPEALS PROCESS:** Should an applicant wish to appeal a decision regarding paratransit eligibility, Winchester Transit will provide an applicant with an Appeals Application. The applicant is not required to fill out the appeals application prior to having the opportunity to be heard; however, the intent to appeal must be filed by phone or by application within 60-days of the denial being issued.

All appeals will be heard and decided on within 30-days from the date of the notification from the applicant.

To exercise your right to appeal, please contact the Transit office at (540) 662-3982 or at Winchester Transit, Attn: Renee Wells, 301 E. Cork Street, Winchester, VA 22601.

**PASSENGER SAFETY:** The safety of our customers and drivers is our primary responsibility as a transit provider. Bus transportation, like all automotive transportation, involves frequent changes of speed, merging, lane changes, some sharp turns, and unexpected stops. These characteristics create potential risks of injury for passengers traveling in unsecured mobility devices as they have the potential to tip over. It is the responsibility of the passenger to make sure their wheelchair is in good working condition (brakes tight & frames secure). All wheelchairs must have a safety belt and it is the responsibility of the driver to keep it fastened while riding the bus. All mobility devices (scooters, wheelchairs, etc.) will be secured to the vehicle using the installed security system.

**OTHER:**

- Smoking, drinking, eating, and foul language is prohibited while on the bus.
- Fares must be paid when boarding the bus.
- Our buses are not equipped with storage areas for bags. Passengers are only permitted to bring as many bags as they can carry in one trip. We ask that passengers not occupy an empty seat with bags as we may be picking up additional passengers who will need to occupy the empty seat. If planning a large shopping trip, make arrangements to have an alternative ride home or bring along a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

**WINCHESTER TRANSIT SYSTEM  
PARATRANSIT SYSTEM  
RIDER'S GUIDE CERTIFICATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have received and reviewed the Winchester Paratransit rider's guide and understand the terms and conditions. Further, I understand that failure to comply with the outlined guidelines may result in my riding privileges being suspended.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

Please return to: Winchester Transit System  
301 East Cork Street  
Winchester, VA 22601