

Ocean City Transportation (OCT)

Paratransit Rider's Guide

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I. Welcome to Ocean City Transportation’s Paratransit program

Welcome to Ocean City Transportation’s Paratransit program. Ocean City is committed to providing a public transit system that everyone can use. We have made many improvements to make our system more accessible for persons with disabilities and seniors. It is our hope that all the information we offer in this section will enable you to travel safely and comfortably within the Ocean City service area. The Paratransit program is for residents and visitors within the corporate limits of Ocean City who are unable to access our fixed-route bus system. This guide will provide helpful information on all aspects of Ocean City Transportation’s Paratransit program. Should you have questions about the Paratransit program please feel free to call Ocean City Transportation Operations Office at 410-723-1606.

II. What is Paratransit?

Ocean City Transportation’s Paratransit program provides “origin-to-destination” ADA van service to qualified persons with disabilities within the Town of Ocean City who are not able to access “fixed-route” buses. The term "fixed-route" refers to established routine transit routes applicable to non-paratransit vehicles (buses). Paratransit “origin-to-destination” service is provided during the same days and hours that fixed-route bus service is available at most locations within three-quarters of a mile of our fixed-route service areas.

III. What is Medical Appointment Transportation?

As an extension of the Paratransit program Ocean City Transportation also offers Medical Appointment Transportation (MEDTRN) to qualified ADA persons residing within the corporate limits of Ocean City, MD for the purpose of nearby medical appointments.

All medical appointment destinations must be located within 500 yards off of US Route 50, MD Route 589 or within the corporate limits of Berlin, Maryland.

IV. Service Hours and Area

Paratransit service is provided during the same hours and days of the week that Ocean City Transportation fixed-route Bus service is available. Fixed-route, wheel chair lift-equipped buses operate within the Town limits, along the 10 mile north/south corridor from South Division Street (downtown) to/from 144th St. (uptown) near the Delaware state line. Along the fixed-route there are approximately 123 ADA compliant bus stops. Most stops are spaced approximately two blocks apart. “In-season” (during the months of May thru September) the West Ocean City Park-n-Ride Shuttle operates along a temporary fixed-route between the South Division Street Transit Station (downtown) and the West Ocean City Park-N-Ride Transit Station. Ocean City Paratransit service area is limited to within three-quarters of a mile of the fixed-route. Please contact Ocean City Transportation at 410-723-1606 to determine if your pick-up/drop-off locations fall within these parameters. ADA Paratransit reservations must be placed by 4:00 p.m. the day before your trip.

Medical Appointment Transportation (MEDTRN) origin-to-destination service is available only to qualified ADA persons with disabilities who are residing within the corporate limits of Ocean City. MEDTRN service is provided for medical/dental/vision appointments that originate within the corporate limits of Ocean City and are located within 500 yards of US Route 50, MD Route 589, between Ocean City

and Berlin, or within the corporate limits of Berlin. MEDTRN service is available Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MEDTRN fare is \$5 per-person , per-boarding. Exact fare is required. MEDTRN fare financial assistance may be available to qualified ADA persons through the use of “Fare Vouchers” as funding permits. To inquire further, please speak with a MEDTRN driver or call Ocean City Transportation at 410-723-1606. Advanced MEDTRN reservations are required no later than 11:00 a.m. the day prior to your scheduled medical appointment. Trip reservations will be taken on a “first-come, first-served basis” as vehicle seating is limited. Allow no less than 45 minutes for transport to/from your appointment. The first scheduled MEDTRN “pick-up” is at approximately 8:30 a.m. Please make every effort to schedule your medical appointments in accordance with MEDTRN hours of operation. Please be ready for “pick up” at the scheduled time. Should you have questions about the MEDTRN service please call 410-723-1606.

V. Fares

Coastal Highway Fixed-Route Bus: Fare is \$4 ride-all-day. Exact fare is required. Senior Citizens (65 years or older), persons with disabilities, Medicare card holders and Ocean City Non-Resident Senior Bus Pass holders are permitted to ride for half fare. Children 42 inches and under in height who are accompanied by an adult, certified ADA card holders, and Ocean City Resident Senior Bus Pass holders are permitted free passage. Call City Hall 410-289-8221 or stop by 301 Baltimore Avenue for additional information regarding Ocean City Non-Resident and Resident Senior Bus Passes. Verification of age may be required. Ride-all-day passes are valid from 6 a.m. to 6 a.m. the following day.

West Ocean City Park-n-Ride Fixed Route Shuttle (Seasonal: May thru September): Fare is free except during designated special events when \$4 ride-all-day exact fare is required. Senior Citizens (65 years or older), persons with disabilities and Medicare card holders are permitted to ride for half fare. Children 42 inches and under in height who are accompanied by an adult, certified ADA card holders, and Ocean City Resident Senior Bus Pass holders are permitted free passage. Call City Hall 410-289-8221 or stop by 301 Baltimore Avenue for additional information regarding Ocean City Non-Resident and Resident Senior Bus Passes. Verification of age may be required. Ride-all-day passes are valid during scheduled Park n Ride operating hours.

NOTE: All of our fixed route buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and/or kneeling capability. There are seats in the front of each bus that are specifically designed as priority seats for seniors and people with disabilities. Ocean City Transportation requires that these seats be made available for our disabled and senior customers upon request. Look for the international accessibility symbol on the front and side of the bus. Wheel chair tie downs are also available on all buses.

Paratransit (ADA Van) Fare: Fare for Paratransit service is \$4 Ride-All-Day. Exact fare is required. ADA Certified Non-Resident Senior Bus Pass holders, Medicare card holders, and those age 65 and older ride for half fare. ADA Certified Ocean City Resident Senior Bus Pass holders and Children under the height of 42” ride free. Children must be accompanied by a paying adult. Ride-all-day passes are valid from 6 a.m. to 6 a.m. the following day. ADA Paratransit reservations must be placed by 4:00 p.m. the day before your trip.

Medical Appointment Transportation (MEDTRN) Fare: The required MEDTRN fare is \$5 per person, per boarding. Exact fare required. Fare “discounts” or “exemptions” (i.e. bus coupons, Resident or Non-Resident Senior Bus passes) are not applicable to this service.

As funding permits, MEDTRN financial fare assistance may be available to qualified ADA persons through the use of "Fare Vouchers". To inquire further, please speak with a MEDTRN driver or call Ocean City Transportation at 410-723-1606.

To help supplement the MEDTRN fare financial assistance program, private party donations will be accepted at the following locations: City Hall - 301 Baltimore Ave. & Transportation Dispatch Office, 214 65th Street.

NOTE: In order to serve as many customers as possible in a timely manner, please be prepared to board the Paratransit and or MEDTRN vehicle at scheduled time of pick-up. Operators may assist you to/from doorways however they are not permitted to take you inside a building.

VI. Paratransit Eligibility and Application Process

Paratransit services are provided for residents and visitors within the corporate limits of Ocean City whose disability(s) prevent them from accessing Ocean City Transportation's fixed-route bus service area.

Residents

1. To receive a Paratransit service application Applicants may either call Ocean City Transportation Operations at 410-723-1606 or stop by the Operations Office located inside the Public Works complex at 214 64th Street, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
2. Ocean City Transportation will provide you with an application to complete, which will explain to us your disability and or functional ability. The application will also give us permission to obtain verification of your disability or functional ability from your Medical Care Provider. From this point on, copies of everything that Ocean City Transportation sends or receives, in reference to the Applicant, will be filed. A "Checklist" is inserted in the Applicants file so that anyone looking at the file can tell at what point in the process the client is. Completed Paratransit applications should be mailed to:

Internal Operations Coordinator
Ocean City Transportation
214 65th Street
Ocean City, Maryland 21842
Telephone: 410-723-1606
Fax: 410-723-6966

3. Upon receipt and review of the completed application the Applicant will be issued a blue "Certificate of Eligibility for ADA Paratransit Services". The Applicant will be allowed temporary access to our Paratransit services for sixty (60) days while the application is being processed.

4. Ocean City Transportation will mail to the Applicants Medical Care Provider (1) "Authorization for Release of Personal Information", which is part of the packet we receive from the applicant, (2) a self-addressed envelope, and (3) "Ocean City Transportation Doctor's Request for Personal Information Form". The Medical Care Provider completes the forms, informing Ocean City Transportation of the expected duration and or cause of disability, Personal Care Assistant requirements, and the Applicant's eligibility and need for Paratransit services.

5. After receiving the completed documentation from the Medical Care Provider Ocean City Transportation will inform the applicant if their request has been approved.

6. If the Applicant is determined to be eligible for Paratransit service by their Medical Care Provider Ocean City Transportation will issue to the Applicant a registration number. Ocean City Transportation will also e-mail City Hall with the necessary information about the client, and instruct the ADA client, by letter, to contact City Hall, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to obtain their blue, Paratransit Photo Identification Card. Enclosed with the letter will also be a brochure explaining the Paratransit program, services, policies and procedures. Paratransit eligibility also entitled the card hold to use of Medical Appointment Transportation (MEDTRN) services.

7. Should the applicant not be eligible a letter is sent to them informing them of this fact. Applicants have the right to appeal the denial of eligibility and service. They must make their appeal within sixty (60) days of receiving the denial and fill out the "Ocean City Area Bus-Paratransit Certification Appeal Process" form. As part of the Ocean City Area Paratransit program and under the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, you have the right to appeal any determination that you are not eligible for ADA paratransit service or any restrictions which have been placed upon your use of the service.

8. The applicant is asked to refer to the particular item that they disagree with in their letter of determination. They then may submit written material regarding their condition as part of the appeal. Any written material received by Ocean City Transportation will become part of the Applicants file and cannot be returned.

9. The Transit Manager of Ocean City Transportation will review the submitted materials and will schedule a meeting with the Applicant within ten (10) days of receiving the appeal. The Applicant may designate an advocate or other representatives to make presentations on their behalf. It is not necessary to bring witnesses to this meeting. The Transit Manager will render, in writing the Applicant, a final determination with in ten (10) days of the meeting.

Visitors

Ocean City Transportation provides ADA Paratransit Service to visitors with disabilities who do not live with in the corporate limits of Ocean City service area. To ride with Ocean City Paratransit, visitors must present documentation that they are ADA eligible for Paratransit Service in the jurisdiction in which they reside. If a visitor is unable to present this documentation, Ocean City Transportation will require documentation of residency and disability. Documentation of eligibility for Paratransit Service for out-of-town visitors should be received by Ocean City Transportation before the first desired day of travel.

Visitors will be provided service for any combination of twenty-one (21) days during any 365 day period starting with the visitor's first use of the service during that period. Once registered, clients will call the appropriate carrier for their zone to book trips. Customers who wish to receive service beyond this twenty-one (21) day period must apply for eligibility with the Ocean City Transportation.

VII. Reserving a Paratransit / Medical Appointment Transportation Ride

After you are certified, and to reserve a ride for the Paratransit or Medical Appointment Transportation (MEDTRN) service, call 410-723-1606. Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Your name as it appears on the Paratransit application.
2. Your complete pick-up and destination address, including zip code, name of building (if applicable) entrance location, cross street or nearest main street.
3. The time you desire to arrive at your destination, keeping in mind that you must allow at least one-hour between pick-up and drop-off times. The time you will be ready to be picked up for the return trip.
4. Whether you have special requirements, such as a wheelchair, an oversized wheelchair, a scooter, etc. All common wheelchairs will be transported.
5. If you plan to have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or traveling companion accompanying you, please see the section titled "Who May Ride with You".

Paratransit and MEDTRN is a shared-ride service. Paratransit and MEDTRN reservation agents will make every attempt to accommodate your travel requests, but they must schedule the times that are available and fit the needs of the greatest number of people. Paratransit and MEDTRN services are not a Taxi Service therefore we cannot accommodate the personal desires of each individual.

We suggest keeping copies of these information requirements beside your phone. Remember, this information will assist us in furnishing the transportation you desire.

ADA Paratransit reservations must be placed by 4:00 p.m. the day before your trip. MEDTRN reservations must be placed by 11:00 a.m. the day before your trip. Ocean City Transportation ADA Paratransit and MEDTRN services do not provide same day trip requests.

Reservations can be made up to fourteen (14) days in advance. The reservation agent will be able to tell you which dates are available. To better ensure the time and date you desire, it is suggested you call as far in advance as possible. It is especially important to make holiday travel reservations several days in advance.

Note: Due to the volume of calls, reservation agents cannot look-up addresses for you. You may request the information on frequent destinations become a part of your permanent record.

VIII. Who May Ride With You

Due to space limitations, we limit the number of people who may accompany you to no more than two (2) persons. If you are pre-registered for a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), only that individual is allowed to ride free of charge; other individual(s) pay the applicable fare.

Personal Care Attendant's (PCA's) and companions must have the same pick-up and drop-off points as the individual they are accompanying. A child may be considered a PCA. A seat for your PCA and/or companion must be reserved when scheduling your trip. Anyone may be considered a PCA.

Children may be considered companions. As with the Ocean City's fixed-route Bus service, children under the height of 42" may ride with you free of charge. Children over the height of 42" must pay the appropriate fare.

Service Animals (such as guide dogs) are permitted on all Ocean City Transportation transit and Paratransit vehicles. No permit is required however you may be asked to confirm that your animal is a service animal and if the animal is licensed and vaccinated as required by Worcester County, MD. Please follow these guidelines as you are responsible for the care and supervision of your animal while on board: Your animal must be on a leash or in a container and must remain under your control at all times; The animal must remain at your feet or on your lap. The animal may not sit on a seat; The animal must not be aggressive towards people or other animals; You are responsible for any damage or soiling caused by the animal.

IX. Cancellations/No Shows

Failure to cancel a scheduled ride or to keep an appointment could have a negative effect on the schedules of other riders by not allowing Ocean City Paratransit and MEDTRN services to schedule other riders in your place. Therefore, please follow these simple rules:

1. Cancellations must be made as soon as possible before your scheduled pick-up. Ocean City Transportation prefers a minimum of two-hours advanced notice. Early cancellations allow the reservationists to schedule rides for other customers.
2. When canceling a ride (or when making any arrangements with the Ocean City Transportation), please make every effort to obtain and record the name of the person you spoke with and the time of day when the conversation occurred. Such information will assist us in resolving problems if they occur.
3. During severe weather, such as ice and snow, Ocean City Paratransit services may be delayed or canceled. We will make every reasonable attempt to continue to operate Paratransit services. During such emergencies please call 410-723-1606 for updates on current service conditions.

“No-Show” - Definitions and Penalties

You will be considered a “no-show” if you:

- Reserve a ride but do not meet the vehicle within 10 minutes of its permitted window of arrival.
- Call to cancel a trip less than two hours before the scheduled pick-up time

NOTE: If a passenger cannot use a scheduled trip, but pays the fare for that trip at the scheduled pick-up time, the trip will be counted as a “Canceled with Pay” and will not be counted as a “No Show.”

X. Pleasant Trip Tips

Ocean City Transportation will make every effort to provide you with efficient and dependable transportation. The objective of the Paratransit (and to an extent the MEDTRN service) is to be comparable with fixed-route bus service. The following suggestions will make your trip successful:

1. The assignment of ready (pickup) times is based upon your required appointment (arrival) time at a designated location, the distance traveled, the sharing of the ride with others, and vehicle availability. The farther the pickup location from the destination, the earlier the ready time.
2. Since Ocean City Paratransit and MEDTRN service is origin-to-destination, we recommend that you be

ready to leave your location at least ten (10) minutes before your scheduled ready time. The vehicle will only wait ten (10) minutes after your scheduled ready time. For example, if your vehicle arrives at 10:00 a.m., the driver will only wait until 10:10 a.m. If your ride does arrive early, you are not obligated to board the vehicle before your scheduled time, however you may do so if you wish.

3. The driver has 30 minutes after your scheduled ready time to pick you up. For example, if your ready time is 10:00 a.m., the vehicle may arrive up to 10:30 a.m. until it is considered late. If the driver is not at your location within 30 minutes after your ready time, please inform the Ocean City Transportation Paratransit services at 410-723-1606.

4. The driver can only assist you in boarding and alighting the vehicle. Drivers may not escort you in side of the building, and they may only remove packages from the vehicle.

5. Do not engage the driver in conversation while he/she is operating the vehicle. This is important for your safety as well as others.

6. Do not verbally or physically abuse the driver. Any physical or verbal action you may take against the driver may affect your riding privilege.

7. Do keep a list of your needs (wheelchair, extra-wide wheel chair, scooter, dog, extra seating space, etc.) by the phone, and make certain your special needs are discussed when you schedule a ride.

8. Have your fare and the fare of your companion ready before the trip starts. The driver is required to collect fares before the trip departs. If you do not have the proper fare, the driver cannot transport you. You must have exact change; drivers do not handle fares or make change.

9. Prior to departing your location, your seat belt and/or other restraints/tie-downs must be fastened. Make certain they are fastened so you feel secure.

10. Eating, drinking, smoking or playing radios/cassette/CD/DVD players without earphones are not permitted by Maryland law.

11. Please notify the Ocean City Transportation Paratransit/MEDTRN program of any changes in your status (if you will be in the hospital, if you are going on vacation, etc.). Such information allows Ocean City Transportation to serve more customers.

12. Contact the Ocean City Transportation Paratransit/MEDTRN program as soon as possible when canceling your ride. We prefer a minimum of two-hours advanced notice so other customers can be accommodated.

13. Please limit the number of packages you take on the vehicle to two. Remember, Paratransit is a shared-ride service, and excess packages will infringe upon other customers.

XI. Rider Responsibilities

Ocean City Transportation has a short list of common-sense guidelines designed to ensure safety and comfort for all riders as well as the driver.

- Read carefully and understand all sections.
- Make reservations at least one or more days in advance.
- Be ready at pickup location and be on time.
- Drivers cannot wait more than 10 minutes
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute “window”.
- Call to cancel unneeded rides as soon as possible; avoid “no-shows” by calling at least 2 hours prior to pickup time.
- Must show valid ADA card upon boarding.
- Pay the correct fare in cash (drivers do not make change).
- Wear seat belts, when available.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchair or other mobility device 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 hygiene.
- No eating, drinking or smoking on board.
- No littering in the vehicle.
- Must have PCA to help with needs not performed by Driver
- No radio, cassette tape players, compact disc players, or other sound generating equipment are to be played aboard the vehicle (headphones are permissible)
- Pets, Therapy Animals and Emotional Support Animals are not permitted on board. Only trained Service Animals are permitted.

XII. Driver Responsibilities

Drivers are to adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene, as those required of the riders.

- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Be uniformed with a visible nametag.
- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle. Maintain the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- If requested, assist riders when entering and leaving the vehicle.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- Enter a rider’s residence or other buildings.
- Perform any personal care assistance for riders, including but not limited to, assisting riders to dress.
- Load or unload packages or groceries (to and from the curb only)
- Lift or carry riders.
- Carry riders / wheelchairs up or down steps.
- Accept tips or gratuities.

Reasonable modifications of Ocean City Transportation policies, practices, and procedures may be permitted to avoid unnecessary exclusion of individuals with disabilities from transit related service or programs.

XIII. Customer Suspension of Service

Misusing the system can result in suspension of your Paratransit or MEDTRN service. The following are examples but are not limited to misuses of the Paratransit and MEDTRN services that could lead to suspension.

1. Obtaining or using Paratransit and MEDTRN services under false pretenses.

The Americans with Disabilities Act reserves Paratransit services for certified eligible individuals. Your service may be suspended if:

- You have made false or misleading statements on your eligibility application.
- You allow other non-eligible individuals such as friends or family members to ride using your name.

2. Suspension for “No-Shows”

No-shows delay vehicles and use up space and resources other riders could use. Three or more “No-Shows” within 60 days could result in suspension of service or restrictions of service

3. Suspension for abusive or disruptive behavior

- Disruptive or abusive behavior endangers passengers, drivers, and staff. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:
- Intimidation or threats of physical harm to drivers or other riders.
- Verbal abuse of drivers, staff, and/or other passengers.
- Unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior having sexual, violent, or racial connotations.
- Unauthorized use of vehicle equipment.
- Voluntary and repeated violation of riding rules, including: Smoking, eating, and drinking on vehicles.
- Refusing to remain seated with seat belt on (when provided).
- Defacing equipment.

4. Circumstances That Are Beyond Your Control

Examples of situations not within the passenger’s control may include, but are not limited to:

- A sudden personal emergency.
- Sudden or worsening illness.
- Late arrival of the paratransit vehicle.
- A driver does not provide appropriate assistance.

If an investigation reveals your disruptive behavior is due to a disability and is beyond your control, your service may not be suspended. However, Ocean City Transportation may require you to travel with a Personal Care Assistant (PCA). If your PCA cannot help you to control your behavior, and/or a safety problem continues to exist, your service may be disallowed.

5. Suspension Duration

A customer's first suspension from service will be effective for 30 calendar days. At the end of the 30-day period the customer's eligibility for service shall automatically resume. A customer's second or subsequent suspension shall be indefinite, until eligibility is reinstated by the Transit Manager. Appeals for any suspension of eligibility may be made via written request to: Transit Manager, 224 65th Street, Ocean City, MD 21842.

XIV. Filing a Concern or Complaint

To file a concern or a complaint please choose one of the following actions. If the situation warrants, a representative from Ocean City Transportation may contact you to discuss the matter further.

- 1) Call Ocean City Transportation at 410-723-1606 to lodge a verbal concern or complaint.
- 2) Appear at Ocean City Transportation Operations Office location at 64th St. Public Works Complex to receive/submit a concern/complaint form.

XV. Title VI Notice

Ocean City Transportation (OCT) is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination based on your race, color, national origin, you may file a complaint up to 180 days from the date of the alleged incident.

To file a complaint or for additional information on OCT's nondiscrimination policies and procedures, contact: Ocean City Transportation, Transit Manager, 224 65th Street, Ocean City, MD 21842

Reasonable modifications of Ocean City Transportation policies, practices, and procedures may be permitted to avoid unnecessary exclusion of individuals with disabilities from transit related service or programs.