

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law that guarantees people with disabilities an equal opportunity to take part in our society. Transportation services are key to that participation. The ADA guarantees equal access to both public and private transportation services.

DRIVERS MUST:

- Provide rides to customers with disabilities.
- Offer assistance with boarding, but not lifting, the rider.
- Not assume an escort, medical personnel or family members will provide boarding assistance.
- Give the same reservation services to all customers regardless of disabilities. You cannot require customers with disabilities to reserve a seat if customers without disabilities are not required to do so.
- Charge customers with disabilities the same fare as those without disabilities.
- Not deny service because a person's disability is annoying, inconvenient, or offensive to the driver or other passengers.
- Immediately inform management if accessibility equipment is missing or not working.
- Allow service animals to accompany their owners.

CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES:

- Should know whether or not their mobility aid is within the ADA definition of a "common wheelchair": 3- or 4-wheeled, 30" in width, 48" in length, with the total weight of the passenger and wheelchair no more than 600 pounds. Devices that are heavier or larger may not fit on motorcoach lifts and will be allowed at the discretion of the driver based on company policy.
- Should confirm 48 hours in advance of the trip that the operator will have the lift and seating area prepared for the trip.
- Must be able to transfer themselves from their wheelchair to a seat if they elect to use a coach seat.
- Should tell drivers if they need assistance and what type of assistance or accommodation they need.
- Must keep service animals under control at all times.
- Must pay their fare.
- If appropriate, should provide emergency contact information in case of medical emergency while traveling.

Emergencies

- Drivers who provide boarding assistance must be trained to safely and appropriately assist a passenger with moving to or from a bus seat or disembarking in case of emergency.

- Operators should ask the passenger how best to assist in evacuation.
- Refer to FTA technical assistance or DOT rules regarding lift and securement use. http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3894.html

Rest Stops and Interline Service

- When a motorcoach makes a rest stop, people using mobility devices must be allowed to disembark if they wish.
- Operators should, if possible, provide the passenger with information about the accessibility of the rest stop.
- On trip longer than 3 hours, drivers must provide a comfort stop on request if the coach has an inaccessible restroom.
- If a driver denies the rest stop request, he must explain why he is, in good faith, unable to fulfill the request.
- Operators providing interline service to customers using mobility devices are required to contact all subsequent carriers so that each one is prepared to provide accessible service for the customer at transfer points.

By providing courteous service to people with disabilities, you will gain: Loyal customers, referrals and additional business!

Operator Pre-trip Checklist:

- ✓ Cycle your lift and review your company's passenger assistance guidelines.
- ✓ Check securement equipment to ensure necessary parts are present, clean, and in working order.
- ✓ Make sure you have a pad and pen available.
- ✓ If a passenger using a wheelchair is expected during a trip, clear the seats in the tie down area, and prepare for loading that passenger.
- ✓ Check for ramp or other loading device if you will be stowing a wheelchair.
- ✓ Check for confirmation of connecting carrier notification if a passenger has a scheduled service trip.
- ✓ Complete your pre-trip vehicle safety inspection.



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Accessible
Community
Transportation
In Our Nation

Motorcoach Operator's ADA Pocket Guide



Today, 54 million people in the United States have disabilities. These people have jobs, families, classes, meetings, travel plans, and other activities that keep them on the move. Motorcoach customers, including those with disabilities, desire good and safe service whether they are touring for leisure, making rail or air connections, or traveling between communities.

Complying with the ADA makes good business sense; assures courteous customer service; and is the law.



1. General Guidelines for Serving Customers with Disabilities

- Treat customers with disabilities with courtesy and respect.
- Use person-first language (e.g., person who uses a wheelchair instead of wheelchair user).
- Give customers with disabilities the same information and choices that you give other customers. Include accessibility information in your customer materials.
- Include accessibility information in your customer materials.
- Never make assumptions about your customers' abilities.
- Ask customers if they need assistance. If they say yes, ask them how you may assist.
- Do not touch customers or their wheelchairs without their permission.
- Speak directly to customers, not their companions.
- Speak clearly with a normal tone and speed, unless the customer requests otherwise.
- If you are asked to repeat or write what you said, do so calmly and pleasantly.
- If you don't understand what the passenger is saying, just ask them to repeat—again, calmly and pleasantly.

- Companies should request customers notify the company of the need for wheelchair accommodation at the time customers make reservations. Companies should encourage customers to provide at least 48 hours advance notice when possible.
- It is good company policy to provide accessibility information with your customer information and include a request that customers provide advance notice of need for an accessible coach.
- Motorcoach companies without fully-accessible fleets may require 48-hour notice for accessible trips. Passengers can assure themselves of an accessible trip by giving the operator advance notice to prepare the tie down area and make sure other passengers are not sitting in the tie down area.



2. Serving Customers with Hearing Impairments

- Face customers when speaking to them, and don't let objects obstruct their view.
- Do not raise your voice—doing so distorts your lip movement and makes lip reading difficult.
- Be sure to notify the customer of schedule changes or audible announcements.

3. Serving Customers with Vision Disabilities

- Identify yourself and ask how you may assist the passenger.
- Respond verbally when the customer gives you information, so that she will know that you have heard her.
- Remember to announce the customer's stop.
- If handling a monetary transaction, count the customer's change out loud.

4. Serving Customers Who Use Wheelchairs

- Ask customers how you can assist them.
- Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and other mobility devices are part of the customer's personal space. Do not hold or lean on them without the customer's permission.
- Customers should be allowed to travel with their mobility aids if they wish to do so.
- If a wheelchair must be stored in the baggage compartment, the driver or another motorcoach employee must assist with storing or retrieving it.
- If you need to operate or store mobility aids, make no assumptions; ask the customer how best to do so.
- Make sure that you are aware of your company's policy regarding wheelchair securement. If a passenger wishes his wheelchair be secured, the operator must provide assistance.



5. Serving Customers Who Use Service Animals

- Service animals are individually trained and allowed by law to ride in passenger compartments of motorcoaches.
- Dogs are the most common service animals, but other animals may help people with disabilities.
- Some service animals wear identification like a tag, vest or special harness. If you are not sure that the animal is a service animal, you may ask if it is a pet or a service animal. You may ask what type of tasks the service animal performs.
- Certification or identification is not required for the animal, and service may not be refused because there is no such identification.
- The service animal must stay with the owner and be kept under control at all times.
- Never touch or talk to the service animal—it is working! Do not take responsibility for the service animal except in emergencies.