



# Guide to THE RIDE Service



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Call 800-533-6282 or email [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com) to request this document in alternate formats (Braille, audio, electronic) or other languages. Information in this guide is subject to change.

This is an important notice. Please have it translated.

这是一件很重要的通知, 请翻译或中文.

Este es un aviso importante. Por favor asegure que se traduce.

Đây là một thông cáo quan trọng. Xin vui lòng cho dịch lại thông cáo này.

Este é um aviso importante. Queira mandá-lo traduzir.

Ceci est important. Veuillez faire traduire.

## What is THE RIDE?

THE RIDE paratransit service provides door-to door, shared-ride transportation to eligible people who cannot use fixed-route transit (bus, subway, trolley) all or some of the time because of a physical, cognitive or mental disability.

THE RIDE is operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) in compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, paratransit functions as a 'safety net' for people whose disabilities prevent them from using public transit. It is not intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation that meets all the needs of persons with disabilities, and it is distinct from medical or human services transportation. You will travel with other customers going in the same general direction.

Accessible vehicles are used to serve persons with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs and scooters. Requests for preferred type vehicles will not be honored. THE RIDE operates 365 days a year generally from 5AM – 1AM in fifty-eight (58) cities and towns. For RIDE trips with origin and destination within 3/4 mile of fixed-route service that operates outside of these hours, or in other municipalities within 3/4 miles of MBTA bus service, extended RIDE service is available.

### Fares

The local one-way **ADA fare** for each registered passenger or guest is **\$3.15**, when booking 1-7 days in advance.

One-way fares for **premium non-ADA** trips are **\$5.25** per registered passenger or guest. This applies when the trip origin and/or destination is greater than 3/4 miles from MBTA bus or subway service and outside of the core areas, or for same-day trip requests or changes, except for trip time negotiation. Reservationists will confirm the fare when you schedule a trip.

A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) accompanying a registered user is not charged a fare. One other person may travel as a guest. Additional guests are allowed if space is available. Any guest is charged the applicable fare as noted above. PCAs and guests must travel to and from the same destination at the same time as the registered user.

## Adding funds to your RIDE account

You must have funds in your RIDE account to schedule a trip. Several options are available:

1. **Online:** at <http://commerce.mbta.com>: **Allow two (2) business days for posting.**
2. **Phone:** Call us at **888-844-0355** (voice, Relay), select option 2 and have your card info and RIDE ID# ready, from 7AM – 8PM Monday through Friday and 9 AM – 5 PM. Saturday and Sunday, including holidays. We accept Master Card, Visa, Discover or American Express credit cards and debit cards supported by Master Card or Visa. **Funds post to your account within 1 hour.**
3. **Mail:** Send a check or money order. Make checks or money orders payable to "MBTA - THE RIDE Fares" and **note your RIDE ID#** in the memo portion of your check or money order. **Allow five (5) business days for posting.** Our address is:

**MBTA - THE RIDE Fares  
10 Park Plaza - Rm. 5000  
Boston, MA 02116**

4. **In-Person:** Visit the CharlieCard Store at Downtown Crossing Station anytime Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM except for holidays. The accessible entrance is at 32 Summer Street via the 101 Arch Street building in Boston. Cash, checks, money orders and major credit/debit cards are accepted. **Funds post to your account within 1 hour.**

Please retain your cashed check or money order receipt as your receipt or confirmation number from your phone/internet transaction for your records. You can determine your account balance via your RIDE contractor's website, your RIDE reservationist, or by calling the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access. THE RIDE fare is debited from your account as you board the vehicle. You are not charged for a trip you don't take. Should you require a refund from your RIDE account please contact us.

## Scheduling RIDE trips

RIDE service is provided by four contractors under contract to the MBTA. The RIDE Access Center (TRAC), managed by Global Contact Services, provides reservations, scheduling and dispatching while Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), National Express Transit(NEXT) and Veterans Transportation LLC(VTS) provide the service on the street with drivers and vehicles. The Core Area is served by all contractors and includes Boston, Brookline, Cambridge and Somerville. A customer can book a round trip from any area into the core area without a transfer. A customer booking a trip from the core area to a location outside of core area must call that area's provider. However, if a customer books a trip within the core area, the customer may call any of the service providers. To schedule trips, please call The RIDE Access Center (TRAC) or VTS until they are transitioned under TRAC. Customers may be able to make reservations online; ask TRAC/VTS for details.

**Reservation Hours:** Currently are 8:30AM – 5PM, 7 days per week, including holidays. Trips may be booked from one to seven days in advance.

#### **North Area: The RIDE Access Center - TRAC/GLSS**

**844-427-7433** (voice, toll-free) or 857-206-6569 (TTY, toll-free)

<https://mmt.gcstrac.com/RiderAccess/SignIn/Start.aspx>

Serving: Core area municipalities of Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville, and the non-core municipalities of Beverly, Chelsea, Danvers, Everett, Lynn, Lynnfield, Malden, Marblehead, Melrose, Middleton, Nahant, Peabody, Reading, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Stoneham, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wakefield, Wenham, Wilmington and Winthrop.

TRAC/GLSS also serves trips to/from the “border communities” of Burlington, Medford, Winchester and Woburn as long as one end of the trip is located within one of the non-core area communities listed above.

#### **West Area: Veterans Transportation Services – VTS**

**877-765-7433** (voice, toll-free) or 888-553-8294 (TTY, toll-free)

<https://rideaccess.veteranstheride.com/RiderAccess/SignIn/Start.aspx>

Serving: Core area municipalities of Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville, and the non-core municipalities of Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Burlington, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Medford, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Weston, Winchester and Woburn. The West Area also includes small portions of Billerica, and Wellesley that are within ¾ miles of MBTA bus service.

VTS also serves trips to/from the “border communities” of Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Melrose, Needham, Reading, Stoneham, and Wilmington as long as one end of the trip is located within one of the non-core area communities listed above.

**South Area: The RIDE Access Center - TRAC/NEXT**

**844-427-7433** (voice, toll-free) or **857-206-6569** (TTY, toll-free)

<https://mmt.gcstrac.com/RiderAccess/SignIn/Start.aspx>

Serving: Core area municipalities of Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville, and the non-core municipalities of Braintree, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Sharon, Walpole, Westwood and Weymouth. The South Area also includes small portions of Abington, Avon, Brockton, Stoughton and Wellesley that are within ¾ miles of MBTA bus service during operating hours.

TRAC/NEXT also serves trips to/from the “border community” of Newton as long as one end of the trip is located within one of the non-core area communities listed above.

Trips to appointments should be scheduled by arrival time. This is to ensure that you are scheduled to arrive before your appointment. Return trips are scheduled by departure time to ensure that we allow for you to conclude your appointment. Requested arrival and return times must be at least one hour apart.

Please notify TRAC if you will be traveling with a PCA, guest(s), child or service animal. Infants and small children must ride in a federally approved child passenger restraint until they are at least 5 years old and weigh more than 40 pounds. Children weighing more than 40 pounds but less than 8 years old or less than 4’9” tall must ride in a booster seat. School transportation of minors (Grades K-12) is not provided.

You may review or change trips one to seven days in advance of your trip, up until 5PM of the day before service. After 5PM, trips for the following day are scheduled and customers are called to confirm their pickup times. If you do not receive a call by 9PM, call your contractor to be sure the trip has been scheduled.

## **Trip Negotiations**

If, during callbacks the night before a trip, you receive a promised pick-up/drop-off time that does not work for you, you may negotiate trip times with your RIDE contractor. Please call your contractor as soon as possible. Some changes are not

considered negotiations and will incur a premium non-ADA fare rate. These include, but aren't limited to, changes requested less than one hour before a trip, rescheduling a missed trip, rescheduling at least 30 minutes earlier or later than the originally requested time, changes to pick-up or drop-off locations. Some requests may not be accommodated.

## **Transfers**

Trips spanning multiple service areas may require a transfer trip, except for certain trips to border communities. The contractor serving your city or town can arrange transfers for trips to other MBTA service areas. You will either remain on your vehicle until the actual transfer to the other vehicle takes place or if required you are assisted to the receiving agency's intermodal center and then continue on your trip.

## **Travel times**

THE RIDE travel time should be comparable to fixed route travel times, including the time necessary to travel to the bus stop, wait for the bus, ride time, transfers, and travel from the final stop to the ultimate destination. Travel times may increase due to inclement weather, traffic, or diverting to pick up another customer who missed a return pick-up.

## **Cancelling trips and No-Show/Late Cancellation policy**

Please cancel trips as early as possible so that THE RIDE can schedule efficiently and improve service for all RIDE customers. Use TRAC(GLSS/NEXT) or VTS web sites or call them directly.

Customers will be considered as "no-show/late cancel" (NSLC) if they do not appear within 5 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time or do not cancel with at least one hour's notice to contractor. No-show/late cancellations are considered a pattern or practice when a customer reserves 7 or more trips within any month and no-shows or late cancels 20 percent or more of those scheduled trips, or if there are more than 7 no-shows or late cancellations in a month. A pattern or practice of no-show or late cancellation trips is a policy violation and will result in written notification and possible suspension.

No shows or late cancellations for reasons beyond a customer's control such as reported to your contractor, or trips which are missed due to operator error, shall not be a basis for determining that a pattern or practice exists resulting in a violation.

The following actions shall apply to violations that occur within the same 12 month rolling period:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Violation</b>	<b>Written Warning</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Violation</b>	<b>1 Week Suspension Period</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Violation</b>	<b>2 Week Suspension Period</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> or Subsequent Violations</b>	<b>8 Week Suspension Period</b>

Information on how to appeal the suspension, either written or in-person, will be included in notification to customers. Appeals must be postmarked within 30 calendar days of the date on which the notice of suspension was issued.

No suspension will take place if a customer has filed an appeal in accordance with the instructions and deadlines noted in the policy and the Appeals Board has not determined the outcome of the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Board is final.

Prior to sending suspension letters, the MBTA will review all NSLCs to ensure that the process was followed properly and an accurate count is represented. Any NSLC that is found to be in error will be removed.

### **On the day of your trip**

Be ready to travel 5 minutes before your scheduled pick-up and be prepared to wait up to 15 minutes after that time. Carry needed medications, oxygen, etc. in case you travel longer than expected. The driver will go to the door for you and then must wait for you for 5 minutes from the time of the scheduled pick-up. If you are not at the pick-up location, the driver will obtain clearance from the dispatcher to leave after waiting 5 minutes. Please do not leave your pick-up location to call before the end of the 15 minute waiting period. All vehicles have a color-coded stripe to assist in locating a particular contractor; blue stripe-GLSS, green stripe-NEXT and red stripe-VTS.

- If THE RIDE does not arrive by the end of the 15-minute period, please call TRAC(GLSS/NEXT) or VTS to assist you in locating the vehicle or estimate its time of arrival (ETA). Your RIDE is not considered late until 31 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time.
- To cancel or to change a trip location or time, call TRAC(GLSS/NEXT) or VTS. Changes, other than trip time negotiation, will trigger the premium non-ADA fare.
- If you are delayed, due to unforeseen circumstances, at an appointment, call TRAC(GLSS/NEXT) or VTS and ask to be put on “will-call” status. When you are ready, call to request your new pick-up time. This will trigger the premium non-ADA fare. RIDE contractors will do their best to incorporate your modified trip request into the days schedule but may not be guaranteed. Always book your return trips with sufficient time should unforeseen circumstances arise.



There are many changes to schedules due to traffic problems, customer delays, and weather. Dispatchers monitor and adjust vehicles to try to keep schedules running on time. Dispatchers interact with customers, drivers, and MBTA RIDE staff to troubleshoot problems. If you require assistance, please call your contractor as soon as possible.

## **Subscription service**

Subscription service is for RIDE customers who make a reservation to and from the same locations for two or more days per week. Call your contractor to request that these trips be automatically scheduled, which eliminates the need to call individually for each trip. Subscription service is subject to availability. This service is not provided on holidays; therefore you are responsible for reserving your trips on those days. If you currently have subscription service, **your automatic trip scheduling may be interrupted** with any change in eligibility conditions ( i.e. from Unconditional to Conditional and vice versa) or reinstated after a negative fare balance suspension. If this happens, contact TRAC or VTS immediately to confirm your trips if you currently use subscription service.

## **More travel options for RIDE customers**

Registered RIDE users are eligible to use paratransit services in other areas in and out of Massachusetts. The federal regulations allow for travel as a visitor in other areas for 21 days in a 12-month period. The Office for Transportation Access, OTA, can provide proof of your MBTA ADA Paratransit Eligibility upon request. Provide this to the visiting agency in order to use their program. If travel will exceed 21 days to a particular area, you may need to apply for certification through that agency.

For services in other Regional Transit Authorities within Massachusetts please call 857-368-4636 (voice), 857-388-0655 (TTY) or visit MassDOT Regional Transit at: <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/NewEnglandRailBusFerryService/LocalTransitOperators.aspx>. Availability, hours of service, fares and policies vary within each Regional Transit Authority (RTA). For information on possible MBTA/RTA transfers, contact OTA.

In response to Executive Order 530, Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) are forming in Massachusetts. The Councils provide a forum for open discussion, unmet needs assessment, decision-making about regional transportation priorities and new services designed to provide more transportation options for people with disabilities,

the elderly, and low income individuals. If you would like more information about an RCC in your region and to join the stakeholder discussion, please check out contact information for your RCC at:

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/MobilityManagementCenter/RegionalCoordinatingCouncils.aspx>

## **Keep your profile current**

Please contact us with changes to your information, such as:

- Change in mobility status, such as using a walker to using a wheelchair, or acquisition of a service animal. Comfort or therapy animals are not service animals under the ADA and will NOT be transported.
- Change of phone number, cell phone update, address, email, emergency contact, legal name change.
- Family members are urged to call us if a customer is deceased so we may inactivate the customer profile and arrange for any refunds from their RIDE fare account. Legal documentation may be requested in some cases.

Email: [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com) or write: MBTA-RIDE Ten Park Plaza- 5750 Boston, MA 02116, or call: 800-533-6282 (in-state toll-free): 617-222-5123, 617-222-5415 TTY

## **Driver assistance**

- All drivers have received sensitivity and safety training.
- Drivers will ask you to state your name at pick-up to ensure they are picking up the correct customer.
- For wheelchair or scooter users, the driver will offer the optional use of an MBTA-supplied body belt immediately upon greeting you.
- Driver will assist customers door-to-door to and from the vehicle, but is not allowed beyond the main door or lobby area of buildings.
- Driver will assist individuals in manual wheelchairs over one curb and/or step, but may not carry an individual or their mobility devices.
- A driver will collapse and securely store an ambulatory customer's manual wheelchair or walker in the trunk or cargo area. It is preferred that manual support canes also be stored in the trunk or cargo area but at a customer's request may be held safely by them and not stored on the floor. 'White' canes must be collapsed and be kept safely with customer.

- The driver will assist customers with boarding and exiting the vehicle, even when accompanied by a PCA.
- The driver will communicate to you their need to fasten and unfasten seatbelts as part of the vehicle's wheelchair/scooter securement system.
- If you or your guest has packages, i.e groceries, **the driver must be able to safely assist you while at the same time carrying your items to and from the vehicle.** Limit heavy or bulky items. Assistance with up to three pieces of luggage per person, not to exceed 40 lbs. each, will be provided for you and your PCA. Keep in mind that this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Transportation will not be provided to customers who exceed this policy at time of pick-up.

## **Appropriate behavior on THE RIDE**

- For everyone's safety and comfort, show respect to your fellow passengers, drivers and the vehicles you use. Inappropriate or illegal behavior will not be tolerated and will be subject to consequences such as service suspension and/or police investigation.
- All passengers, including ambulatory or wheelchair/scooter users, must wear a seatbelt.
- Animals (i.e. **comfort/therapy animals or pets which may cause allergic reactions to others**) are **NOT allowed**, with the exception of Service Animals (as defined under the ADA). At all times, Service Animals will only be transported if tethered, leashed or harnessed and at the feet of their owners not in a carrier on a seat or a customer's lap. Owners must have control of their Service Animals at all times via voice or signals.
- Smoking is not allowed, including electronic cigarettes. Hoverboards will not be transported in RIDE vehicles.
- Consumption of food and/or beverages is prohibited, unless required for dietary and/or medical purposes and client has advised the driver.
- Do not stand while the vehicle is in motion.
- No tipping or other gratuities are allowed.
- Personal audio devices may only be used with headphones.
- Customers may ask that the AM/FM radios installed on RIDE vehicles be turned off, on, or volume adjusted, as they prefer. Two-way radios, installed in vehicles for service provision, will not be turned off but may be lowered in volume at customer's request.
- Please note that personal hygiene and the use of perfumes can be objectionable to others or cause allergic reactions.
- For the safety of all our customers, drivers are prohibited from using personal cell phones or any other personal electronic devices while providing RIDE service.

When you are using your personal mobile device respect others around you and avoid shouting, etc.

## **Other tips**

- Tell your driver as soon as possible if you would like to use the lift if you have difficulty stepping up into the vehicle.
- For your safety carry a cell phone that has been programmed with phone numbers of your RIDE contractors and family or friends.
- If at any time, you are approached by someone who you are unsure is a RIDE driver, you may ask them to confirm your RIDE ID # or destination.
- Remember THE RIDE is public transportation, not a private service, and the MBTA may change their operations or policies and still be ADA compliant. Familiarize yourself with what the ADA requires and what it doesn't. If you are not sure, contact [www.fta.dot.gov/ada](http://www.fta.dot.gov/ada) or 1-800-446-4511(voice), 1-800-877-8339(TTY).

## **Compliments/complaints**

The Office for Transportation Access welcomes your feedback. All complaints will be investigated and responded to. Complaint information is shared with the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA, unless otherwise requested when you file your complaint. Contact us:

Email: [\*\*theride@mbta.com\*\*](mailto:theride@mbta.com)  
800-533-6282 (in-state toll-free)  
617-222-5123 (voice/relay)

Or write to:  
MBTA – OTA, THE RIDE  
Ten Park Plaza – 5750  
Boston, MA 02116

The MBTA will not tolerate any retaliation or intimidation to a customer for filing a complaint or concern of any nature. If you feel you have been subjected to these actions, we urge you to contact OTA or the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA immediately.

## **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT)**

The Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA is a consumer body composed of persons with disabilities, RIDE customers, advocates and representatives of disability

advocacy groups and agencies who advise and make recommendations to the MBTA regarding accessible transportation. AACT members and other interested persons meet publicly each month. For more information or meeting schedules, call 857-702-3658(voice), 617-570-9193(TTY), email [aact@ctps.org](mailto:aact@ctps.org), or visit their website at: [www.mbta.com/aact](http://www.mbta.com/aact) or [www.ctps.org/bostonmpo](http://www.ctps.org/bostonmpo) .

## Contact us

**General RIDE inquiries, or for RIDE fare or RIDE account questions:** Contact the MBTA Office for Transportation Access at: Email: [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com) , 800-533-6282 (in-state toll-free), 617-222-5123 (voice, Relay). Always visit [www.mbta.com/theride](http://www.mbta.com/theride) for the latest information on The RIDE program including updates and service notifications. Visit [www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot](http://www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot) if you are interested in becoming a pilot program participant and wish to learn more about RIDE pilot offerings.

**RIDE Eligibility:** Call THE RIDE Eligibility Center at 617-337-2727(voice, Relay) located at 1000 Massachusetts Avenue Suite 201, 2<sup>nd</sup> flr, Boston, MA 02118,

**Emergency:** Call MBTA Police at 617-222-1212 (voice/relay), 617-222-1200 (TTY).

**For information on making a Reasonable Accommodation Request** visit [http://www.mbta.com/customer\\_support/?id=6442454932](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support/?id=6442454932) or contact us 617-222-3200 (voice/relay), 800-392-6100 (toll free) or 617-222-5146(TTY). All requests for reasonable modifications to MBTA programs and services (including bus, subway, Commuter Rail, Commuter Ferry, or THE RIDE) will be considered on an individual basis. Please note that the MBTA may be unable to accommodate requests for reasonable modifications which would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of MBTA programs and services, or which would directly interfere with the health and safety of others.

**For information on accessible services** including the MBTA's Fixed Route T Access Guide, application and information on Reduced Fare passes, Elevator/Escalator updates, visit: [www.mbta.com/riding\\_the\\_t/accessible\\_services/](http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/accessible_services/) or call 800-392-6100 (toll-free) or 617-222-3200 (voice, Relay) or 617-222-5146 (TTY)

**For information** on signing up for '**System Orientation Training**' , one on one travel training or to learn more about accessible fixed route buses and trains, call 617-222-5237(voice, Relay) or email [howtotravel@mbta.com](mailto:howtotravel@mbta.com).

**For customers who are MassHealth eligible and want more information on MassHealth's** free HST transportation option to non-emergency medical appointments (doctors, counseling, day habilitation) contact them at 1-800-841-2900 (V) or 1-800-497-4648 (TTY).

**For transit and travel updates:** Visit [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) or contact Customer Service at 800-392-6100 (toll-free), 617-222-3200 (voice/relay) or 617-222-5146 (TTY).

**For information on the Federal Transit Administration,** who is responsible for civil rights compliance and monitoring to ensure nondiscriminatory provisions of transit services, contact [www.fta.dot.gov/ada](http://www.fta.dot.gov/ada) or 1-800-446-4511 (V), 1-800-877-8339 (TTY).

The MBTA wishes to improve your travel experience on THE RIDE. You, our customers, have valued insight and we welcome your suggestions. Additionally, in these days of heightened security it is especially important for us to rely on our customers and drivers; so please remember, ***If you see or sense something, say something.***

### **NOTES:**

# THE RIDE Service Area

FY15-FY19

