



# Guide to The RIDE Service



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Information in this guide is subject to change. Please visit [www.mbta.com/theride](http://www.mbta.com/theride) for the current version of this guide and program information.

To request this information in alternative formats (Braille, audio, electronic) or other languages, please call 1-800-392-6100, [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support).

Para solicitar esta información en formatos alternativos (Braille, audio, electrónico) u otros idiomas, llame al 1-800-392-6100, [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support).

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Để yêu cầu thông tin này theo các định dạng khác (Chữ nổi, âm thanh, điện tử) hoặc các ngôn ngữ khác, vui lòng gọi số 1-800-392-6100 [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support)

Pour demander cette information dans d'autres formats (Braille, audio, électronique) ou dans d'autres langues, veuillez composer le 1-800-392-6100 [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support).

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# **General Information**

## **What is The RIDE?**

The RIDE paratransit service provides door-to-door, shared-ride public transportation using accessible vehicles 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. Public transportation is distinct from medical or human services transportation. As it is a shared-ride service, you may travel with other customers going in the same general direction. ADA travel times are to be comparable to the same trip taken on fixed-route (bus, subway, or trolley) plus an additional 20 minutes.

## **Where does it serve?**

The RIDE complements the fixed-route system, operating 365 days a year generally from 5am – 1am in fifty-eight (58) cities and towns. For 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.

The RIDE serves these cities and towns: Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Beverly, Boston, Braintree, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Canton, Chelsea, Cohasset, Concord, Danvers, Dedham, Everett, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Lexington, Lincoln, Lynn, Lynnfield, Malden, Marblehead, Medfield, Medford, Melrose, Middleton, Milton, Nahant, Needham, Newton, Norwood, Peabody, Quincy, Randolph, Reading, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Sharon, Somerville, Stoneham, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wakefield, Walpole, Waltham, Watertown, Wenham, Weston, Westwood, Weymouth, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop, and Woburn. Portions of Abington, Avon, Billerica, Brockton, Stoughton, and Wellesley are also served. See the end of this guide for a full map.

## How much does it cost?

**One-way ADA fare is \$3.35** for each registered customer or guest. **One-way ADA Senior or income-based reduced fare is \$1.70** for each registered customer.



**One-way premium non-ADA fare is \$5.60** for each registered customer or guest. **One-way premium non-ADA Senior or income-based reduced fare is \$2.80** per registered customer. Premium non-ADA fares apply if the trip origin and/or destination is greater than 3/4 miles from MBTA bus or subway service or for same-day changes, except for trip time negotiation. Reservationists will confirm the fare when you schedule a trip.

A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) or child under the age of 11 accompanying a customer (up to 2 children per customer) is not charged a fare. Customers may bring one guest, with additional guests allowed if space is available. PCAs and guests must travel to and from the same destination at the same time as the customer.

## Taking a Trip

### How do I add funds?

You must have sufficient funds in your RIDE account to schedule a trip.

Options to Add Funds	Posting	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Go to <a href="http://www.MBTAs.com/theridefares">www.MBTAs.com/theridefares</a>	Instant	Sign into your account and add funds 24 hours a day. Your confirmation # is your receipt.
 Call 888-844-0355, select option 2	Instant	Call Mon-Fri 7am-8pm and Sat/Sun 9am-5pm incl. holidays to make a deposit or check your balance. Your confirmation # is your receipt.
 Visit the Charlie Service Center at 296 Washington St., Boston, MA 02108	Instant	Monday-Appointment only Tuesday through Friday – 8:30 AM – 5 PM. Receipt is provided.
<input type="checkbox"/> Mail a check or money order	Allow 5 business days to post	<b>MBTA-RIDE Fares, PO Box 845097, Boston, MA 02284-5097.</b> Your canceled check or money order is your receipt.



## How do I check my balance?

For customers interested in checking their current and available balance, you may do the following:

- Call TRAC at 844-427-7433
- Visit the online booking website [www.mbta.com/booktheride](http://www.mbta.com/booktheride)
- Call 888-844-0355, and select option 2

Fares are held in reserve upon booking a trip and automatically debited from your account as your trip is taken. No fare is charged if the trip is not taken. **Balances are non-refundable and non-transferable.** Full withdrawals are only allowed upon closing your account per the MBTA's Refund Policy by contacting [ridewithdrawal@mbta.com](mailto:ridewithdrawal@mbta.com).

## How do I book a trip?

### Booking Methods:

- **Online via our booking website:** [www.mbta.com/booktheride](http://www.mbta.com/booktheride)
  - Website is accessible 24 hours a day
- **Call The RIDE Access Center (TRAC):** 844-427-7433 (voice/relay) 857-206-6569 (TTY)
  - TRAC staff are available 8:30am – 5:00pm

Trips may be booked from 1 to 5 days in advance. Note that no trips can be booked after 5pm for travel the following day. Same day requests cannot be accommodated.

### Booking Process:

- Request an **Arrival Time** for trips to a destination where you need to arrive before a specific time (for example, arriving at a doctor's appointment by 9am) or **Pick-Up Time** for trips from a destination where you cannot leave earlier than a specific time (for example, leaving work after you are off at 5pm)
- Provide necessary pick-up and drop-off location information, indicate your mobility type, and if you will travel with a PCA, guest(s), child, or Service Animal
- Receive a call the night prior to your trip by 9:00pm with your scheduled pick-up time.
- Please keep in mind the following when booking your trip:
  - Requested arrival and pick-up times must be at least 45 minutes apart

- Please be prepared for your vehicle to arrive anytime between 5 minutes before to 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time.
- Ensure you can wait safely at your destination as you may be dropped off up to 30 minutes early and drivers cannot wait until a location opens
- Always book your trips with extra time should unforeseen delays arise

**To create a web account:** A helpful FAQ for registering and using the RIDE's website can be found here: <https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride/updates-ride-customers>. To use the booking website, you will need to specify your favorite addresses; to add your favorite addresses please review the updated FAQs and visit this Google form: <https://forms.gle/RnP3ESnAynJf5fQS7>. This form can be used to modify your favorite addresses as needed moving forward and must only include an address that is within the RIDE service area.

To create an account, go to <https://mbta.com/booktheride>, click **Create an Account**, and follow the instructions on the website.

**Reoccurring (Subscription) Trips:** Customers may have their trips automatically scheduled if they travel to and from the same locations two or more days per week. Call TRAC to request to schedule a subscription, eliminating the need to call for each trip. Subscription service is subject to availability. Please note the following restrictions:

- **Subscription service is not scheduled on holidays;** therefore, you are responsible for reserving your trips on those days.
- **Any change in your eligibility status or conditions** (i.e., from Unconditional to Conditional and vice versa) may interrupt your subscription service
- **Two consecutive no-shows for round trip rides** will cancel a subscription
- **A lack of funds in your account to cover all booked rides** for the next 5 days will cancel your subscription. You will receive a phone call to alert you to add funds prior to your subscription and trips being suspended.

## **How do I change or cancel a trip?**

You may **change trips** up until 5pm of the day before service by calling TRAC at 844-427-7433. After 5pm, trips for the following day are scheduled and cannot be changed. Please **cancel trips** as soon as your plans change using the booking website at [www.mbta.com/booktheride](https://www.mbta.com/booktheride), or by calling TRAC at 844-427-7433. Customers must adhere to the No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy found in this guide.

## How will I be notified about my trip?

The trip notification process includes two phone messages:

1. **Night before your trip by 9:00pm:** A trip confirmation message providing your **scheduled pick-up time**.
  - a. Please be prepared for your vehicle to arrive anytime between 5 minutes before to 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time.
2. **Day of your trip, 10 minutes before:** An **arrival notification** indicating your driver is almost there. Head to your location's external-most door.

### Expect 2 Reminder Calls for Your Trips



#### 1 Night Before Reminder Call

A trip confirmation message providing your scheduled pick-up time.

#### 2 10 Minutes Before Arrival Call

Lets you know your driver is about to arrive. Go to the door and be ready to go.



## **How can I make my pick-up a success?**

- Be patient while you wait as a driver's arrival can be delayed by issues out of their control including traffic, customer delays, and inclement weather.
- Please do not contact TRAC for trip status updates unless it is 15 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time and your driver has not arrived.
  - If you have reached the end of your 15-minute pick-up time and your driver has not arrived, you may check on the status of your trip by calling TRAC at 844-427-7433.
  - Only contact TRAC if your vehicle does not arrive by the end of the pick-up time to obtain their assistance in locating your vehicle.
- At your given pick-up time meet your driver at your location's external-most door. If you are not there, the driver will obtain clearance from TRAC to leave after waiting 5 minutes.
- Do not leave your pick-up location once you get your 10-minute arrival call.
- Confirm your name and destination with the driver
- Call TRAC immediately to rebook your return trip if you are delayed at an appointment. TRAC will do its best to accept your change, but there is no guarantee if availability is limited. The change will incur a premium non-ADA fare.

## **Trip, Driver and Customer Policies**

### **What if I don't get my preferred pick-up time?**

If, during callbacks the night before a trip, you receive a pick-up time that does not work for you, you may negotiate trip times with TRAC by calling them as soon as possible that evening. Some changes are not considered negotiations and will incur a premium non-ADA fare. These include, but are not limited to, requests less than one hour before a trip, rescheduling a missed trip, rescheduling at least 30 minutes earlier or later than the originally requested time, or changes to pick-up or drop-off locations.

### **Can I request a specific vehicle or driver?**

Requests for **preferred type vehicles will not be honored**. The Authority's decision to utilize multiple vehicle types does not conflict with ADA/DOT regulations, which require an accessible vehicle (e.g., lift/ramp equipped) be provided. If you refuse a vehicle upon arrival, which is accessible to you, another one will not be sent.

## **How long will I be in a vehicle? Do I need to transfer?**

Per the ADA, travel time should be comparable to fixed-route (bus, subway, trolley) travel time plus 20 minutes to account for travel to and from the transit stop and transfers. Travel times may increase due to inclement weather, traffic, or diverting to pick up another customer who missed a return pick-up. You can review fixed-route travel times using the MBTA's Trip Planner at [www.mbta.com/trip-planner](http://www.mbta.com/trip-planner) and can add 20 minutes to approximate estimated travel time.

Trips spanning multiple communities within the MBTA service area, or trips to MetroWest Regional Transit Authority and Brockton Area Transit, may require a transfer trip. TRAC will coordinate travel with these Regional Transit Authorities only if the trip originates in the MBTA service area. You will either remain on your vehicle until the actual transfer to the other vehicle takes place, or if required, be assisted to the receiving agency's transfer location, and then continue your trip. There is no assistance available at the Brockton Area Transit drop location.

If you need to book a trip which may involve a transfer, please call TRAC at 844-427-7433. Transfer trips cannot be scheduled through the online booking website.

## **What if I cancel too late or miss my trip?**

A customer's trip will be considered as **"no-show/late cancel" (NSLC) if the customer is not present within 5 minutes after their scheduled pick-up time, or the customer does not cancel at least one-hour ahead of the start of the pick-up time.**

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.

A pattern or practice of no-show or late cancellation trips is a policy violation and will result in written warning and possible suspension. No shows or late cancellations for reasons beyond a customer's control that are reported to TRAC, 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. Prior to sending 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.

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

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

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.

### **What assistance should I expect from my driver?**

- Drivers receive sensitivity and safety training and are well-versed in assistance policies as their main duty is to safely assist customers
- Drivers will be in uniform and have RIDE identification
- Drivers will ask for your name to ensure they are picking up the correct customer
- Drivers will assist customers door-to-door to and from the vehicle, but are not allowed beyond the exterior-most door of a building
- Drivers can only assist with packages if they are able to, in one trip, safely assist you while at the same time carry your items to / from the vehicle
- Drivers will offer the use of a supplied body belt for wheelchair/scooter users
- Drivers will assist individuals in manual wheelchairs over one curb and/or step, but may not carry an individual or their mobility devices
- Drivers may assist in carrying a child car/booster seat to and from the vehicle, but cannot install or secure the child car/booster seat
- Drivers may be prevented from providing door-to-door assistance in extreme weather (i.e., if snow or ice has not been cleared) or the location is not accessible due to construction, detours, etc.
- Drivers will collapse and securely store an ambulatory customer's 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 request, may be held safely by them and not stored on the floor. If you use a 'red or white' cane that collapses, you may collapse it and keep it with you and not stored on the floor. Customers using manual collapsible wheelchairs will be transported in a van.
- Drivers will assist customers, even when customers are accompanied by a PCA, in securing their mobility devices

- Drivers will communicate their need to fasten and unfasten seatbelts as part of the vehicle's wheelchair/scooter securement system
- Drivers will use the lift if a customer has difficulty stepping up into the vehicle
- Drivers are prohibited from using personal cell phones or any other personal electronic devices while providing RIDE service

### **What am I expected to do while onboard the vehicle?**

- Show respect to fellow passengers, drivers, and vehicles. Inappropriate or illegal behavior is subject to service suspension and/or police investigation
- Wear a seatbelt – this is required of all passengers, inc. wheelchair/scooter users
- Carry needed medications, sufficient oxygen, etc.
- Do not stand while the vehicle is in motion
- Keep control of your Service Animal on the floor of the vehicle at all times
- Consider carrying a cell phone that has phone numbers programmed for TRAC (844-427-7433), MBTA Customer Support (617-222-3200), and family/friends
- Smoking is not allowed, including electronic cigarettes
- Hoverboards, razor scooters, skateboards, and bicycles will not be transported
- Consumption of food or beverages is prohibited unless required for dietary/medical purposes, the requirement is included in their profile, and the driver is advised
- No tipping or other gratuities are allowed
- Personal audio devices or cell phones with volume turned on may only be used with headphones and conversations on mobile devices must be held in a quiet manner
- Customers may ask that vehicle AM/FM radio volume to be adjusted.
- Please be aware that personal hygiene and the use of fragrances can be objectionable to others or cause allergic reactions

### **How many packages may I bring onboard?**

If you bring packages (e.g., groceries, luggage), the driver must, in one trip, be able to safely assist you while at the same time carry your items to / from the vehicle. Transportation will not be provided to customers who exceed this policy.

### **What animals may I bring onboard?**

**Only Service Animals as defined by the ADA are allowed. Other animals (i.e., comfort/therapy animals or pets) are NOT allowed.** The ADA requires Service Animals to be under the control of the handler at all times. This can occur using a harness, leash, or other tether. If the handler is unable to hold a tether because of a disability or its use would interfere with the Service Animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, the Service Animal must be under the handler's control by some other means, such as voice control. Service Animals cannot be in a carrier, on a seat, or on a customer's lap.

## **How do I travel with children?**

### **School transportation of minors (Grades K-12) is not provided.**

Customers must provide and install their personal child car/booster seat. Drivers will assist in carrying the seat to and from the vehicle, but the customer or their PCA must provide and install the car or booster seat in accordance with all federal and state laws. Drivers cannot install or uninstall the seat or place the child in or out of the seat. If a customer's disability prevents them from fulfilling these responsibilities, the customer should consider travelling with a PCA to provide assistance. Please visit <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/car-seat-laws-in-massachusetts> for additional information.

All RIDE customers who are 11 or younger must travel with a PCA on all RIDE trips.

## **Additional Information**

### **How do I submit a question, compliment, or complaint?**

**Web:** [www.mbta.com/customer-support](http://www.mbta.com/customer-support) or **email:** [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com)

**Phone:** 617-222-3200 (voice/relay)

**Mail:** MBTA –The RIDE, Ten Park Plaza-5750, Boston MA 02116

All complaints are taken seriously and are documented, investigated, and responded to. The MBTA will not tolerate any retaliation for filing a complaint or concern. If you feel you have been subjected to these actions, contact the MBTA immediately.

### **What else do I need to know?**

#### **In Case of Emergency:**

Call Transit Police at 617-222-1212 (voice/relay) or 617-222-1200 (TTY). Please remember, ***if you see or sense something, say something.***

#### **Mobility Center Information or Inquiries:**

**Email:** [mbtamobility@mtm-inc.net](mailto:mbtamobility@mtm-inc.net)

**Phone:** 617-337-2727 (voice/relay)

#### **Updating Your Profile:**

- **Information Changes:** Please contact **TRAC** at 844-427-7433 (voice/relay) with changes to your information, such as change of phone numbers, addresses, email, emergency contact, and legal name change.
- **Mobility Changes:** Please contact the **Mobility Center** at 617-337-2727 (voice/relay) or [mbtamobility@mtm-inc.net](mailto:mbtamobility@mtm-inc.net) for changes in mobility status, such as using a walker to using a wheelchair, or acquisition of a service animal.



- **Deceased Customer:** Please contact the **MBTA** at 617-222-3200 (voice/relay) or [www.mbta.com/customer\\_support](http://www.mbta.com/customer_support) if you are a family member of a customer who is deceased so we may inactivate the customer profile.

**Pilot Programs:** If you are interested in getting same-day trips with our ride-sharing partners, visit [www.mbta.com/TheRIDEFlex](http://www.mbta.com/TheRIDEFlex) to learn more. The pilot program is available to all RIDE eligible customers. While The RIDE Flex program does not offer traditional ADA paratransit-level service, customers may ask drivers for assistance getting into and out of the vehicle. We cannot guarantee that all drivers will be able to provide this level of service. RIDE Flex participation also allows The RIDE Access Center to assign some of your standard RIDE trips to our ride-sharing partners.

**Reasonable Accommodation Requests:**

**Web:** <https://www.mbta.com/customer-support>

**Phone:** 617-222-3200 (voice/relay), 800-392-6100 (toll free), 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, such as requests for a preferred vehicle type, or which would directly interfere with the health and safety of others.

**Get Involved in the RIDE community:** The Rider's Transportation Access Group (R-TAG) is a community engagement group composed of persons who utilize the MBTA's fixed-route and paratransit systems. R-TAG advises on transportation programs that may affect persons with disabilities and/or seniors. Visit [www.mbta.com/rtag](http://www.mbta.com/rtag) for more information including meeting dates/times and locations. You can also email [RTAG@bostoncil.org](mailto:RTAG@bostoncil.org) or call 617-870-9874 for additional information.

**Information on Accessible Services:** Information on the MBTA's Fixed-route T Access Guide, application and information on Reduced Fare passes, Elevator and Escalator updates, visit: <https://www.mbta.com/accessibility> or call 800-392-6100 (toll-free) or 617-222-3200 (voice/relay) or 617-222-5146 (TTY). To sign up for System Orientation or one-on-one trainings, or to learn more about accessible fixed-route buses and trains, call 617-222-5254 (voice/relay) or email [howtotravel@mbta.com](mailto:howtotravel@mbta.com).

**MBTA Transit and Travel Updates (for all modes or travel):**

**Web:** [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com)

**Phone:** 617-222-3200 (voice/relay) or 617-222-5146 (TTY)

### **More Travel Options for RIDE Customers:**

RIDE customers are eligible for **paratransit services in other areas in and out of Massachusetts**. Federal regulations allow for travel as a visitor in other areas for 21 days in a 12-month period. The Mobility Center can provide proof of your MBTA ADA Paratransit Eligibility which can be given to a visiting agency. If travel in a particular area will exceed 21 days, you may need to apply for additional certification with that agency.

For services in other Massachusetts **Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)**, call 857-368-4636 (voice/relay) or 857-388-0655 (TTY) or visit <https://massridematch.org/> or <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Transit/>. Availability, hours of service, fares and policies vary.

The **Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services** lists transportation services by category on their website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/get-help-finding-a-ride>. MassHealth customers looking to utilize the agency's free HST Transportation option to non-emergency medical appointments (doctors, counseling, and day habilitation) can contact HST at 1-800-841-2900 (V) or 1-800-497-4648 (TTY).

**Regional Coordinating Councils** To collaborate with transit providers, planners, human service providers, and advocates to address regional transit needs, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-transportation-coordination>.

### **FTA and the ADA:**

The RIDE is public transportation, not a private or medical service. The MBTA may change their operations or policies and still be ADA compliant. Familiarize yourself with what the ADA does and does not require. 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).

# The RIDE Service Area

FY21-FY25

