



# Guide to The RIDE Service



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### NOTES:

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## 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 Authority's decision to utilize all vehicles does not conflict with ADA/DOT regulations, which require an accessible vehicle (e.g. lift/ramp equipped) be provided. **Comfort/therapy animals or pets, which may cause allergic reactions to others, are not allowed,** with the exception of Service Animals (see page 11).

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.

## The RIDE Service Area

### Core Area

Core area municipalities are Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Somerville.

### North Area

North area municipalities are Beverly, Chelsea, Danvers, Everett, Lynn, Lynnfield, Malden, Marblehead, Melrose, Middleton, Nahant, Peabody, Reading, Revere, Salem, Saugus, Stoneham, Swampscott, Topsfield, Wakefield, Wenham, Wilmington and Winthrop.

## West Area

West area municipalities are 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of MBTA bus service.

## South Area

South area municipalities are 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles of MBTA bus service during operating hours.

## 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles from MBTA bus or subway service and outside of the core areas, 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) 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:** <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 MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express credit cards and debit cards supported by MasterCard or Visa. **Funds post to your account directly.**

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**  
**P.O. Box 847091**  
**Boston, MA 02284-7091**

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 directly.**

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 The RIDE Access Center's website, the automated phone system option or your TRAC reservationist. The RIDE fare is debited from your account as you board the vehicle. You are not charged for a trip you do not take. Should you require a refund from your RIDE account please contact the MBTA at 617-222-5123.

## **Scheduling RIDE Trips**

RIDE service is provided by four contractors under contract to the MBTA. The RIDE Access Center (TRAC) provides reservations, scheduling, and dispatching for Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), National Express Transit (NEXT) and Veterans Transportation LLC (VTS). GLSS, NEXT and VTS all provide the service on the street with drivers and vehicles.

To schedule trips, please either:

- **Call TRAC** at 844-427-7433 (voice, toll-free) or 857-206-6569 (TTY, toll-free), or
- **Make a reservation online** at [www.mbta.com/trac](http://www.mbta.com/trac) (logon with your RIDE ID# and your password is your date of birth using MMDDYYYY format). Customers

must first provide TRAC up to 12 locations for TRAC to initially be entered into the system.

**Reservation Hours:** Currently are 8:30AM – 5PM, 7 days per week, including holidays. Trips may be booked from one to seven days in advance. Same day requests will not be accommodated.

There are two ways to book a trip:

- **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
- **Departure Time** for trips leaving destination **where you cannot leave earlier than a specific time** (for example leaving work not until after you are off at 5pm).

**Note for arrival times based trips you can arrive up to 30 minutes before your scheduled arrival time, so please plan accordingly to ensure you can wait safely at the location if you arrive early.** Arrival time trips do not guarantee a specific pick-up time until call-backs are complete the night prior – you may receive a pick-up time earlier than you might expect, as this is a shared-ride service that can pick-up and drop-off multiple passengers on the way to your destination. Requested arrival and departure times must be at least 45 minutes 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 pick-up times. If you do not receive a call by 9PM, call TRAC to be sure the trip has been scheduled.

## **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 TRAC 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 immediately to confirm your trips if you currently use subscription service.

## **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 TRAC by calling them as soon as possible that evening. Some changes are not considered negotiations and will incur a premium non-ADA fare rate. These include, but are not 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.

## **Transfers**

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, except for certain trips to border cities and towns. TRAC will coordinate travel with these Regional Transit Authorities only if the trips originate in our 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 on your trip. There is no assistance available at the Brockton Area Transit drop location.

## **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. Customers should plan accordingly for any of the above disruptions to service.

## **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's web site 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 TRAC. No-show/late cancellations are considered a pattern or practice when a customer either:

- reserves 7 or more trips within any month and no-shows or late cancels 20 percent or more of those scheduled trips, or
- receives 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 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 suspension letters (see below), 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:

<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>4 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.

## **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, sufficient 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.** For identification purposes all vehicles have a numerical vehicle ID number displayed prominently on the outside should you need to discern which vehicle is yours. Please confirm with the driver your name and destination to ensure you have been picked up by the right vehicle.

- If The RIDE does not arrive by the end of the 15-minute period, please call TRAC to assist you in locating the vehicle or estimate its time of arrival (ETA). Your RIDE is not considered late until after this period.
- If you are delayed, due to unforeseen circumstances at an appointment, call TRAC 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. TRAC will do its best to incorporate your modified trip request into the days schedule but it 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 TRAC as soon as possible.

## **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
- Drivers will assist customers door-to-door to and from the vehicle, but are 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
- Extreme weather, i.e., if snow or ice has not been cleared, this may prohibit a driver’s efforts to provide door-to-door or assist over curbs, etc. safely
- A driver 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’s 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 and rollators will be transported in a van.

- Drivers will assist customers with boarding and exiting the vehicle, even when accompanied by a PCA
- Drivers 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 (e.g., groceries, luggage), **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 that 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. Customers with a service animal will be transported in a van due to space constraints of the sedans and for the safety and comfort of the service animal.
- 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, client has advised the driver, and the requirement is included in their profile.
- Do not stand while the vehicle is in motion.
- No tipping or other gratuities are allowed.
- Personal audio devices or cell phones with volume turned on 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 be aware 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 the phone number for TRAC and family or friends.
- If at any time, you are approached by someone who you are unsure is a RIDE driver, you may ask him or her to confirm your RIDE ID # or destination. All RIDE drivers are in uniform and carry an ID badge.
- 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 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).

## Riders' Transportation Access Group

The Riders' Transportation Access Group (R-TAG) is the community engagement group that replaced the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT). It is intended to be a consumer body composed of persons who utilize the MBTA's fixed route system, The RIDE paratransit program, advocates as well as representatives of disability advocacy groups and agencies. The group will advise and comment on MBTA programs for transportation that may affect persons with disabilities and/or seniors. Members of R-TAG and other interested persons will meet publicly. Until R-TAG is officially launched with published meeting dates/times and locations, please contact 617-222-5254 (voice/relay) or [swa@mbta.com](mailto:swa@mbta.com) for additional information.

## Updating Your Profile

- **Information Changes:** Please contact TRAC at 844-427-7433 with changes to your information, such as change of phone numbers, addresses, email, emergency contact, and legal name change.
- **Mobility Changes:** Please contact TREC at 617-337-2727 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 if you are a family member of a customer who 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.

## Compliments/Complaints

The Office for Transportation Access welcomes your feedback. All complaints will be investigated and responded to. Contact us:

Email: [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com)  
Web: <https://www.mbta.com/customer-support>  
Phone: 617-222-3200 (voice/relay) or 800-392-6100 (toll free)  
Mail: 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 the MBTA immediately.

## Additional Information

### General RIDE Information, Inquiries, Fare or Account Questions:

Web: [www.mbta.com/theride](http://www.mbta.com/theride)  
Email: [theride@mbta.com](mailto:theride@mbta.com)  
Phone: 617-222-5123 (voice/relay)

**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 RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC) 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/>. Availability, hours of service, fares and policies vary within each Regional Transit Authority (RTA). For information on possible MBTA/RTA transfers, contact 617-222-3200.

The Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services has a very good listing of transportation services by category on their website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/get-help-finding-a-ride>

MassHealth eligible customers looking to utilize the agency's free HST Transportation option to non-emergency medical appointments (doctors, counseling, day habilitation) can contact them at 1-800-841-2900 (V) or 1-800-497-4648 (TTY).

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: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/regional-coordinating-councils-for-community-transportation>.

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

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

**Pilot Program:** Visit [www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot](http://www.mbta.com/paratransitpilot) if you are RIDE eligible and are interested in becoming a pilot program participant and wish to learn more about RIDE pilot offerings. For questions, e-mail [ridepilots@mbta.com](mailto:ridepilots@mbta.com).

**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.

**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: [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). To sign up for System Orientation Training or one-on-one travel training 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 of travel 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).

**Information on the Federal Transit Administration (FTA):** The FTA, who is responsible for civil rights compliance and monitoring to ensure nondiscriminatory provisions of transit services, can be contacted at [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.***

# THE RIDE Service Area

FY15-FY19

