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Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil-rights law that guarantees people with disabilities an equal opportunity to take part in 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.
- Not 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 customers.
- Immediately inform management if accessibility equipment is missing or not working.
- Allow service animals to accompany their owners.

- Should know the maximum size and weight capacities of the coach's lift equipment because the size and weight of customers' mobility devices vary.

CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES:

- Should know the size and weight of their mobility device with themselves in it because the maximum size and weight capacities of lifts vary.
- Should confirm with the motorcoach company 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 their 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 assist customers safely and appropriately with moving to or from a bus seat or disembarking in case of emergency.
- Operators should ask customers how best to assist them in evacuation.

- Refer to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) technical assistance or U.S. 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 customers with information about the accessibility of the rest stop.
- On trips longer than 3 three 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 customers 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 customer 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 customer using a wheelchair is expected during a trip, clear the seats in the tie down area and prepare for loading that customer.
- ✓ Check for a ramp or another loading device if you will be stowing a wheelchair.
- ✓ Check for confirmation of connecting carrier notification if a customer who needs an accessible coach has scheduled a trip.
- ✓ Complete your pre-trip vehicle safety inspection.



Easter Seals Project ACTION

1425 K Street NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20005
(800) 659-6428 • www.projectaction.org
(202) 347-7385 (TTY)



American Bus Association

111 K Street NE • 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 842-1645 • www.buses.org

Accessible
Community
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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 service and is the law.



1. General Guidelines for Serving Customers with Disabilities

- Treat customers with disabilities with courtesy and respect.
- Use people-first language (e.g., a customer 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.
- 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 a customer is saying, just calmly and pleasantly ask him to repeat.

2. Serving Customers Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- 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 customers of schedule changes or audible announcements.

3. Serving Customers Who Are Blind or Have Visual Impairments

- Identify yourself, and ask if and how you may assist the customer.
- 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.

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4. Serving Customers Who Use Wheelchairs

- Ask customers if and 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 and 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 customer wants his wheelchair to be secured, the operator must provide assistance. Companies should request that customers notify the company of the need for a 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 the need for an accessible coach.
- Motorcoach companies without fully accessible fleets may require 48-hour notice for accessible trips.
- Customers can assure themselves of an accessible trip by giving the operator advance notice to prepare the tie down area and make sure other customers are not sitting in the tie down area.

5. Serving Customers Who Use Service Animals

- Service animals are individually trained and allowed by law to ride in customer compartments of motorcoaches.



- Dogs are the most common service animals, but, in accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) ADA regulations, other animals may help people with disabilities.
- Some service animals wear identification such as 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 due to a lack of 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.