

## **Rider's Guide to San Francisco Paratransit**

### **GUIDE 1**

This Guide is available in accessible formats.

Please contact SF Paratransit at

1-415-351-7000

TTY 1-415-351-3942

### **Welcome to SF Paratransit**

SF Paratransit is a van and taxi program for people unable to independently use public transit because of a disability or disabling health condition. Since 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has required all public transit agencies to provide paratransit services to qualified disabled people. San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has provided paratransit services since 1978, before it was required by the ADA. SFMTA contracts with a "Paratransit Broker" to manage the service. The Paratransit Broker contracts with van and taxi companies to provide transportation.

### **We Provide Three Main Types Of Service:**

#### **SF Access**

SF Access is a pre-scheduled, ADA-compliant van service providing door-to-door transportation to ADA eligible riders. SF Access is a shared-ride service. You must make reservations from one to seven days before the day of your trip, and service will be scheduled within one hour of your requested pickup time. For additional information on SF Access, see Rider's Guide 2.

#### **Taxi Services**

Paratransit taxi is general-public, curb-to-curb taxi service provided to ADA-eligible riders. This is not an ADA service, but many riders find that it better meets their transportation needs. For additional information on the taxi program, please see Riders Guide 3.

#### **Group Van Service**

Group Van is a pre-scheduled van service providing door-to-door transportation to groups of ADA-eligible riders attending participating agency programs such as Adult Day Health Care, senior centers, or sheltered work sites.

### **We Also Provide Two Other Services For Seniors And People With Disabilities**

#### **Shop-a-Round Service**

Shop-a-Round is a convenient, low-cost van shuttle that makes it easier to go grocery shopping. The service offers personalized assistance not available on Muni to people with disabilities and seniors, age 65 or older. Shop-a-Round taxi service is also available on a limited basis.

## **Van Gogh Shuttle**

The Van Gogh Shuttle provides transportation to social outings, cultural activities and public events. Each trip is arranged through a trip coordinator and must be requested at least seven (7) days in advance of the event. Each group must have at least seven (7) eligible individuals who will be travelling together.

For more information about Shop-a-Round service or the Van Gogh Shuttle program, please call 1-415-351-7094.

## **Paratransit Eligibility**

To be eligible for ADA paratransit services, you must be unable to use Muni's accessible buses, trains, or streetcars some or all of the time, without the aid of another person. You are eligible to use ADA paratransit services if you fall into one of the following categories:

### **1: You are unable to use the fixed route system**

You are unable to independently board, ride, or disembark from an accessible Muni bus, train, streetcar or BART train some or all of the time.

### **2: The fixed-route system is not accessible**

You are functionally able to independently navigate, board, ride, and disembark from an accessible Muni or BART vehicle, but there are no accessible vehicles on the route providing service to a particular destination. Riders in this category must use accessible Muni or BART routes/vehicles whenever they are available.

### **3: You are not able to get to or from the system**

You have a specific impairment-related condition that prevents you from traveling to or from a bus stop or rail station, some or all of the time.

## **How Do I Apply For Paratransit?**

If you feel you are unable to independently use Muni or BART some or all of the time due to a disability, you may request an application for ADA Paratransit service.

- Call SF Paratransit at 1-415-351-7050; or TTY at 1-415-351-3942.
- Pick up an application at the SF Paratransit Office, 68 12<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Download the application from [www.sfparatransit.com](http://www.sfparatransit.com).

If you need an application in an accessible format or in a foreign language, or if you need a referral for help in completing your application, please call 1-415-351-7050, and let us know.

## **What happens after I've submitted my application for eligibility?**

For an application to be considered complete, you must answer all questions. We will not review any incomplete applications; they are returned to the applicant.

Once you have submitted a completed application, we will evaluate the information you have provided. In some cases, no other information will be needed to make an assessment.

In most cases, we will conduct a second-level assessment. This may be a telephone interview with you, professional medical verification, or an in-person interview. The in-person interview may include a functional test to determine your ability to take a public transit trip: for example, can you walk to a bus stop? Can you read signs?

If you need transportation to a certification appointment, our staff will assist you with arrangements and provide transportation at no cost to you.

### **How long does it take to find out if I am eligible?**

Your properly completed application will be processed within 21 days. If requested, you must make yourself available for a second-level assessment, and your medical professional must return the medical verification form within seven days of receipt.

If your eligibility determination takes longer than 21 days, you will be entitled to “presumptive eligibility”. This allows you to use the paratransit system until we make a final decision. You may not be entitled to presumptive eligibility if, through delay or inactions on your or your medical professional’s part, we are unable to complete the processing of your application.

### **If I am determined eligible, will I be able to take all my trips on paratransit?**

You may take all your trips on paratransit only if you are determined fully eligible. If you are determined conditionally eligible, you can use paratransit only for certain trips. Conditional eligibility means that you are able to use Muni for some of your trips, but that due to your disability you are not able to use Muni for other trips. Some examples include:

- A person may not be able to get to a particular destination because it requires climbing up a steep hill from the bus stop and a disability prevents him/her from climbing the hill. This person would be eligible for paratransit to that particular destination.
- Some kidney dialysis patients are able to take Muni to their dialysis appointments, but they require paratransit to get home, due to weakness after the treatment.

The simple rule to remember if you are determined conditionally eligible: ***If I am able to take the trip on Muni, then I must take the trip on Muni.***

Once you are determined eligible, we will send you an eligibility letter. Any restrictions for conditional use will be noted in this letter and will be a part of your record. If you are determined to be conditionally eligible, SF Paratransit staff can help you determine which trips you are eligible to take on paratransit and which trips you must take on Muni or BART.

### **If I am certified ADA paratransit eligible, how long will my eligibility last?**

Eligibility is typically good for three years. In some cases, eligibility may be based on a temporary condition, such as a broken hip, and therefore limited to a temporary period. The term of your eligibility will be listed on the registration letter you receive. After your eligibility expires, you will need to reapply if you feel you are still eligible.

It is your responsibility to notify us if your disability or health-related condition changes. If your condition improves so that it affects your eligibility status, and you do not notify us, we could suspend or revoke your eligibility until you reapply or come in to our offices for re-evaluation. If this occurs, you would be entitled to the appeals process (see below).

### **If I am denied ADA eligibility or disagree with my eligibility determination, can I appeal?**

If you are denied eligibility, we will automatically provide you with an appeal request form. You may also appeal if you disagree with our conditional or temporary eligibility determination. This form will need to be completed and returned within 60 days of our eligibility determination. When we receive your appeal request, we will notify you about the time and location of your hearing. You are strongly encouraged to attend the appeals hearing, but your attendance is not required. If you attend, you may bring a representative with you to assist in presenting your appeal. The appeals hearing is informal and is not a legal proceeding.

An independent panel that has not been involved in your eligibility decision will hear your appeal. The panel typically includes a medical professional, a disabled community member and a transit professional. The panel is trained in the appeals hearing process. SF Paratransit staff will attend the hearing to explain how they reached the conclusion to deny eligibility, and you will be given time to explain why you believe you are eligible.

If necessary, foreign language or American Sign Language interpreters will be provided for you with advance notice. You will not be charged for this service. You may also request transportation to and from the hearing at no cost to you.

### **Do I need an ID card to ride the SF Paratransit Program?**

No. Everyone determined paratransit eligible will be given a certification letter. For SF Paratransit taxi, a photo ID debit card is required. For SF Access an optional photo ID card will be issued upon request. The ID card will include an expiration date and will indicate whether your eligibility is full or conditional. You should carry your ID card with you whenever you use SF Paratransit or visit the SF Paratransit office. You will need this card to use paratransit taxi services (Please refer to Rider's Guide 3). You may also need to show your ID card or eligibility letter when you travel to other parts of the country, to verify that you are ADA paratransit eligible.

### **Is my personal information kept confidential?**

Yes. All personal information is kept confidential and only information necessary to provide adequate transportation service is shared with transportation providers. If you appeal an eligibility determination, your personal information may be shared with the appeals panel so that you may be given a complete and fair hearing. The appeals panel must also observe your right to confidentiality.

## **General Information About SF Paratransit Services**

### **What hours and in what geographical area are SF paratransit services provided?**

Paratransit van and taxi services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Service is provided throughout San Francisco, to Treasure Island, to the Marin Headlands during Muni service hours (SF Access only), and to the northernmost part of Daly City in San Mateo County. If you are not sure if your destination is in the SF Paratransit service area, call the Paratransit staff at 1-415-351-7052.

### **Where is the San Francisco Paratransit office located and what are the office hours?**

Location: 68 12<sup>th</sup> St., between Market and Mission Streets. The nearest accessible BART station is Civic Center Plaza at the intersection of Market, Grove and Hyde Streets. The accessible Muni Metro lines are the J, K, L, M, N and T (Van Ness Avenue Station). Muni bus lines serving the area are the 6 Parnassus, 9 / 9L San Bruno, 14 / 14L Mission, 47 Van Ness, 49 Van Ness/Mission, and 71 Haight. The F Market and Wharves historic streetcar line also serves this area.

Hours: The office is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 4:45 pm.

Holidays: The office is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

### **What types of services are provided at the SF Paratransit office?**

At the SF Paratransit office you may:

- Obtain information about SF Paratransit Services
- Obtain an ADA paratransit application
- Submit an application for ADA paratransit certification or recertification
- Purchase ride tickets for SF Access service
- Add value to your SF Paratransit taxi debit card
- File a formal complaint or compliment about any aspect of our service
- Obtain a new or replacement photo ID card (appointment needed)
- Update your personal information (address, phone number, etc.)
- Report changes in your disability or health-related condition

### **How do I get information on taking paratransit to neighboring counties?**

ADA paratransit service is provided to and from neighboring counties. Direct service is available between San Francisco and the East Bay as well as Marin. A transfer is required in some cases to San Mateo County. Please contact those individual programs for reservations, program rules and fares:

	<u>Administrative Office</u>	<u>Reservations</u>
• Alameda County (East Bay Paratransit)	1-510-287-5000	1-510-287-5040

- Marin County (Whistlestop Wheels)      1-415-454-0902      1-415-454-0902, ext. 4
- San Mateo County (Redi-Wheels)      1-650-508-6241      1-650-871-8590
- Transit and Paratransit Information for all agencies in the Bay Area – 511 (from any area code)

**What if I leave the Bay Area and need Paratransit?**

Once you are ADA-certified to use paratransit, you are also eligible to receive paratransit services in other cities and states; however, recertification may be required after 21 days. Prior to booking your trip, we suggest that you notify our eligibility department and tell us where you will be travelling and when, so that we may send your information to the appropriate agency. We also suggest that you contact the transit agency in the city to which you are traveling for more information. They will explain about arrangements, fares, operating times, and schedules.

**How do I use paratransit if I am a visitor to San Francisco?**

ADA-certified persons who are visiting from outside the Muni service area will be served by SF Paratransit. For more information, please call SF Paratransit at 1-415-351-7050 in advance of your visit. As an ADA-certified visitor from outside the Bay Area, your eligibility will be valid for up to a 21-day period in a rolling twelve-month period. If you need service for longer than 21 days, you will need to apply for Bay Area ADA Paratransit Eligibility.

**If you are paratransit eligible and you arrive in San Francisco but you have not called to notify the SF Paratransit office and you need service the next day, please call SF Access at 1-415-285-6945** directly to make a reservation. When you call, please inform the reservation agent that you are a visitor from out of town. Your reservation can then be booked under a generic “Visitor” rider ID number. You must notify the SF Paratransit office on the next business day to ensure your continued use of the system during your visit.

SF Paratransit does not serve any Bay Area airports. Redi-Wheels paratransit serves the San Francisco Airport, East Bay Paratransit serves the Oakland Airport, and Outreach serves Mineta San Jose International Airport.

**How Can I Provide Input And Feedback About The SF Paratransit Service?**

**Complaints and Compliments**

We encourage you to let the SF Paratransit office know when you receive exceptional service and when your service is poor. If you wish to file a formal complaint or compliment about any aspect of our services, you may do so by writing us at:

**SF Paratransit  
Quality Service Department  
68 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
San Francisco, CA 94103-1297**

Pre-paid postage complaint / compliment cards are available in the lobby of the SF Paratransit office and on SF Access vehicles.

You may call us directly with your complaint or compliment by dialing 1-415-351-7052, TTY 1-415-351-3942. You may also file a formal complaint or compliment by e-mail at [sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com](mailto:sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com).

When you call or write, please provide as much detail as possible. Information about your trip such as date, time, cab company name, or cab number is helpful. If you have a complaint about SF Access, include date and time of pick up or drop off, vehicle number, etc. The more information you include, the better we can research your complaint.

We will follow up on your complaint and respond to you, usually within 14 days. Anonymous compliments and complaints also are accepted but will not receive a written response.

### **Paratransit Coordinating Council**

The Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC) is an advisory body comprised of Paratransit customers, service providers, social service agency representatives and others which provides input to the paratransit program. The Executive Committee of the PCC meets regularly to discuss and provide input to the SFMTA on Paratransit Services. To become involved, call SFMTA Accessible Services at 1-415-701-4485, TTY 1-415-701-4730.

### **Rider Surveys**

We may also occasionally contact you as part of a random survey to ask you about the service you receive. This contact will occur only by telephone or US mail. You will never be asked for personal information, and you should not offer any personal information you do not wish to share.

Survey participation is completely voluntary. If you answer our surveys, your name will never be used in any information we make public. The information we gather from you about our service is used to help us design new services or improve existing services. The SF Paratransit program will never attempt to sell you any products or services.

### **Paratransit Rules And Policies At A Glance**

Below are some general rules for SF Paratransit. For specific information and policies about the SF Access and SF Paratransit Taxi programs, please read Guide 2 and Guide 3, respectively.

### **Ride Time**

A trip on SF Access should take approximately the same amount of time as a trip on a Muni bus, including the time it takes to walk to and from the bus stop and any transfers. For example, if you live in the Outer Sunset District and you are going to the Ferry Building, the trip would take about 50 minutes on Muni. That same trip on SF Access should also take about 50 minutes. A SF Paratransit trip in a taxicab should take the same amount of time as the same trip would require for a cash-paying taxi customer.

### **On-Time Window**

On SF Access, the van is considered on-time if it arrives from five minutes before to 15 minutes after your promised time. For example, if you have a reservation for 10:00, the van would be

considered on-time if it showed up anytime between 9:55 and 10:15. That 20-minute period is known as the 'on-time window'.

A taxi is considered on-time if it arrives for pickup within 30 minutes of the time you placed the order.

### **Cancellations**

You should cancel a ride as soon as you know you do not need the ride. For SF Access, you should cancel your ride no less than two hours before the promised pickup time\*, a cancellation less than two hours before the promised pickup time is considered a 'Late Cancellation'. Your riding privileges may be suspended if you develop a pattern of excessive Late Cancellations, see policy below.

### **No-Shows**

A No-Show occurs if the vehicle arrives at the designated origin location within the pickup time window (which is five minutes before or fifteen minutes after the promised pickup time\*), and the certified rider:

- Does not begin to board within five minutes after the arrival of the vehicle (and the driver announces his or her presence at the door);
- Refuses the ride (unless due to late vehicle arrival or lack of driver assistance);
- Cancels at the door;
- Is not present at the appointed location and time after the driver announces his or her presence at the door;
- Is not ready for transport at the promised pickup time\* or unreasonably delays the van beyond the standard five minute window wait time; or,
- Does not pay fare for the trip and is unable to take the trip due to a history of non-payment of fares.

\*The promised time is the pickup time given a certified rider at the time of reservation or subsequently modified and communicated to the passenger prior to the trip.

A No-Show will not be assigned if a medical situation occurs that prevents the rider from boarding the vehicle or if it is verified that the 'no-show' was out of the control of the rider.

Your riding privileges may be suspended if you develop a pattern of excessive No-Shows and/or Late Cancellations, see policy below.

### **Service Suspension for No-Shows and Late Cancellations on SF Access or Group Van**

No-Shows and Late Cancellations are costly and may prevent other passengers from obtaining rides. They also complicate the planning process and unnecessarily inconvenience other riders. To ensure that adequate resources are available, an accumulation of three verifiable No-Shows



and/or Late Cancellations of SF Access trips in a month's time (30 days) may result in suspension of service, if it represents more than 10% of the service scheduled by the rider.

The following penalties will be assessed for No-Shows or Late Cancellations that occur in a 30-day period:

<b><u>Violation</u></b>	<b><u>Penalty</u></b>
First	Verbal reminder to rider
Second	Written warning to rider
Third*	30-day suspension of service

\*For any 30 day period in which a rider incurs three or more No-Show or Late Cancellations, the rider may be suspended if these No-Show/Late Cancellation trips represent more than 10% of riders scheduled trips. For example, if a rider has 40 scheduled trips during a 30 day period and has three unexplained No-Show/Late Cancellations, they will not be subject to a suspension. However, if a rider has 30 or less scheduled trips and have three unexplained No-Show/Late Cancellations during a 30 day period, they may face suspension.

Penalties will not be assigned if a medical situation occurs that prevents the rider from boarding the vehicle or if it is verified that the "No-Show" was out of the control of the rider.

For all proposed suspensions, the SF Paratransit office will send the rider a letter identifying the suspension period and the reasons for the suspension. Riders who appeal a proposed suspension may continue to ride pending a decision on the appeal. During this process, riders may challenge the validity of their No-Shows and Late Cancellations. If the appeal is denied, the suspension will be imposed effective the date the appeal is denied, pending final notification to the rider.

Suspensions under this policy will apply to all SF Paratransit services.

### **Subscription Trips**

You may request subscription service if you travel to and from the same place on the same day(s) of the week, at least once weekly, and you plan on doing so for at least one month. Once subscription service is scheduled, you only need call when you wish to cancel the trip for a particular day(s). New requests for subscription service are not guaranteed. Subscriptions can be suspended after notice is given to you if subscription trips exceed 50% of overall trips during any 1-hour period. If suspended, you would continue to be able to make individual reservations. We do not provide subscription service for trips to certain agencies, because these are already served by subscription group van service.

Subscription service for SF Access service is not available on the paratransit office holidays listed on page 15 except for trips to/from dialysis centers. If you have a subscription trip and still want to make the trip on one of these holidays, you will need to call between one and seven days in advance to make a reservation.

## **Use of Seat Belts and Securing Wheelchairs**

All riders must wear lap and shoulder belts as required by California motor vehicle laws. Wheelchair users may use their own lap and shoulder belts if they meet State of California standards. Refusal to be properly secured prior to transport could result in loss of service.

If you ride in a wheelchair, your wheelchair will be secured in the paratransit vehicle or ramp taxi via a four-point tie-down system or a similar device. We may refuse to transport you if you will not allow your wheelchair to be properly secured prior to transport.

## **Mobility Devices & Wheelchairs**

Passengers may use mobility devices – such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs – on SF Paratransit van and taxi services. If you transfer to a seat, the driver will assist you with proper and safe stowage of your mobility device(s), including a wheelchair.

All vehicles in our van programs are accessible and equipped with passenger lifts or ramps that meet ADA specifications. They will accommodate mobility devices such as wheelchairs and three-wheeled scooters up to 48” by 30”, with a gross weight of at least 600 pounds including the passenger, up to the manufacturer’s maximum rated weight. The combined weight of passenger and mobility device may not exceed the lift or ramp manufacturer’s maximum rated weight. Mobility devices that cannot be boarded due to legitimate safety requirements may not be transportable.

If you need to use the passenger lift to board a vehicle, the driver will assist. You may also board the vehicle while standing on the lift or sitting in a boarding chair, if you requested one at the time you made your reservation.

For your safety, please be sure that your wheelchair or other mobility device is properly maintained in accordance with manufacturer’s specification. We may refuse to transport any mobility device that is not properly maintained and could pose a hazard to the rider, driver, or to our equipment.

## **Transporting Life-Support Equipment**

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life-supporting equipment; this equipment must not violate laws or rules regarding transportation of hazardous materials. Equipment must be of an appropriate size to fit in our paratransit vehicles and be under the rider’s or the attendant’s continuous control.

## **Transporting Packages**

All riders should limit their parcels to a reasonable number. Since drivers must adhere to a schedule, they may help you to or from your door with only one armload of packages or the equivalent of two grocery bags, not to exceed a total of 25 pounds. You or your attendant or companion must carry any additional packages. For the safety of all riders, you may not transport explosives, acids, flammable liquids or other hazardous or illegal materials.

## **Transporting Children**

Children ages five and over may travel without an accompanying adult only if it can be demonstrated that they would be able to use public transit independently, if not prevented by their disability. Children who are registered riders must pay the full fare, and all rules applying to adult riders also apply to children. Children traveling as companions must also pay the full fare (except when riding in a taxi).

If you will be traveling with a child under the age of 8 who is less than 4 feet 9 inches in height, you must provide the child's safety seat and you must properly secure the child in it in accordance with California law. Any child seat used on SF Paratransit must meet the state of California standards for a child of that size and age. The driver will provide assistance if necessary.

### **Transporting Animals**

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog. You should tell the reservations agent when you request a ride that you will be traveling with a service animal.

A service animal is an animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. A service animal must be under the constant control of its owner or handler.

Pets and other non-service animals may be carried on the San Francisco Paratransit system only in a properly secured cage or container.

### **Reasonable Modifications**

The SF Access service is fully compliant with the paratransit requirements of the ADA. We are committed to ensuring full access to our service. If you have a need for a modification to our SF Access service in order for it to be accessible to you, please contact our Customer Service team at 1-415-351-7052 or email us at: [sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com](mailto:sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com). If that modification can be reasonably made we will endeavor to accommodate your request. If we cannot accommodate your request, we will provide you with appeals information in case you wish to appeal our decision.

### **Responsibilities**

Below are "common-sense" responsibilities designed to ensure safety and comfort for all passengers and drivers.

#### **Rider's Responsibilities:**

- Carefully read all Rider's Guide materials.
- For van services, make ride reservations at least one (1) day and up to seven (7) days in advance. For SF Access, provide either a pickup time or appointment time.
- Be at the designated pickup location on time and provide entry for the vehicle if you live in a gated community or have special access requirements.
- If the van has not arrived by the end of the on-time window call Where's My Ride at 1-415-285-6945, extension 3.

- For SF Access rides, pay the correct fare in cash using exact change or with a SF Paratransit fare coupon. Remember, drivers cannot make change.
- Call to cancel an unneeded ride as soon as possible to avoid a “no-show” and any service disruption for other passengers. For taxis, make reservations no less than 30 minutes before you need the ride, allowing reasonable travel time to get to an appointment.
- If your taxi has not shown up 20-30 minutes after your request, call the taxi company to get a status update.
- If riding taxi, present your SF Paratransit debit card at the start of your trip so the driver may verify there is sufficient value on your card to pay for the trip.
- Wear seat belts at all times during transport.
- Avoid distracting the driver or engaging other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids in safe operating condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.
- Expect “shared-ride” service on SF Access vans. Others may be picked up after you, and/or dropped off before you reach your destination (except in taxi program).
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene; please refrain from using scented products to accommodate riders with chemical sensitivities.
- Follow these common rules of courtesy:
  - No eating, drinking or smoking on board the vehicle.
  - No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
  - No littering in the vehicle.
  - No radios, audible music players or other sound-generating equipment may be played aloud aboard the vehicle.
- Provide feedback to SF Paratransit if your service is unsatisfactory by calling 1-415-351-7052, or by emailing us at [sfparatransit@sfparratransit.com](mailto:sfparatransit@sfparratransit.com).
- When conducting business with the SF Paratransit office, be prepared by having all necessary identification and funds, and be considerate of others.

**Driver Responsibilities: What you can expect from the drivers.**

**Drivers must:**

- Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of riders.
- Drive safely at all times.
- Treat riders with courtesy.

- Be in proper uniform (except taxi drivers who don't have uniform requirements).
- Visibly display a proper ID badge.
- Perform a thorough pre-trip inspection on the vehicle, including cycling the lift. Immediately report any defects to his or her supervisor
- For safety reasons, maintain "line-of-sight" of vehicle at all times.
- Keep to the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- Provide reasonable assistance to riders entering or leaving the vehicle.
- Assist riders using wheelchairs up or down no more than two exterior stairs, except if passenger is enrolled in the "stair-assist" program.
- When requested, and if safe to do so, assist passengers to and from the main door of their origin and destination.
- Driver may not use personal cell phones, radios, iPod™ or similar sound generating devices, or play music while on duty.

**"Assistance" includes, but is not limited, to:**

- Offering ambulatory passengers a steadying arm or other appropriate assistance when walking or using stairs.
- Helping persons in wheelchairs maneuver onto standard ramps and to and from the main door of their origin and destination.
- Carrying no more than two grocery bags or similarly sized packages, not to exceed a total of 25 pounds.

**Drivers Are Not Permitted to:**

- Enter the residence of a rider.
- Perform any personal care assistance for any rider, such as assisting with dressing.
- Lift or carry a passenger.
- Assist a rider or wheelchair up or down any interior steps or more than two exterior steps, except if passenger is enrolled in the Stair-assist program, and then only subject to that program's rules.
- Wait for a passenger to make a stop to conduct business, such as at an ATM/Cash machine, pharmacy, or store.
- Escort a passenger beyond the ground floor lobby of a public building or beyond the front door of a private residence.
- Accept tips or any other gratuities, except for taxi drivers who may receive cash tips or allowable tips using the paratransit debit card.

- Perform errands for riders, such as picking up prescriptions or groceries.
- Operate their vehicle while distracted by cell phones, computers or similar devices.

### **Suspension Of Service**

SF Paratransit has a program for progressive discipline to curb misuse, abuse, and inappropriate and/or illegal behavior while protecting riders' rights. Suspension from our paratransit program can result when a rider:

1. Obtains or uses paratransit service under false pretenses; for example, providing false information on the eligibility application, allowing others to ride in your place, or misusing the SF Paratransit taxi debit card.
2. Incurs an excessive pattern of verified "no-shows" or an excessive number of trip cancellations.
3. Engages in abusive or disruptive behavior (for example, threatening drivers, program staff or other riders with physical harm), or engages in illegal behavior while on board our vehicles (e.g., sale/purchase of illegal drugs, crime of any nature, etc.).
4. Engages in any behavior having a racist or sexual connotation with the driver or other riders.
5. Illegally sells, misuses, or transfers an SF Paratransit taxi debit card to another person, including a driver.

Our disciplinary process progresses from warnings to suspension, depending on the behavior. A rider may be warned first by a telephone call from a SF Paratransit staff member. If the behavior or action continues, the rider will receive a written warning with an explanation of the violation. Finally, if the behavior continues unchanged, SF Paratransit will notify the rider of a pending suspension. Suspensions can be immediate when the behavior is illegal or potentially compromises the safety of our driver, other riders or our equipment.

A rider is allowed to appeal the suspension or proposed suspension. A rider being suspended will be provided with a full written explanation of this process. This full description will also be provided to any rider upon request. Suspensions from the taxi program can be temporary or permanent. Suspended riders will be placed on the SF Access van program.

### **Helping Wheels**

The Helping Wheels Fund provides limited assistance with the cost of paratransit fares for travel within San Francisco in our SF Access or taxi services. To be eligible, individuals must:

- Be low-income, based on SSI or GA standards.
- Be an ADA-eligible Paratransit customer.
- Have a sudden unexpected medical need requiring many trips (e.g. starting kidney dialysis), unexpected loss of residence or possessions (e.g. due to a fire or theft), a documented financial need, or other significant need.

Because Helping Wheels is funded by individual donations, help is available only when funds remain on hand.

For more information about the Helping Wheels Fund, please call the SF Paratransit office at 1-415-351-7070.

### **More Information**

This is the first of a three-guide set to provide you information about the SF Paratransit Program.

Guide 1 – General Information

Guide 2 – SF Access Van Service

Guide 3 – Taxi Services

If you need additional information on paratransit policies, you may request the “SF Paratransit Rules of Operation” by contacting the SF Paratransit office at 1-415-351-7000; TTY 1-415-351-3942. The information presented in these Guides is subject to change.

### **Benefits Of Using Muni’s Fixed Route System And BART**

Since many paratransit riders use Muni and BART for many of their trips, we are providing some limited information on San Francisco’s comprehensive system of accessible fixed-route bus, light rail and commuter rail services.

#### **Muni’s services have many benefits including:**

- **More than 100 bus, light rail, historic streetcar routes** throughout the City and County of San Francisco, with stops within two blocks of most addresses – including service to Treasure Island and Daly City. Muni provides connections with other Bay Area transit systems including BART, Caltrain, AC Transit, SamTrans and Golden Gate Transit.
- **Wheelchair-accessible buses** currently serve all bus lines and feature wheelchair lifts, kneelers, automated stop announcements, and other features to make riding easier for seniors and disabled passengers.

**Muni Metro light rail accessibility** at the four downtown, underground stations shared with BART as well as at five additional Muni-only underground stations and at many designated “at-grade” stations. The historic F-line is fully accessible along The Embarcadero and at designated stops on Market Street between The Embarcadero and Castro Street. **For more information on Muni Accessible Services call 1-415-701-4485 or TTY 1-415-701-4730**

- **Discounted fares for seniors and persons with disabilities.** All seniors (aged 65 and over) with valid ID are eligible for a Senior Clipper Card. All other disabled persons under the age of 65 years old may be eligible for Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount ID Card. Individuals with a Senior Clipper Card, RTC Discount ID Card, or other qualifying documentations, are eligible for discounted fares and monthly passes/stickers.

Starting March 1, 2015, low and moderate income seniors and disabled persons who live in San Francisco and have either a Senior Clipper Card or a RTC Discount ID Card may be eligible for Free Muni program, allowing them to ride the Muni fixed route system at no cost.

For more information on how to apply for and use an RTC card, please call the Muni RTC office located at 27A Van Ness Avenue at 1-415-252-3291; TTY 1-415-701-4730. Applications for RTC cards are accepted Monday thru Wednesday, from 10:30am to 4:00pm.

For more information on how to apply for and use a Senior Clipper Card, please call the SFMTA Customer Service office located at 11 South Van Ness Avenue at 1-415-701-3000. Their office hours are Monday through Friday, from 8am to 5pm. They are closed on all national and local holidays.

BART provides accessible commuter rail service to locations in San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa and San Mateo counties. Amenities include “close-in” accessible parking, TDD payphones at many stations, station elevators and escalators, and discount senior and disabled fares through the RTC Program.

**For more information on Bay Area transit services, call 511** – the toll-free Bay Area travel information number.

By dialing “511” (no area code needed), you can obtain route, schedule and fare information for Muni and other Bay Area transit agencies, service changes, and accessibility information such as elevator and escalator status reports for BART and Muni Metro stations. Paratransit information can also be accessed by calling 511.

### **Passenger – Emergency Preparedness Guidelines**

#### **SF Paratransit**

If you are an on-board our SF Access vehicle when a disaster or emergency occurs, the primary responsibility of the driver is you, the passenger. The drivers have been trained to do the following:

- ✓ Immediately check the condition of the passengers.
- ✓ If the driver feels it is unsafe to continue en route, they will contact their dispatch control center, provide a status update and ask for further instructions.
- ✓ If all communication is unavailable, the driver will attempt to take you home and if not possible, report to a pre-designated staging area where further assistance can be provided.
- ✓ Staging areas for drivers and passengers to assemble and meet have been designated throughout the City and Northern San Mateo County.

#### **Emergency preparedness requires all to be prepared.**

While each person’s abilities and needs are unique, every individual can take steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies from fires to earthquakes. By evaluating your own personal needs



and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you will be better prepared. This guide outlines common sense measures individuals with disabilities, seniors, and their caregivers can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen.

### **Step One - Make an Emergency Supply Kit**

The first step is to consider how an emergency might affect your individual needs. The experts recommend that you plan to make it on your own for at least three days. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a pharmacy. It is crucial that you and your family think about what kinds of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if those resources are limited or not available.

#### **Recommended basic emergency supplies include:**

- Water - at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener if kit contains canned food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- A whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps

### **Step Two - Have a Plan**

The reality of a disaster situation is that you will likely not have access to everyday conveniences. To plan in advance, think through the details of your everyday life.

- If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency.
- Create your own personal support network by identifying others who will help you in an emergency.
- Think about what modes of transportation you use and what alternative modes could serve as back-up.

- If you have mobility aids or tools specific to your disability, plan how you would cope without them. For example, if you use a communication device, mobility aid, or rely on a service animal, what will you do if these are not available?
- If you are dependent on life-sustaining equipment or treatment such as dialysis, find out the location and availability of more than one facility and whether they expect to operate if power is out.
- For every aspect of your daily routine, plan an alternative procedure.
  - Make a plan and write it down.
  - Make a list of all your medications.
  - Keep a copy of your plan in your emergency supply kit and a list of important information and contacts in your wallet.
  - Share your plan with your family, friends, care providers, and others in your personal support network.
- **Create a Personal Support Network**  
If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster, make a list of family, friends, and others who will be part of your plan.
- **Develop a Family Communications Plan**  
Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be shut down all together - be patient. If possible, send a text message instead of trying to call out on the phone. Text messages are recommended because they use smaller amounts of data and won't clog up the phone lines in the same way that using the standard phone will.
- **Deciding to Stay or Go**  
In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. Monitor television or radio news reports for information or official instructions as they become available.
- **Consider Your Service Animal or Pet**  
If you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that by law only service animals must be allowed inside. In some instances, public emergency shelters may be co-located with emergency animal shelters. Plan in advance, for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your animals.
- **Shelter in Place**  
Whether you are at home or elsewhere, there may be situations when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside.

### **Step Three - Be Prepared**

Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. Above all, stay calm, be patient and think before you act. With preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

### **Paratransit Priority After A Disaster or Major Emergency**

Riders can expect that regular paratransit service delivery will change for up to three days and maybe more, depending on the nature of the disaster. Your scheduled paratransit trip may not be available. Due to limited resources after a disaster, priority will be given in the following order:

- ✓ Life sustaining medical appointments, i.e., dialysis, chemotherapy, etc.
- ✓ Prescription pickup
- ✓ Grocery and food bank
- ✓ Emergency assistance requested by SFMTA due to the emergency or disaster
- ✓ Other requests by customers to the call-in center
- ✓ Pre-existing standing rides, i.e. school, work, etc.

During the first 72 hours after a disaster, call only if your transportation is for life sustaining medical appointments or other life support needs.

### **Quick Reference Numbers**

#### **SF Paratransit**

Main Administration	1-415-351-7000
Administrative Fax	1-415-351-3134
TTY	1-415-351-3942
Taxi Accounts, SF Access Tickets	1-415-351-7051
Certification/Eligibility	1-415-351-7050
Certification/Eligibility Fax	1-415-351-3135
Customer Service & Formal Complaints	1-415-351-7052
Helping Wheels Message Center	1-415-351-7070
Shop-A-Round or Van Gogh Information	1-415-351-7094

Office Address:

68 12th Street

San Francisco, CA 94103-1297

Website: [www.sfparatransit.com](http://www.sfparatransit.com)

Our E-mail address: [sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com](mailto:sfparatransit@sfparatransit.com)

**San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency**

Accessible Services Office	1-415-701-4485
TTY	1-415-701-4730
Fax Number	1-415-701-4728
Muni Bus & Metro Info	311
Muni RTC Discount ID Office	1-415-252-3291
Muni Customer Service Office	1-415-701-3000
Muni/Taxi Complaints/Compliments	311
Regional Transit Information	511

Muni Accessible Services Mailing Address:

Muni Accessible Services  
 One South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor  
 San Francisco, California 94103-1267  
[www.sfmta.com](http://www.sfmta.com)

**Transportation Services**

**SF Access**

Reservations & “Where’s My Ride?” 1-415-285-6945

**Taxi Information Hotline**

Current List of Names and Phone Numbers of Participating  
 Taxi Companies 1-415-351-7090

To report fraud or misuse of taxi debit cards,  
 call toll-free 1-877-477-2747

(Anonymous tips can be reported.)

**FOR LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES, DIAL 9-1-1!!**

Summer 2015