



# Paratransit Frequently Asked Questions



Marin Access Paratransit provides pre-scheduled bus transportation for persons with disabilities who cannot independently use regular Marin Transit or Golden Gate Transit bus service some or all of the time.

Para obtener acceso or solicitar una copia de este guía en español por favor visite al [www.marinaccess.org](http://www.marinaccess.org) o llame al 415-226-0855.

711 Grand Avenue, Suite 110 • San Rafael, CA 94901 • (415) 454 - 0902  
[travelnavigator@marintransit.org](mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org) • [www.marinaccess.org](http://www.marinaccess.org)

## ABOUT

Marin Access Paratransit is a combined effort of both Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit to offer a single point of contact for all paratransit trips that begin or end in Marin County or pass through Marin from one neighboring county to another (i.e. Santa Rosa to San Francisco). Operated by Whistlestop, a non-profit transportation provider, this joint effort allows for seamless travel within Marin County and beyond.

This guide offers information about the basics of using Marin Access Paratransit. For complete information on paratransit service please refer to the Marin Access Paratransit Rider's Guide. This guide can be found at <https://marintransit.org/paratransit>. For additional assistance, please contact the Marin Access Travel Navigators by phone at 415.454.0902 or by email at [travelnavigator@marintransit.org](mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org).

## PLANNING FOR YOUR TRIP

### TO SCHEDULE A RIDE

You must call between one and seven days in advance to book your trips. Same day changes or same day reservations aren't possible. If you are scheduling a round trip, reserve your return ride at the same time.

Please bear in mind that ADA paratransit is a "shared-ride" service, and that trips on Marin Access take about the same amount of time as similar trips taken using Marin Transit or Golden Gate Transit bus service, including transfers and the time to walk to and from the bus stop.

Pickup times are subject to negotiation – the scheduler will offer you one or more options within one hour (before or after) of your requested pickup time. If you are traveling to an appointment (for example, a doctor's appointment), please tell the scheduler what time you need to arrive at your destination. They will tell you what time you need to be picked up in order to ensure that you arrive on time at your destination.

Let the scheduler know what mobility aids or devices (such as a wheelchair, walker, or white cane) you will be using during your trip and if you will be travelling with a Personal Care Attendant or a service animal, so we can ensure that the appropriate space is reserved on the vehicle for you to take your ride.

If you regularly go to the same place on the same day and time, you might want to set up a subscription trip. For more information, please call the scheduling team at 415.454.0964.

If you are booking multiple rides for the same day – for example a round trip from home, or a trip to the bank, the post office, and the drugstore, before returning home – please remember to allow ample time between requested pickup times.

## **TO CANCEL A RIDE**

Call Marin Access at 415.454.0964 at least two hours before your scheduled pickup, or as soon as you know you will be unable to take your ride as scheduled.

## **ON-TIME PICKUP WINDOW**

Marin Access pickups are considered on-time if the vehicle arrives within the 30 minute negotiate pickup window. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives at any time within the pickup window. If your vehicle does not appear within the on-time pickup window, please call Marin Access. The driver will wait for you to appear for a maximum of five minutes – either from the time the vehicle arrives to pick you up, or from your negotiated pickup time, whichever is LATER (in cases where the vehicle arrives early).

## **IF YOU MISS YOUR RIDE HOME**

Marin Access has a “no-strand” policy. If you miss your return ride, you will not be left stranded. Call Marin Access and explain your situation, and arrangements will be made to take you home. Please keep in mind that it may some time for a vehicle to come back to pick you up, particularly during busy periods, such as the midday hours on weekdays. If you miss one pickup as part of a multi-leg trip – for example if you are out running errands and your first stop takes longer than expected, causing you to miss your second ride – you may want to revise your plans, if you can.

## **TRANSFERS TO NEIGHBORING PARATRANSIT SYSTEMS**

If your trip requires a transfer to another agency, Marin Access will drop you off at a defined transfer point and depart (whether or not the neighboring agency’s vehicle has arrived to pick you up). Marin Access will assist in coordinating the connections for each portion of your trip. Contact the scheduling team 48 hours prior to your trip to allow time for transfers to be arranged.

If you are delayed and will be late for a transfer trip returning to the Marin Acces service area, notify us as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to coordinate a trip home with the connecting agency.

## **CUSTOMERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE READY AND WAITING.**

Customers should be waiting when the vehicle is scheduled to arrive. The driver will only wait five minutes (from the time the vehicle arrives, or from your negotiated pickup window, whichever occurs later) for you to appear before leaving. The driver cannot enter a building to look for you. Drivers can assist you between the outside door and the vehicle if they will not lose sight of the vehicle. You must be waiting where you can tell if the vehicle has arrived. Drivers cannot leave their vehicles unattended to look for riders. The driver is not able to assist you up or down stairs.

## **DRIVERS CAN:**

- Help fasten lap belts
- Assist sight-impaired passengers
- Assist with maneuvering of manual wheelchairs
- Offer an arm for stability
- Carry up to four standard grocery bags (no more than 20 pounds each)
- Open the front door at your pick up or drop-off location

## DRIVERS CANNOT:

- Enter a residence, including a garage
- Enter a building to look for a passenger
- Lift or carry any wheelchair
- Operate a power wheelchair
- Access some driveways and parking lots
- Lose sight of the vehicle
- Maneuver the vehicle in a way that could be hazardous, including backing out of a driveway

## TIPS TO AVOID NO-SHOWS & LATE CANCELLATIONS

Riders who don't show up for a scheduled ride, or who cancel less than two hours before their scheduled trip are considered a "no-show." Riders who establish a pattern or practice of no-shows or late cancellations may have their riding privileges suspended temporarily. See Rider's Guide for complete no-show policy.

Customers will NOT be penalized for missed trips that occur due to Marin Access errors, or for reasons beyond the customer's control. If you miss a ride for reasons that you feel are beyond your control, please contact the scheduling team to explain the situation.

## KNOWING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAN HELP YOU AVOID NO-SHOWS

- » Sign up and **keep your contact information up to date** for Marin Access Alerts.
- » Watch for the Marin Access vehicle. The driver may wait **no more than 5 minutes** for you to appear. You need to be ready to go when the vehicle arrives.
- » You must be waiting for your pick-up where you can tell when the vehicle arrives. **The driver may not enter a building to look for you.**
- » If you miss one of your rides, and do not intend to use any subsequent rides you have scheduled for that same day, it is your responsibility to cancel those rides as soon as possible. **Marin Access will NOT cancel subsequent rides automatically.** If you do not cancel these rides and do not appear for your scheduled pickups, you may be assessed additional no-shows.
- » If you have subscription rides reserved, **it is your responsibility to notify Marin Access** when you won't need them temporarily due to holidays, vacations, planned hospitalization, etc.
- » **Always figure travel time into your plans** when reserving your trip with Marin Access.
- » If you find yourself staying at your destination longer than anticipated (example: a medical appointment takes longer than you thought it would), please **call the Marin Access Cancellation Line as soon as you know you won't make your scheduled ride.** Once you are ready, call the dispatcher again and arrangements will be made to pick you up.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS ADA PARATRANSIT?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into federal law in 1990. It prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, private services, telecommunications, and public services such as transit. The ADA requires all public transit operators to provide an equivalent service to eligible individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using accessible, lift-equipped public transit. This service, called "paratransit" is required by the ADA to be "complementary" to fixed-route public transit service. By complimentary the ADA means that paratransit operates at similar times and in similar areas as public transportation (defined by the ADA as a minimum of three-quarters of a mile on either side of existing public non-commute fixed-route transit).

### WHAT IF I NEED TO REQUEST A CHANGE TO A POLICY OR PROCEDURE BECAUSE OF MY DISABILITY?

Marin Access is committed to ensuring that no person, solely by reason of his or her disability, is excluded from participation in, is denied benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination under any Marin Transit programs or activities. Marin Transit considers all requests for reasonable modifications of its policies, practices or procedures when necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability.

To request a reasonable modification to current policies, practices or procedures please call Marin Transit at 415-226-0855 to request a Reasonable Modification Form. The Reasonable Modification Form is also available on the Marin Access website at [www.marintransit.org/reasonablemodification](http://www.marintransit.org/reasonablemodification). Please note that requests for vehicle preference, exclusive rides, or other "priority" service cannot be granted.

### HOW DO I MAKE A COMMENT ABOUT MY RIDE EXPERIENCE?

Call us at (415) 454-0902 or TDD 711, fill out our online form at <https://marintransit.org/contact>, send an email to [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org), or fill out the yellow comment card found on the vehicle.

Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI or the ADA may file a complaint. For more information on Marin Transit's civil rights program or ADA program and the procedures to file a complaint, contact (415) 226-0855 or TDD 711, email [info@marintransit.org](mailto:info@marintransit.org) or visit our offices at 711 Grand Avenue, Suite 110, San Rafael, CA 94901.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T SHOW UP FOR MY RIDE?

Riders who establish a pattern or practice of no-shows and/or late cancels may be subject to temporary suspension of their Marin Access Paratransit service. The term "no-show" refers to not showing up for a scheduled pickup time, late cancellations (less than two hours before the negotiated pickup time), or cancellations at the door. No-shows or late cancels do not count against the customer if they are due to Marin Access errors or if they occur for reasons beyond the customer's control.

## **HOW CAN I LEARN HOW TO USE MARIN ACCESS SERVICES?**

Marin Access offers travel training free of charge to teach people how to use Marin Access services, when possible. For more information, call 415.454.0902.

## **CAN PARATRANSIT ACCOMMODATE MY MOBILITY DEVICE(S)?**

Marin Access can take any mobility device that can be safely boarded and transported, including wheelchairs, three and four-wheel scooters, etc. It is recommended that riders transfer from the mobility device to a seat in the vehicle, if possible. For guidance on this, call the Marin Access Travel Navigators for more information at 415.454.0902 before you book your trip.

## **WHERE WILL I BE PICKED UP AND DROPPED OFF?**

Marin Access provides “door to door” service. Marin Access can provide service to and from any safe pickup location inside our service area. When scheduling a ride, please have the address of both your pickup and drop-off locations available. It is not possible to change your return pickup location at the time of your drop-off.

## **WILL OTHER PEOPLE BE ON THE VEHICLE WITH ME?**

Marin Access Paratransit is a shared-ride public transit service, just like Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit bus service. It is likely that there will be other people on the vehicle with you. This helps to keep the service sustainable. Please bear in mind that the vehicle may make several stops to pick up and drop off other passengers during your trip, particularly if you are traveling a long distance. Federal law prohibits ADA paratransit systems (like Marin Access) from prioritizing one trip over another.

## **HOW LONG WILL MY TRIP TAKE?**

Trips on Marin Access should be expected to take about the same amount of time as the same trip taken on Marin Transit or Golden Gate Transit bus service, including walking to and from bus stops, waiting for the bus to come, and any transfers between buses. New riders should keep in mind that trips on public transit often take significantly longer than direct trips taken by private car or taxicab. This is due to the shared-ride nature of bus service, and the routing of buses to provide the most travel options for the most people in the service area. For more information about Marin Transit or Golden Gate Transit fixed-route bus service, including estimated travel times, please call 415.455.2000.

## **CAN THE DRIVER DROP ME OFF FIRST?**

Marin Access drivers must perform their pickups and drop-offs in the assigned order. They are not permitted to deviate from their scheduled routes under normal circumstances. Marin Access routes are designed to meet the needs of all riders as efficiently as possible. It is common for several other riders to be picked up and dropped off before the first rider reaches their destination – there is no “first-on, first-off” rule. In some cases, it may be necessary for the vehicle to pass near your drop-off location in order to perform another pickup or drop off on time, before returning to complete your trip. In other cases, trips may be added to your route while it is in service, in order to help recover from service disruptions elsewhere in the system. Marin Access provides more than 500 rides per day, on dozens of routes, and the patience and understanding of our riders is appreciated.

## **CAN I TAKE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WITH ME?**

Per ADA regulations, every rider is allowed one companion rider and/or one Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Let the scheduler know that you will have a companion riding with you. Companions pay the same fare as the Marin Access rider. Additional companions will be allowed to ride on a space available basis. PCAs ride free of charge.

## **CAN I BRING MY SERVICE ANIMAL?**

Service animals, such as guide dogs, may ride on paratransit if the animal is on a leash and under the supervision of the rider. Let the scheduler know if you are traveling with a service animal. While riding in a vehicle, the service animal is required to sit, stand or lay on the floor of the vehicle and may not block the aisle. If the animal misbehaves, the customer will be asked to remove the animal from the vehicle. If there are multiple occurrences of misbehavior, the animal's riding privileges may be revoked. Examples of misbehavior include unprovoked growling or attacking passengers, the driver or other service animals. A service animal is defined as a guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. If the animal is not a service animal, it must be transported in a carrier.

## **HOW MANY BAGS CAN I BRING?**

Passengers are limited to four carry-on bags or packages, with each package no heavier than twenty pounds. Packages or parcels may not obstruct aisles or prevent seats from being used. Drivers will assist you with packages that fit into this policy. For the safety of you and all others on board the vehicle, if you are trying to bring items on board the bus that exceed this policy, you will not be permitted to ride.

## **DO I NEED TO RENEW MY PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY?**

Recertification of eligibility is required every three years (less with a temporary disability). An abbreviated recertification process for those individuals whose condition is unlikely to change over time. To learn more, contact the Travel Navigators at 415.454.0902.

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RIDE PARATRANSIT?**

- » The one-way fare within Marin County is an exact fare of \$2.00 payable at time of boarding. Drivers do not sell ticket booklets or carry change.
- » The one-way fare for extended trips (outside the service area but remaining within Marin County) is \$2.50.
- » "Will-call" trips, a local trip where the passenger is not ready for his/her scheduled pick-up and calls to have Marin Access send out a second vehicle, are also subject to the \$2.50 fare.
- » Intercounty trips are double the cost of the same trip on fixed route.
- » Contact the scheduling department for fare information for a specific trip.

## **DOES MARIN ACCESS OFFER FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?**

Marin Transit is pleased to offer a Low-Income Fare Assistance Program for eligible persons in need. Funded by Marin County's Measure B (vehicle registration fee), this program provides a fare subsidy for Marin Access programs. For more information about this program, please contact Marin Access Travel Navigators at (415) 454-0902 or [www.marinaccess.org](http://www.marinaccess.org).

Tickets provided through the Low-Income Fare Assistance Program are non-refundable, non-transferable and have no cash value. Tickets may not be used for intercounty travel.

### WHAT OTHER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS DO I HAVE?

There are additional transportation options available to our rider that may be more suitable for specific trips. See below for more detail.

Option	Detail	Where Can I Find More Detail?
Fixed Route Buses	Public bus service that operates on a fixed schedule and route. All Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit vehicles are fully accessible.	Visit: <a href="http://www.marintransit.org">www.marintransit.org</a> <a href="http://www.goldengatetransit.org">www.goldengatetransit.org</a> Dial: 511 or (415) 455-2000
Marin Access Travel Navigators	Marin Access Travel Navigators are available to review your transportation options for getting around Marin and beyond and can walk you through program eligibility requirements and application processes. Travel Navigators are available in-person, via phone or email, or at satellite hours at locations across Marin.	Call: (415) 454-0902 Email: <a href="mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org">travelnavigator@marintransit.org</a>
Travel Training	With Travel Training, you can learn about your transit options and get in-person instruction on how to ride the public bus system.	Call: (415) 454-0902 Email: <a href="mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org">travelnavigator@marintransit.org</a>
Catch-A-Ride	Subsidized taxi service for eligible Marin residents.	Call: (415) 454-0902 Email: <a href="mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org">travelnavigator@marintransit.org</a>
STAR / TRIP Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Programs	Volunteer driver reimbursement programs that provide mileage reimbursement for eligible riders to pass on to the driver(s) of their choice.	Call: (415) 454-0902 Email: <a href="mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org">travelnavigator@marintransit.org</a>
Marin Transit Connect	On-demand accessible service in Northern San Rafael. Marin Access riders are eligible for a 50% discount.	Call: (415) 454 -0902 Email: <a href="mailto:connect@marintransit.org">connect@marintransit.org</a>



## CONTACT INFO

Contact	Hours of Operation	Address	Email	Phone
Travel Navigators	8am – 5pm; Mon - Fri	930 Tamalpais Ave. San Rafael, CA 94901	travelnavigator@marintransit.org	(415) 454-0902
Paratransit Scheduling	8am – 5pm; 7 days	--	--	(415) 454-0964
Paratransit Cancellations	8am – 5pm; 7 days	--	--	(415) 457-4630
Reasonable Modification	8am – 5pm; Mon - Fri	711 Grand Ave, Suite 110 San Rafael, CA 94901	jhuitt@marintransit.org	(415) 226-0855
Marin Transit	8am – 5pm; Mon - Fri	711 Grand Ave, Suite 110 San Rafael, CA 94901	info@marintransit.org	(415) 226-0855
Golden Gate Transit	8am – 5pm; Mon - Fri	San Rafael Transit Center 850 Tamalpais Avenue San Rafael, CA 94901	customerservice@goldengate.org	(415) 455-2000

Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. You may request them by calling the Travel Navigators at (415) 454-0902.