

MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT

STS

**MIAMI-DADE
COUNTY**



**SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE
RIDER'S GUIDE**



**Door-to-door transportation
for people with disabilities
who are unable to use Metrobus,
Metrorail or Metromover**

www.miamidade.gov/transit

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WELCOME TO STS

The information contained in this Special Transportation Service (STS) Rider's Guide has been developed to help new riders become acquainted with the STS program and to provide the necessary guidelines required to use the service effectively.

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this guide or you would like to request this guide in an alternate format (i.e., Braille, electronically, a cassette tape, or computer diskette) please contact Miami-Dade Transit's Paratransit Administrative Office at (786) 469-5000.

WHAT IS STS?

STS is a shared-ride public transportation service of Miami-Dade County in compliance with the complementary paratransit service provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. STS operates throughout most of urbanized Miami-Dade County, some parts of southern Broward County

and up to mile marker 50 in northern Monroe County. STS can be used for work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc.

STS provides door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use Metrobus, Metrorail, or Metromover. Transportation is provided from the main entrance of the place of origin to the main entrance of the destination.

Miami-Dade County has contracted with private transportation carriers to provide STS service. The carriers use vans, minivans, sedans, and lift-equipped vans to transport riders.

A wheelchair rider who can safely and independently transfer to a sedan or taxi may be scheduled to ride as an ambulatory passenger.

WHO MAY USE STS?

- People with disabilities whose physical or mental disabilities prevent their use of accessible public transportation.

- People with temporary disabilities who may be temporarily eligible for STS during the period of their disability.
- People with disabilities visiting from out-of-town who may be presumed eligible if they have been certified in another Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) jurisdiction or they can prove their disabilities.
- To register with STS, contact the Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office at (786) 469-5000.

WHERE CAN I RIDE WITH STS?

The STS service area matches the MDT public transportation system (bus and rail) and includes most urbanized Miami-Dade County, but excludes certain locations such as: the Everglades National Park Visitors Center, Trail Glades Range, Miccosukee Indian Reservation Bingo Hall and the Tribal Center, Fisher Island, and areas south of

mile marker 50.

The Miami-Dade County service area is based on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations which state that ADA-eligible persons who travel in areas that are within three quarters of a mile on each side of an existing fixed route bus or rail service, are entitled to STS service.

STS RIDER'S RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Riders have a right to:

- Safe trips in air-conditioned vehicles.
- Drivers trained to meet riders' special transportation needs.
- Safe, clean, properly equipped, smoke-free vehicles.
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs.
- Pickups within 30 minutes after the negotiated reservation time. Riders are not required to be ready to travel before the negotiated pick up time, but can

do so if desired.

- Professional and courteous treatment by the staff and other passengers.
- Refuse unsafe service and file complaints without fear of reprisal.
- Prompt investigation and effective resolution of complaints.
- Current and complete program information.
- Assistance getting in and out of the vehicle and to the main entrance of destination, if required. Drivers are not permitted to lift riders and cannot enter buildings or residences.
- Peace and quiet: drivers and passengers are not permitted to play audio equipment in vehicle (2-way dispatch radio is necessary). Riders may play audio equipment if they use a personal headset.

Riders have a responsibility to:

- Be informed about program benefits and limitations.

- Schedule trip requests from 1-7 days in advance. If you wait until the last minute to make a reservation, we may not be able to meet your exact requested time. In accordance with ADA, riders may be asked to negotiate a different time of pickup, up to 1 hour before and 1 hour after the requested time. Once the time has been negotiated, the service provider is not permitted to change the time without the rider's consent.
- Be ready and waiting at the main entrance. Drivers will announce their presence at the main entrance door but they will not enter buildings or residences, or even call or search for riders.
- Remain in the pickup location for 30 minutes after the negotiated pickup time.
- Call in trip cancellations as soon as possible, but no later than 1 hour before the scheduled pickup time.
- Have times, addresses, zip codes

and other needed information ready when making a reservation.

- Present the correct fare. Drivers do not make change.
- Wear seat belts and check that wheelchair tie-downs are secure.
- Not to smoke, eat, or drink while in vehicle.
- Be courteous to others and avoid distracting the driver.
- Keep wheelchairs or other mobility aids in good working condition, including having an operable wheelchair brake.
- Avoid littering the vehicle.
- Use headphones when playing radios, TV, CD players, etc.
- Expect share-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. Travel time should be comparable to service provided by the public transportation system including transfers.
- Request pickup time taking the 30-minute window time, distance and rush hour periods into

consideration.

- Allow sufficient time, at least 45 minutes, between scheduled drop-off and return time.
- Advise the agent of your appointment time. If you must arrive at a certain time of appointment, the agent can provide you with a pickup time that takes into consideration travel time and your appointment time.

Drivers are not responsible for:

- Assisting riders to dress.
- Carrying riders or wheelchairs up/down flights of stairs.
- Providing wheelchairs or Personal Care Attendants (PCAs).
- Entering buildings or residences to search for riders.
- Calling riders on cell phones or building intercoms.
- Waiting with a rider at a drop-off location.

Companions

One companion may ride with a

certified passenger, provided both are picked up and dropped off at the same address. Certified riders may travel together but must always pay the fare when they travel and are not eligible to travel free of charge as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

Companions, including children regardless of age, pay the same fare as the certified passenger. Additional companions may ride provided there is room in the vehicle. Riders traveling with children three years or younger shall provide a child restraint (car seat) as required by law.

Be sure to advise the call-taker, at the time you make the reservation, if you are traveling with a companion and/or a child.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his/her needs. You must indicate during the eligibility certification process if you will be traveling with a PCA. It is

recommended that persons with cognitive disabilities (Alzheimer's, dementia, organic brain syndrome, profound retardation, etc.) and children 12 years of age and younger, travel with a PCA. Remember that the STS driver is the same as a bus driver and cannot function as a caretaker. Both the PCA and the certified rider must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. You must advise the call-taker, at the time you make your reservation, if you are traveling with a PCA. No fare is charged to the PCA, but the certified rider must pay the standard fare. Riders may travel with one companion in addition to a PCA.

RESERVATIONS TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND HOURS

To reserve a trip, simply call the reservations line at (305) 264-9000, press 1 for English (2 for Spanish) and then 1 again to reach a reservations agent. For TTY/TDD service for the hearing impaired, call (305) 265-9435. Hours of operation are Monday through Sunday, from

8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1) RESERVING TRIPS FOR SERVICE

Reservations for STS service can be made from 1 to 7 days in advance of the expected travel date. However, next day trip reservations must be made by 5:00 p.m. the day before you wish to travel. You may wish to call for your reservation on weekends or between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on weekdays, when the phone lines are less busy.

During peak travel periods, it may be necessary for the agent to negotiate an earlier or later pickup and/or return time based on vehicle capacity and/or availability. The agent will inform you of this at the time you place your reservation. The agent cannot insist on a pickup time (at either end of the trip) that varies by more than one hour from the rider's desired travel time.

Remember to allow ample travel time when placing your reservation, as there may be other riders with

different pickup and drop-off points sharing the vehicle.

Information you should provide when making a reservation

- Name, identification number, and telephone number.
- Exact street addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers of the locations where you will be picked up and/or dropped off, including the name of the complex if applicable.
- Special pickup directions, such as landmarks, specific entrance, exit, store, or building etc., at shopping centers, college campuses, large medical complexes or other confusing locations. Please be very specific as there are multiple pickup locations and drivers need to know exactly where you will be.
- The time you would like to arrive at your destination or your desired pickup time.
- Requested return time.
- Number of companions, PCAs and/or children traveling with you.

2) SAME-DAY EMERGENCY RESERVATIONS

Same-day service is not available. Same-day service may be approved on an individual basis for a verifiable non-life-threatening medical emergency, but it cannot be guaranteed and is subject to denial based on space availability. For life-threatening emergencies call 911.

SUBSCRIPTION RESERVATIONS

You may request subscription service if you make the same trip at least once per week to work, school, religious service, medical appointments, etc. Once scheduled, subscription service is automatic and you do not need to place daily phone calls to schedule these trips, except to cancel or make minor changes for a specific date of your subscription service.

To be approved for subscription service, the subscription must remain in effect for a minimum

period of one month, please cancel your subscription trip(s) for the day(s) or month(s) you will not be using it. To do so, please make it clear to the call-taker that you are cancelling for a specific day(s) and not cancelling the subscription trip permanently.

Subscription changes may require two days to process, so it is necessary to provide notice in advance. It may take some time to anchor your subscription change on the best possible route, so try to avoid subscription changes whenever possible. Changes may temporarily disrupt your service until they are re-anchored on a route. Since subscriptions must remain in effect for a minimum period of one month, changes, if necessary, should be limited to once per month.

To request new subscription service, update an existing subscription (due to change pickup or drop-off address, time, phone number) or temporarily put your subscription service on hold, please call (305)

264-9000 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If you need service on any of these holidays, you must call reservations at (305) 264-9000 at least one day in advance to schedule service.

Cancellations

For a same-day cancellation of your reservation subscription, call (305) 264-9000. Cancellations should be made as early as possible but at least one hour before the scheduled pickup time. Be sure to indicate if you are cancelling the initial pickup and/or the return trip. Cancelling may result in automatic cancellation of your return trip unless you are very specific. Cancellations are very costly to the STS program. Before placing a reservation, be certain that you really plan to travel. Excessive cancellations are an abuse of the STS program and

will be investigated.

NO-SHOW POLICY

If you reserve service and decide not to travel, you must call to cancel your service at least one hour before your requested travel time or your record will be marked “No-Show”. If a rider is a “No-Show” on the going trip, the return trip will automatically will be cancelled unless the rider calls to advise.

A “No-Show” rider is one who places a request for service but does not meet his/hers ride upon arrival. On the first occasion, a warning letter will be sent to remind you of the “No-Show” policy. Continued abuse of STS service may result in fines, suspension, or termination of STS transportation privileges.

PICKUPS

The STS vehicle will pick up the rider within 30 minutes after the negotiated pickup time. Be prepared to leave when the vehicle arrives. Riders must carry their STS

identification card at all times when traveling with STS. Drivers can only wait 5 minutes for you to board. If you do not board within 5 minutes the driver will depart without you and go to the next pickup as they have a schedule to follow. In the event that this happens, you may be charged with a “No-Show”.

Remember that other STS riders may ride in the same vehicle with you, or the vehicle may be scheduled to pick up another passenger right after you reach your destination. Your punctuality is required as a courtesy to other STS riders.

If the vehicle arrives before your “pickup window” you may choose to board early or you can board within 5 minutes of the start of your pickup window. You are not required to board the vehicle before the start of your pickup window.

The driver will:

- Collect the exact fare when you are picked up. Drivers do not make change. NOTE: If you prefer not to carry cash, call STS at (305) 264-

9000 to purchase Pre-Paid Tickets. Pre-Paid Tickets can be given to the driver in lieu of a cash fare.

- Upon request, the driver will assist the rider from the main entrance door at the pickup location to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance door at the scheduled destination.
- Ask you to sign the driver's manifest, which indicates the actual time you were picked up and the dollar amount paid as fare.

IMPORTANT: You should review the trip information carefully and be sure it is correct before you sign. Report any discrepancies to STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000. County staff will investigate all discrepancies and complaints.

FREE-FARE PROGRAM

Certified STS riders can use Metrobus and Metrorail, free of charge, by simply showing their STS identification card to the bus operator or rail security officer.

Elevators are available at every Metrorail station. Your decision to use public transportation whenever possible is encouraged by Miami-Dade Transit and will not jeopardize your privileges in any way. To plan your public transit trip call 3-1-1 or (305) 468-5402 (TTY/TDD). An information agent will help identify the best route(s) to reach your destination.

FARE STRUCTURE

The base STS fare for ADA-eligible riders is \$3 per one-way trip.

Companions pay the same \$3 per one-way trip base fare as the certified rider. The Personal Care Attendant (PCA) travels free but must be pre-certified by the STS Certification Office as part of the rider's permanent certification records.

The \$3 base fare falls under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 which stipulates that fares charged for shared-ride complementary Paratransit services be no more than

twice the regular public transportation fare. The current Miami-Dade Transit base fare is \$2 plus 50 cents for any transfer required.

SERVICE HOURS

STS operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

LATE-VEHICLE ASSISTANCE

If your ride has not arrived 30 minutes after the negotiated pickup time, call the contractor's Late Vehicle Assistance line at (305) 264-9000. If your problem is not resolved, call the County's Customer Service line at (786) 469-5000. The Contractor or County staff may dispatch a backup vehicle if the primary contractor is unable to fulfill service commitments. However, neither the County nor the contractor will reimburse taxi fares should a rider call a taxi on his/her own.

PASSENGER ASSISTANCE POLICIES

Upon request, STS drivers will

assist you to and from the vehicle. This includes a steadying arm when walking and assistance in getting your wheelchair to and from the main door of the building entrance.

If you need assistance in getting to and from your wheelchair or walker into a vehicle, or from the vehicle to your wheelchair or walker, the driver will hold the chair or walker steady for you but cannot lift you. If riding in a sedan your wheelchair or walker will be stored in the trunk of the vehicle while traveling. Drivers will help carry up to two bags, but no driver may go beyond the threshold of your home or beyond the main entrance of any public building.

MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Resolving riders' concerns.
- Monitoring the performance of the contracted service.
- Certifying and registering eligible applicants.
- Communicating program changes to riders.

To assist the County in continuing to deliver quality service and at the same time keep program costs within approved budget limitations, your assistance is required.

By adhering to STS Program Policies contained in this guide you will be helping us continue to provide the disabled community with this important transportation service.

CALL MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT IF:

- You have a recurring problem with late vehicles.
- Your ride is unsafe.
- You are treated rudely.
- Your STS vehicle is in poor or unsafe condition. This includes wheelchair restraints, seatbelts, lifts or ramps, and cleanliness.
- You are a wheelchair rider transported sideways. The ADA requires forward and/or backward securement using 4-point tie-downs, shoulder and lap belts.
- You are injured or involved in an

accident while using this service.

RESOLVING A SERVICE PROBLEM

Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for resolving service problems quickly and efficiently. If you have a complaint or compliment about the service, a driver, or a provider, please e-mail your comments to **Paratransit@miamidade.gov** or visit our website at

www.miamidade.gov/transit/STScomment.asp.

You can also call the County's STS Customer Service Office at (786) 469-5000, or you can write to:

**Miami-Dade Transit
Special Transportation Service
701 NW First Court, Suite 1100
Miami, Florida 33136-3923**

Complaints should be reported to the County Customer Service on the date that the incident occurs or on the very next business day after the incident. Every complaint will be investigated.

When your complaint is filed, the County will:

- Record the problem's description.
- Research the complaint.
- Require that the contracted service provider respond to the County within 7 business days from the provider's receipt of your complaint.
- Work with the provider to solve the problem.
- Notify you of complaint resolution.

To assist us in researching your complaint, it is important to report your complaint as soon as possible, while the details are still clear. The following information is helpful:

- Date and time of incident
- Name of rider
- Rider's identification number
- Phone number
- Address
- Trip destination
- Description of vehicle and/or vehicle number

- Driver's name (if possible)
- Scheduled pickup time
- Actual pickup time
- Details of the incident

Recurring problems are referred to the STS Program Manager. If a provider fails to comply with the agreed upon resolution to the problem, the STS Program manager will then recommend appropriate sanctions against the service contractor.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your service problem, you may contact any one of the following:

- MDT Office of Civil Rights at (786) 469-5486
- State's Transportation Disadvantaged Helpline at 1-800-983-2435

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Book trips at least one day in advance, preferably between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. when the phones are less busy.

- Have your identification number and accurate information and directions ready to give to the call-taker when making your reservation request.
- Give specifics to help the driver find you at the pickup location. This is particularly important at large medical facilities, colleges, and shopping centers.
- Write down the reservation or cancellation confirmation number given to you by the call-taker. This information will help us assist you if you experience a problem.
- Call the STS Certification Office at (786) 469-5000 to advise of any changes such as address, telephone number, disability status etc; so that way we can keep your transportation record current.
- Tipping is not permitted.
- Pets are not permitted in the vehicle, except for service animals specially trained to assist riders with disabilities.
- Service animals travel inside the

vehicle with their owner and will be considered a rider when determining vehicle capacity. Service animals are not permitted to sit on the seats and must sit on the floor during transit.

- Whenever possible, try to travel between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when traffic conditions are generally less congested.

SUMMARY OF ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any Miami-Dade Transit customer who believes that service on the Metrobus, Metrorail, Metromover, or STS does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may file a grievance by writing to:

**Miami-Dade Transit
Office of Civil Rights
701 NW First Court, Suite 1700
Miami, Florida 33136-3923**

Your grievance should include sufficient detail to permit proper research and response to your concern. Be sure to include your

name, address, daytime phone number, date of incident, time of day, location and description of the problem. If you require a response in an accessible format – large print, Braille, audio tape or computer diskette (ASCII) – please specify the preferred format.

A preliminary determination of whether or not an ADA violation exists and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to correct the problem, will be sent to the customer within 30 calendar days of receipt. MDT customers are protected under the ADA and are free to file a grievance without fear of retaliation. For a copy of the ADA grievance procedure, please call (786) 469-5486.

STS GROUP MEETINGS

The County conducts a monthly STS Rider's Meeting to provide riders with the latest STS program news and policy information. The meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of the month between

6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. If you are interested in attending call (305) 264-9000 to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting.

HURRICANE EVACUATION PLANNING

When the County Manager issues an evacuation order, STS will provide certified riders with a one-way trip to a shelter. STS will not provide shopping trips during an emergency. Riders should stock medications and supplies well in advance of hurricane season. STS will stop operating when winds reach 40 miles per hour. The Hurricane Answer Center is activated during an emergency to answer your questions including public shelter openings. The Answer Center may be contacted at (305) 468-5900.

Evacuate early! Don't wait!

If you need to evacuate, plan to seek shelter with family or friends who live inland. Remember that public evacuation centers are uncomfortable and crowded and are intended as a last resort for people

who have no other place to go during a storm.

If you plan to go to a public evacuation center and need assistance with daily living because of a medical condition or disability, contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management to register for a Special Needs Center. This program offers transportation and is available to STS and non-STS certified persons. To register, call 311 to contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Evacuation Assistance Registry. The TTY/TTD number is (305) 468-5402.

COUNTY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

STS Certification/Enrollment Office and Information

(M-F, 8 A.M. to 5 p.m.) 786-469-5000

TTY/TDD

(hearing impaired) 305-263-5459

STS Project Office and Administration

(M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).... 786-469-5029

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)
..... 305-630-5300

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)
..... 305-263-5475

Customer Service
(M-F 8a.m. to 6p.m.).... 786-469-5000

TTY/TDD (hearing impaired)
..... 305-263-5475

Toll-Free number 1-888-543-4822

Transit Information 3-1-1

TTY Users (deaf / hard-of-hearing)
..... 305-468-5402

CONTRACTOR TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Reservations

(Daily 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.).....305-264-9000

Subscriptions

(M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) ... 305-264-9000

Cancellations

(24 hours)..... 305-264-9000

Late Vehicle Assistance

(24 hours)..... 305-264-9000

TTY/TDD

(24 hours)..... 305-265-9435

If calling from outside Miami-Dade County (24hours)..... 1-888-543-4822

Administration & Pre-Paid Ticket Purchase

(M-F 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.).....305-264-9000

THIS RIDER'S GUIDE IS AVAILABLE FROM:

Miami-Dade Transit

Special Transportation Service

701 NW First Court, Suite 1100

Miami, Fl 33136-3923

Transit Information Center

Government Center Metrorail

station, Second level

You can read or print this
publication from our website at:

**[www.miamidade.gov/transit/
library/sts.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/library/sts.pdf)**

Copies are also available in Braille,
electronic ASCII file, large print,
and audio cassette for the visually or
hearing impaired.

Carlos Alvarez
Mayor

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