

ETA access

Rider's Guide



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WELCOME TO ETA ACCESS PARATRANSIT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law enacted in 1990, requires transit agencies to make public transportation accessible to people with disabilities.

ADA Paratransit – what’s required. In accordance with the ADA, and because El Paso Transportation Authority (ETA) operates local fixed route bus service (ETA paseo), ETA must provide “ADA paratransit” service, an exterior door-to-exterior door, shared-ride service, to persons who are unable to independently use or access ETA paseo bus services some or all the time due to physical, visual, or cognitive disabilities. This obligation also specifies that ADA paratransit must be available during the same service hours and areas as ETA paseo service. This paratransit service is called **ETA access**.

Premium Service. Also available to ETA access customers who are determined to be ADA eligible is “premium” service for trips going between ETA access zones or between the ETA access zones and Sun Metro’s LIFT ADA paratransit service area. Because premium service is not required, the service is not governed by ADA paratransit guidelines but must abide by the more general requirements of the ADA. Premium trip fares are higher than the fares for ETA access trips that qualify as ADA paratransit trips.

How ETA Access is Operated. While ETA sets the policies and provides the vehicles for ETA access, the service itself is operated through a contractor. The contractor performs eligibility determination; intakes, schedules, and dispatches trips; and operates the vehicles. ETA provides direct oversight of the ETA access contractor, and manages customer service functions (general information, feedback and complaints).

ETA access Service Hours. ETA Access service is available during the following service hours:

Monday-Friday:	5:00 AM to 8:20 PM
Saturday:	5:30 AM to 7:30 PM
Sunday:	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM

CONTACTING ETA ACCESS

ETA access Administration

(915) 273-3838; TTY 711
Monday to Friday 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
800 E. Overland Ave., Room 423
El Paso, TX 79901

ETA access Eligibility

(915) 247-0505; TTY 711
Monday to Friday 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

ETA access Reservations, General Information, Customer Service

(915) 247-0505; TTY 711
Everyday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
ETA customers can book trips one to seven days in advance. Trips for the following day must be booked before 5:00 PM.
Advance cancellations can be called in during reservations hours.

ETA access Dispatch

(915) 247-0505; TTY 711
Monday-Friday: 5:00 AM to 8:20 PM
Saturday: 5:30 AM to 7:30 PM
Sunday: 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Same-day cancellations can be called in during dispatch hours. We require that same-day cancellations be called in at least two (2) hours in advance of the confirmed pick-up window.

Online Information

www.elpasotransportationauthority.org/access

ETA access Service Hours. ETA access service is available during the following service hours:

- Monday-Friday: 5:00 AM to 8:20 PM
- Saturday: 5:30 AM to 7:30 PM
- Sunday: 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION PROCESS

To qualify for ETA access, customers must first apply for eligibility with ETA access. The eligibility determination process determines which applicants are able to access and use ETA paseo buses for some or all trips and, based on that determination, which individuals are eligible for ETA access for some or all trips. Individuals who are interested in using ETA access must apply and be found eligible according to federal ADA guidelines.

To apply for ETA access, call ETA access at (915) 247-0505 between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, to request an application and/or to ask for assistance to complete the form.

Eligibility for ETA access is based on an individual's functional ability to independently use or access ETA paseo buses as follows:

Category 1 Any person with a disability who is unable to board, ride, or disembark from an accessible vehicle without the assistance of another person (except for the operator of a lift or other boarding device).

Category 2 Any person with a disability who needs the assistance of a lift ramp to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle and an accommodating vehicle is not available.

Category 3 Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents the person from traveling to or from a bus boarding and disembarking location.

Eligibility is not based on age, economic status, or inability to drive an automobile. Applicants should note that having a medical condition, use of a mobility device (i.e., wheelchair, scooter, etc.), or disability will not automatically qualify them for service.

Unconditional vs. Conditional Eligibility

Unconditional eligibility may be granted to an applicant, meaning that all trips within the ADA paratransit guidelines are eligible. Conditional eligibility may also be granted on a conditional basis, e.g., for certain trips, for certain times of the years, etc.

In either case, eligibility will be typically granted for a three-year period, unless the customer's disability is temporary in nature. At the end of the three-year cycle, customers must recertify. (See [Recertification](#))

Temporary Eligibility

Eligibility can be granted for a temporary period, if the disability impairing use or access to ETA paseo is temporary, e.g., a broken leg. Customers with temporary eligibility may request to recertify. (See [Recertification.](#))

Keep your Customer Profile Information Up to Date

Customers must keep their address, telephone numbers, emergency contact, and mobility aid information current with ETA access to ensure quality service. If your information changes, you are required to notify the ETA access at which point your eligibility may need to be re-evaluated.

Eligibility for Young Children

Eligibility is established as any individual with a disability who is unable to independently access or navigate local fixed route transit services because of a physical or mental impairment (including a visual impairment). For young children who would not typically travel alone on bus, the abilities of the team (e.g., the child and parent/guardian) are considered rather than the independent ability of the child. If it is determined that it is not the child's disability preventing them from using ETA paseo service, they will be deemed ineligible for ETA access.

Children who are granted eligibility must pay the standard fare, and all rules applying to adult riders also apply to children. Children traveling as companions must also pay the standard fare. If a child under the age of eight (8) who is less than 4 feet 9 inches in height is traveling on our service, you must provide the child's safety seat and you must properly secure the child in it in accordance with Texas law. Any child safety seat used on ETA access must meet the State of Texas standards for a child of that age, height, and/or weight.

Applying for Paratransit Eligibility

You can request an informational brochure from the ETA access at (915) 247-0505; TYY 711

The application contains information about ADA paratransit service, how to apply, what happens when the application is received, when and how the applicant will be notified of eligibility determination, and an explanation of eligibility types. The application is available in English and Spanish. ETA access can also provide further language assistance upon request. Accessible formats shall also be available for all information about the process, materials necessary to apply for eligibility, notices, and determinations concerning eligibility upon request. Formats include, but are not limited to audio, large print, Braille, electronic files emailed and sign language.

Two-Step Application Process

Step 1: Complete & Submit ETA access ADA Paratransit Eligibility Application

An applicant must first complete a two-part application that contains (1) Applicant Questionnaire, and (2) Physician or Licensed Healthcare Professional Verification.

- Applicant Questionnaire: The applicant or their designated representative must provide contact information such as a current home address, telephone number, emergency contact, e-mail, etc. The applicant or their designated representative will also complete the questionnaire that is related to the applicant's functional abilities. The informed consent portion of the questionnaire MUST be signed.
- Professional Verification: A qualified healthcare professional, with specific knowledge of the applicant's disability or medical condition, must complete (and sign) the Professional Verification. The Professional Verification cannot be completed or signed by the applicant.

The qualified licensed professional may be a physician, physical therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, counselor from an established agency, or other similar professional. The professional must: (1) Verify that the applicant is an individual who has at least one disability or medical condition; and (2) Specify, from a medical perspective, how the applicant's disability (or disabilities), disabling health condition(s), and any related medications affect the applicant's functional abilities.

The completed application can be submitted using the following methods:

- Mail it to the ETA access at: PO Box 920451, El Paso, TX 79901

- Drop it off In person at Transdev, 700 W San Francisco, El Paso, TX 79901 between Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM.
- Email the scanned application to director@elpasotransportationauthority.org

Once the applicant has submitted the application, the applicant can call ETA access at (915) 247-0505 or 711 (TTY) to schedule a phone interview.

An incomplete application form, along with an explanation for why it is incomplete and what more information is required, will be returned to the applicant.

Step 2. Schedule and Complete Phone Interview and In-Person Functional Assessment (upon request)

Once ETA access receives your application, the staff will review the application for completeness, and (if complete with signature) will conduct a phone interview. **It is up to the applicant to schedule the telephone interview after submitting the application** by calling ETA access at (915) 247-0505 (voice) or 711 (TTY).

During the telephone interview, ETA access staff will review the application with the applicant to discuss barriers related to the applicant's abilities to ride the fixed route system and provide an introduction to the ETA access ADA paratransit service and premium service.

If ETA access staff cannot determine ADA paratransit eligibility from the information in the application and follow-up interview, staff may (1) contact the applicant's healthcare professional in an attempt to obtain additional information deemed necessary for an eligibility determination and/or (2) require an in-person functional assessment to obtain more information regarding the application. Written notification of a needed in-person functional assessment will be sent to the applicant.

If an in-person functional assessment is needed, **it is up to the applicant to schedule the appointment** by calling ETA access (using the telephone number above). When scheduling the appointment, the applicant should let staff know whether transportation to/from ETA access, operated by Transdev at 700 W. San Francisco, El Paso, TX 79901 is needed. If so, free transportation on ETA access can be provided to/from as long as the origin of the trip is within the ETA access ADA paratransit service zones.

During the functional assessment, the applicant may provide any additional information pertaining to the submitted application that may deem necessary during the review process. Translation and language assistance shall be provided, as requested.

Eligibility Determinations

The ADA paratransit eligibility determination process may take up to 21 calendar days to complete. Applicants will receive written notification of their eligibility determination, including specific information supporting the decision. If decisions take longer than 21 calendar days to process (after a completed application has been received and the follow-up interview conducted), applicants will be granted **presumptive eligibility** to receive services on the 22nd calendar day until a determination is made.

Approved applicants enrolled as new paratransit customers will receive a non-photo ID card in their welcome packet to use as proof of eligibility including your expiration date (three (3) years from the effective eligibility date).

Recertification

As the expiration date approaches (approximately two months beforehand), ETA access will send a notice in writing to the ETA customer that they must recertify for ETA access. Customers who are recertifying may continue to use paratransit services throughout the eligibility process until a determination is made and through the appeals process. **The recertification process is the same two-step eligibility process described above.**

Appeals

ADA paratransit eligibility applicants may appeal eligibility denial, temporary eligibility and/or conditional eligibility determinations. Eligibility determination letters provide information on how to appeal if applicants do not agree with their determination.

Applicants must submit their appeals to ETA access by mail, email, or telephone within 60 days of the date on their eligibility determination letter.

ETA Contact Information

(915) 273-3838; TTY 711

Monday to Friday 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

E-mail : appeals@elpasotransportationauthority.org

Mailing address: 800 E. Overland Ave. Room 423, El Paso, TX 79901

ETA follows a two (2) level eligibility determination appeal process:

Appeal Level 1 Administrative Review by an ETA staff who was not involved in making the original denial.

Appeal Level 2 In-Person Interview/Functional Assessment is conducted by an Appeal Panel Committee comprised of ETA staff who were not involved in making the original determination, and at least one member of the Access Advisory Committee. ETA staff will contact the appellant to schedule the in-person/ functional assessment within two (2) to three (3) business days once the first level appeal is complete.

ETA will inform an applicant about the outcome of their appeal in writing within 30 calendar days after the completion of the in-person/functional assessment.

Eligibility for 21 Day Visitors

Visitors from outside ETA access service area may use ETA Access as described within this Rider's Guide for up to 21 calendar days during any 365-day period, beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during the 365-day period.

Visitors are advised to call ETA access at (915) 247-0505 before their visit to establish their ADA Paratransit eligibility. ETA access staff will verify the visitor's ADA paratransit eligibility and inform the visitor on how to use the service. However, visitors are not required to apply for or receive eligibility certification to use ETA access.

As proof of ADA paratransit eligibility, visitors may present information about their use of complementary paratransit service in the jurisdiction in which they reside. Other visitors who do not have such documentation may be asked to present documentation of residence, and if the individual's disability is not apparent, of his or her disability.

Visitors who need to use the ADA paratransit services for more than 21 calendar days in a 365-day period, beginning with the visitor's first use of the service during the 365-day period, must apply for ETA access eligibility.

ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE and PREMIUM SERVICE

Two Levels of Service

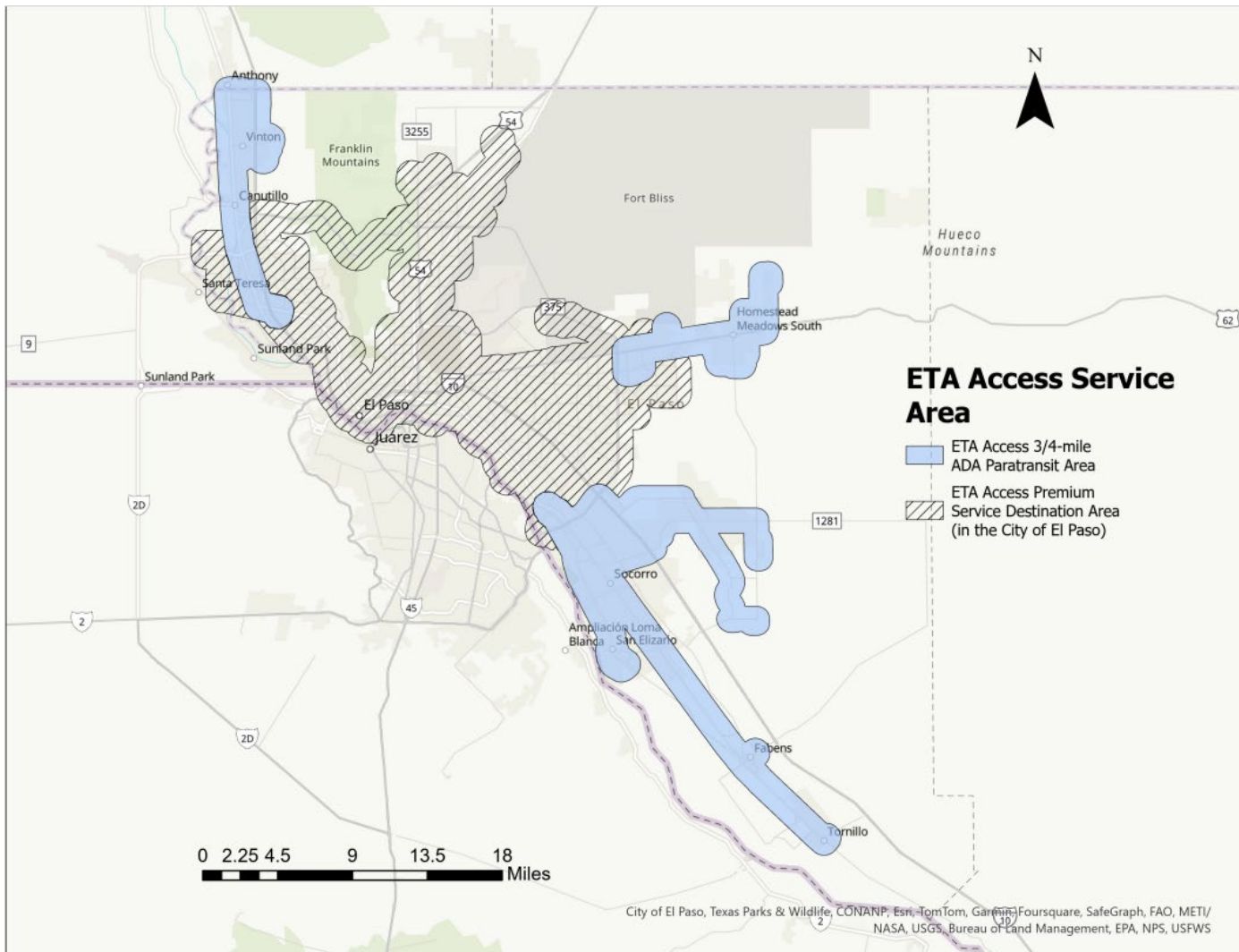
ETA access is comprised of two levels of service

- (1) **ADA paratransit service** – This level of service involves serving trips within the minimally required $\frac{3}{4}$ mile fixed route transit service corridors; these are defined as the West, East and South zones and are shown in Figure 1.
- (2) **Premium service** This level of service involves serving the following trips served directly (without transfers):
 - (a) An inter-zone trip (e.g., between the West Zone and the East Zone, between the East Zone and the South Zone, and between the South Zone and the West Zone) being made by an ETA access customer.
 - (b) An inter-area trip, being made by an ETA access customer living in the County and beyond the City of El Paso, from one of the three zones (East, West or South) into Sun Metro LIFT paratransit service area. This destination area is also shown in Figure 1.

If a customer is making a round trip between areas, each leg of the round trip will be made directly, without transfer.

Note: Premium service is not required by the ADA or any other federal or state statute. It is being provided by the ETA to enhance the mobility options for its ADA paratransit customers. It is not considered to be ADA paratransit service but does abide the general requirements for demand-responsive transportation under the ADA.

FIGURE 1. ETA ACCESS SERVICE AREAS



ETA access Service Hours

Both levels of service are provided during the following service hours:

Monday-Friday:	5:00 AM to 8:20 PM
Saturday:	5:30 AM to 7:30 PM
Sunday:	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM

ETA access Fares



A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone whose services or presence is required by the customer to meet his or her personal needs or to assist in traveling. PCAs must make the exact same trip as customer the PCA is assisting. Under these conditions, PCAs **may ride free**. See also PCAs under Other Services, Information, and Policies.

A companion is a friend, relative, or other person who accompanies a paratransit customer on a trip who is not a PCA. Companions must make the exact same trip as the customer they are accompanying. Under these conditions, companions **must pay the same fare** as the customer they are accompanying. See also Companions under Other Services, Information, and Policies.

Capacity Constraints

ADA paratransit service may not be “capacity-constrained.” This means that the service cannot have *patterns* of trip denials, late trips, missed trips, excessively long trips, and/or excessively long hold telephone times.

ETA has defined each of the metrics and has established service quality standards for each metric; these can be found in the **ETA ADA Paratransit Plan** www.elpasotransportationauthority.org/access. Moreover, ETA has established processes to identify and solve such patterns if they exist.

For example, a trip on ETA access should take no longer than the time a similar trip would take if it were to be taken on ETA paseo including the time to walk to and from the bus stop. Trips that take longer are deemed “excessively long”. The standard that ETA has established for excessively long trips is to not exceed 2% of all ADA paratransit trips. And even if that standard has been met, a pattern of excessively long trips might still exist, and ETA access staff will be monitoring the service data to identify if such a pattern does exist. If it does exist, ETA will take steps to address the contributing problem.

Similarly, while ETA has a goal of zero denials for ADA paratransit trips, denials could happen from time to time if negotiations for an alternative time (within ADA paratransit guidelines) do not result in an accepted trip time. (See [Trip Time Negotiations](#).)

While ETA will strive to ensure that premium service abides by these same standards, such patterns can exist for premium service. This is because premium service is being provided on a discretionary basis, unlike ADA paratransit which is a required obligation and a civil right. And so capacity constraints can result in patterns of denials, late trips, missed trips, and excessively long trips with premium service.

RESERVING A TRIP ON ETA ACCESS

Advance Notice Reservations and Reservation Hours

Call the ETA access Reservations Line (915) 247-0505 one (1) to seven (7) days in advance, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM seven (7) days a week.

Customers should make the following information available when calling to reserve a trip:

- Paratransit identification number.
- Date and desired pick-up or drop-off time of a one-way trip or the going leg of a round trip and the desired pick-up time for the return leg of a round trip (if booking a round trip).
- Exact name and address (including suite number, if known) of the pickup and drop-off locations (including return trip information). If the customer's home address or destination is difficult to find, special driving instructions should be provided when a trip is reserved.
- Confirmation if traveling with a mobility device, a PCA, companion, or service animal.
- Trips may be reserved based on a desired pick-up time or a desired drop-off time, such as for a medical or dialysis appointment or when going to work or class when getting to the destination is more important than when you are picked up.

Customers may reserve multiple trips with one call. If you are booking multiple rides for the same day (i.e., a round trip from home to the bank, the post office, and the drugstore) before returning home, please remember to allow at least one (1) hour between pickup windows. ETA access service is a shared ride service, we are unable to make a drop-off and wait for a customer at a location then take the customer to another location.

If you do not have your trip information ready when you call to book rides our reservationist may request that you call back when you have all your trip details ready.

Will-Call Return Trips

For medical return trips only, customers may request a will-call return instead of requesting a scheduled pick-up time. When ready to return, call (915) 247-0505 to request the will-call return trip. The vehicle will arrive within one (1) hour after the call.

Trip Time Negotiations

The reservationist will try to match your desired pick-up or drop-off time exactly given the trips that have already been booked at the time of the call, but sometimes this may be impossible and remembering that ETA access is a shared ride service.

If an exact match cannot be found, and for or ADA paratransit trips, the reservationist may negotiate an alternative pick-up or drop-off time within one (1) hour period before or after the desired pickup or departure) time. This means that if a customer requests an 8:00 AM pick-up time, the reservation first may offer an alternative or “negotiated” time up to one hour before or after the desired time (or in this example, any time from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM), noting that in the case of a desired drop-off time, times cannot be offered after the drop-off time. If the reservation first cannot find a negotiated pick-up time between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM, the trip request is marked as a trip denial. If times can be found within this period but are unacceptable to the customer, the trip request is marked as a trip refusal.

Be-Ready Window and On-Time Definition

For trips requested based on a pick-up time, and once a trip time has been accepted by the customer, the reservationist will give the customer a confirmed “be ready” window. This will be a 30-minute window based centered about the accepted pick-up time, so +/- 15 minutes from the agreed upon pick-up time. If

the vehicle arrives within this window, it is on-time. Customers are not required to board the vehicle early if it arrives before the start of this window.

For trips requested based on a drop-off window, the vehicle will be considered to be on-time if the vehicle arrives no later than the requested drop-off-time and up to 30 minutes before the requested drop-off time. For such trips, the customer will also be given a 30 minute be ready pick-up window based as above but based on the expected pick-up time derived by the scheduling system. The on-time definition applies to this be ready window as well even though the trip was requested by the drop-off time.

In either cases (whether requested by a pick-up or a drop-off time, the confirmed pickup window will not be altered without the customer's consent.

Subscription Service

A subscription trip is defined as a routine, recurring trip to the same destination at the same time. ETA specifies that it must be made at least once a week. It benefits customers by not having to call in to reserve each trip. This reduces the call volume and reduces the workload for schedulers as well.

ADA paratransit regulations do not require the provision of subscription service. ETA provides subscription service to enhance ETA access experience for customers. It also helps to reduce the call volume (and hold times) and has been shown to improve service efficiency and on-time performance.

Call the ETA access Reservations Line to request a subscription trip. The reservationist will intake the details of the recurring trip but will not immediately schedule the trip onto a specific vehicle run, as is done with advance reservation trips. Instead, the details of the request will be forwarded to the ETA access schedulers who will try their best to assign the trip to the same vehicle and driver if possible, on each day of the week that trips is to be served.

There is no guarantee that ETA access schedulers will be able to accommodate the trips requests as a subscription trip, especially if it causes a capacity constraint. ADA paratransit regulations do allow wait lists for subscription service. ETA access schedulers will seek to add subscription trips when they are efficient and when they do not negatively impact the ability to provide advance reservation trips.

Generally, though, it may take up to a week for a scheduler to determine whether the subscription trip can be served or needs to be put on the subscription trip wait list. Either way, the customer will then be notified as such. If the trip is successfully scheduled onto a vehicle run, ETA access will then provide the customer with the confirmed “be ready” window for the going trip and for the return trip (if any), and the first date when the trip will be served. Until receiving that notification, the customer may wish to continue to book that trip (if needed) as an advance reservation trip to/from that destination in the meantime.

When requesting subscription service, be sure to mention whether this will be an on-going trip or whether the trip is to be served for a temporary period only; if the latter, please provide the last day of service for the reservationist. ETA access will continue to serve the trip on a continuing basis until the request is terminated by the customer. Once subscription service starts, you can always suspend it for a temporary period (e.g., for an extended illness or a vacation).

ETA access may also terminate the subscription service if the trip, in combination with other subscription trips, is a capacity constraint, or if there is an excessive number of cancellations. If the subscription trip is cancelled by ETA, the customer can always make advance reservation trips. In addition, customers may only make changes to subscription reservations once in a three (3) month period.

During major holidays New Years Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day it is the customer’s responsibility to call and cancel their subscription trip.

Trip Cancellations

Advance Cancellations/Before the Day of the Trip Customers are encouraged to cancel their scheduled trips in advance by speaking with a reservationist. Advance cancellations are defined as cancellations that are made at least two (2) hours before the beginning of the confirmed be ready window for the trip. When at all possible, customers are asked to make cancellations before the day of service. Cancellations may be called in on the Reservations Line between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM seven days a week.

Late Cancellations are cancellations that are made within two (2) hours before beginning of the confirmed be ready window. They also include **cancel-at-door** when the customer has not called in to cancel the trip, and where the vehicle arrives during or before the beginning of the be ready window and the customer informs the driver that they wish to cancel the trip. Late cancellations are the equivalent of a no-show. See **No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy**.

Note: Late cancellations that are called in, cancels-at door, or no-shows that occur when the vehicle does not arrive until after the end of the be-ready window will not be counted as a no-show or late cancellations. Trips that are not completed because the vehicle arrives late are deemed a “missed trip”.

Early Morning Cancels Customers might not be able to talk with a reservationist to cancel a trip two (2) hours in advance on the day of service if the reason for the cancellation materializes after 5:00 PM on the day before the trip date up to 8:00 AM on the day of service. In such a circumstance, ETA access provides a way to cancel the trip via the Dispatch Line. (915-247-0505; TTY 711; Monday-Friday: 5:00 AM to 8:20 PM; Saturday: 5:30 AM to 7:30 PM; Sunday: 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM).

No Show/Late Cancellation Policy

No-shows and late cancellations are defined as follows.

No-Show. A no-show occurs when an ETA access vehicle arrives at the designated pickup location within the confirmed 30 minute be-ready window and the customer cannot be located. ETA Access dispatch staff will attempt to contact customer following a no-show; however, trips are not automatically cancelled and if we are unable to contact the customer subsequent trips will not be cancelled, and additional no-shows may be recorded. Where possible, a driver will leave a “door hanger” on the front door of the pick-up location indicating the time the door hanger was hung. A no-showed going trip will not trigger the automatic cancellation of a return trip for a round trip reservation.

Late Cancellation and Cancel-at-Door. A late cancellation occurs when a cancellation occurs less than two hours before the be ready window or when the ETA access vehicle arrives at the designated pickup location within the confirmed 30 minute be-ready window and the customer decides not to take the trip (a cancel-at-door). A cancel at door is one form of a late cancellation.

It is up to the customer to cancel the return trip of a round trip if the return trip is not needed as a result of the going trip being a no-show or being cancelled. If the return trip is not needed, you need to cancel that trip, lest a no-show be recorded for the return trip.

ETA services are supported by public funds and no-showed trips, and late cancellations add significant financial costs to our program. They also impact route efficiency and serviced quality for all customers. In accordance with ADA regulations, ETA access is permitted to have a suspension policy for customers who establishes a ‘pattern or practice’ of missing scheduled trips.

No-show/late cancellations are considered excessive when a customer reserves 7 or more trips within any month and no-shows and/or late cancels 20% or more of those scheduled trips. This will be considered a pattern or practice and the customer will be sent written notification that he/she has violated the No-Show/Late Cancellation Policy and is subject to suspension.

The following suspension periods shall apply to violations of this policy that occur within the same rolling 12-month period.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • 1 st Violation | Verbal Warning |
| • 2 nd Violation | Written Warning |
| • 3 rd Violation | 1 Week Period (7 days) |
| • 4 th Violations | 2 Week Period (14 days) |
| • 5 th or Subsequent Violations | 4 Week Period (28 days) |

Verbal warnings are to be delivered by vehicle operators at the pick-up point (in the event of a cancel-at-door) or over telephone by the reservationist (if a late cancellation) or by a (if a no-show). ETA access staff shall document all verbal warnings.

Subscription service will be cancelled after the second violation for any customer who is suspended under this no-show/late cancellation policy. A pattern of frequent, random advance cancellations (at least two hours before the beginning of the pick-up window), reflecting at least 25% of the subscription trips in a given month, will result in the removal of that trip from subscription service. Customers may temporarily suspend subscription service (e.g., if away on vacation or for an extended illness) without penalty.

Before service is suspended, ETA access will take the following steps:

1. Notify the customer in writing that ETA access proposes to suspend service, citing specifically the basis of the proposed suspension and

setting forth the proposed sanction, including effective dates. When imposing a suspension, all future trip requests booked for the suspension period will automatically be cancelled.

2. Provide the individual an opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments.

The ADA guarantees that a customer may file a local appeal of a suspension under this policy. If a customer requests an appeal, ETA access service will be provided to the customer until the appeal is heard and decided.

No-Show/Late Cancellation Reversals and Suspension Appeals

Customers will not be penalized for missed trips (that occur due to ETA access errors, or for reasons beyond the customer's control). If you feel that you have been issued a no-show or late cancellation incorrectly, please contact ETA Administration.

Customers may also appeal the determination by ETA access that they have developed a pattern and practice of missing their trips. Customers may request an appeal of a no-show or a pattern and practice determination by letter, email, or telephone within 60 days of the date of the no-show or pattern and practice determination by contacting ETA Administration (see above).

If requested, ETA access staff will assist a customer to submit an appeal of a no-show or a pattern and practice determination. You have the right to be heard in person with free transportation provided to the customer if you wish to have this conversation at the ETA Administration office.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF ETA POLICIES

Service Areas

As minimally required by the ADA, ETA access' ADA paratransit service is provided within the ¾ mile transit route corridors on either side of ETA paseo local bus routes. These three (3) zones are called the East Zone, the West Zone and the South Zone. As the routing of ETA paseo bus routes change, so may the ADA paratransit service area.

ETA access' premium service is provided between the West Zone and the East Zone, between the East Zone and the South Zone, and between the South Zone and the West Zone. Premium service is also provided between each of these zones and destinations in Sun Metro LIFT ADA paratransit service area.

All trips are direct and do not require a transfer.

The ADA paratransit service zones and the premium service destination area are pictured in this Rider's Guide. ETA access reservationist will advise customers whether or not the trip being requested is an ADA paratransit service area or a premium trip destination area (as the fare is different) based on the origin and destination of the trip being requested or whether the trip origin and/or destination is not on either area and cannot be served.

Service Hours

ETA access' ADA paratransit service operates only during the same hours of the day and days of the week that the ETA paseo buses operate. This ensures the equity between the bus network and the paratransit service. Changes to ETA paseo service days and hours may result in a change to the service days and hours of ETA access.

ETA access' premium service operates on the same schedule as the ADA paratransit service.

ETA service days and hours are found on page 4 of the Rider's Guide. ETA access reservationist will advise customers regarding the service hour availability for requested trips.

Fares



30-Minute “Be-Ready” Window and Driver Wait Time

When a trip is scheduled, customers will be given a confirmed be-ready window for a trip pick-up, regardless of whether the trips is requested based on a desired pick-up time or a desired drop-off time. (Customers must specify either a desired pick-up time or a desired drop-off time when requesting a trip).

A vehicle arriving within this “be-ready” window is considered to be on-time. All customers must be ready to depart at the start of their be-ready window.

Drivers arriving within the be-ready window will wait for five (5) minutes upon arrival and may depart thereafter if the customer is not ready. If the vehicle arrives early, the five (5) minute driver wait time will not start until the beginning of the be-ready window. Attempts to reach the customer by phone will be made before departing.

Response Time for Will-Call Return Trips

For medical return trips only, customers may request a will-call return instead of requesting a scheduled pick-up time. When ready to return, call (915) 247-0505 to request the will-call return trip. Vehicle will arrive within one (1) hour after the call.

Trip Confirmation and Imminent Arrival Notifications

ETA access will place both a confirmation call or text (depending on the preference of the customer) the evening before the trip date and an imminent arrival call or text when the vehicle to which your trip is assigned is approximately 5 to 10 minutes from your pick-up location.

Early Vehicle Arrivals at the Pick-up Location

A customer may, but is not required to, board the vehicle early if a vehicle arrives before the start of the be-ready window. The driver will wait until the start of the customer's be-ready window before approaching the customer's external door.

If the vehicle arrives early and the customer does not wish to board the vehicle at time, the driver will wait until the beginning of the be ready window before escorting the customer to the external door. Also, if the vehicle arrives early, the 5-minute driver wait time will not begin until the beginning of the confirmed be-ready window.

Late Vehicle Arrivals at the Pick-up Location

If a vehicle has not arrived by the end of a customer's confirmed be-ready window, the customer should call the ETA access Dispatch Line to report a late vehicle and to get an estimated arrival time. Customers are requested not to call this number to report a late vehicle until the vehicle is actually late.

ETA Dispatch staff will address the situation to provide a real-time trip solution. In such an event, the customer may choose to complete the trip, in which case the trips will be deemed a “late trip” or may decline to take the trip, without penalty. If the vehicle is late or the customer calls in after the end of the be-ready vehicle to cancel a trip or doesn't appear (possibly because they found another ride), the trip will be deemed a “missed trip” which is the fault of the ETA access operations contractor and not the customer. See also **Missed Trips** below.

The on-time goal for ADA paratransit trip pick-ups is 90%. Regardless of whether this is actually achieved, a pattern of late pick-ups may constitute a capacity constraint, which is not permitted under the ADA.

Early and Late Vehicle Arrivals at the Drop-off Location

For completed trips requested based on a requested appointment (drop-off) time a drop off that is more than 30 minutes before the confirmed drop-off time is “early” and not on time. To be on time for such trips, a drop-off can be no later than confirmed drop-off time and be within 30 minutes prior to the confirmed drop-off time. For example, if the confirmed drop-off time is 3:30 PM, the trip has an on-time drop-off if the actual drop off is between 3:00 PM and 3:30 PM. If the actual drop-off is before 3:00 PM, the drop-off is “early” and not on-time. If the actual drop-off time is at 3:31 PM or later, the trips is “late” and not on-time.

ETA access on-time performance goal for ADA paratransit drop-offs (for trips that are requested based on a desired drop-off time or appointment time) is 95%. Regardless of whether this is achieved, a pattern of early

and/or late drop-offs may constitute a capacity constraint, which is not permitted under the ADA.

Missed Trips

A missed trip is defined as an event where (1) the vehicle never arrives; (2) the vehicle arrives early and departs before the confirmed be-ready window begins; (3) the vehicle arrives on-time or late but departs before the 5-minute driver wait time is over; (4) a vehicle operator fails to carry out specific instructions included with the reservation (e.g., a specific building entrance, honk on arrival, etc.), which results in the rider missing their ride; or (5) the vehicle arrives after the end of the confirmed pick-up window and the customer no-shows or cancels-at-door or calls in to cancel the ride after the end of the be-ready window.

Such an event is the fault of the ETA access operations contractor and not the customer. Missed trips are not considered no-shows and must be tracked separately by the contractor.

In the event of missed trip, customers will be given full explanation of the cause of the missed trip, such as scheduling error or driver error, and the steps that will be taken and monitored to avert a repeat of the occurrence.

If the customer believes that a no-show or late cancellation has been incorrectly assessed to the customer when it should have been deemed a missed trip, the customer should call the ETA Customer Service Line at (915) 247-0505.

ETA access' goal for ADA paratransit service is to ensure that missed trips do not comprise more than 0.5% of the completed trips. Regardless of whether this is actually achieved, a pattern of missed trips may constitute a capacity constraint, which is not permitted under the ADA.

On-Board Travel Times and Excessively Long Trips

ADA paratransit regulations require ETA access be provided at a level that is comparable to ETA paseo bus service. Accordingly, customers may expect that the time it takes to make an ADA paratransit trip will take a comparable amount of time that the trip would take on ETA paseo. Comparability is based on the length of time required to make a similar trip between the same two points using ETA paseo, including time spent traveling to and from a boarding point and waiting for the bus to arrive.

Trips with on-board travel times that exceed this definition are deemed “excessively long.” ETA access’ goal for ADA paratransit service is to ensure that excessively long trips do not comprise more than 2% of the completed trips. Regardless of whether this is actually achieved, a pattern of excessively long trips may constitute a capacity constraint, which is not permitted under the ADA.

Excessively Long Telephone Hold Times

Excessively long hold times can also point to a capacity constraint – such as not enough lines or not enough call-takers. Reservations average hold time shall be monitored for each hour the Reservation Line and the Dispatch Line is open.

For the Reservations Line, ETA access’s goal is to ensure that the average hold time in any hour is below two (2) minutes average, and does not exceed a maximum hold time of five (5) minutes for any call.

For the Dispatch Line, ETA access’s goal is to ensure that the average hold time in any hour is below one(1) minute average and does not exceed a maximum hold time of two (1) minutes for any call.

Regardless of whether these standards are actually achieved, a pattern of excessively long trips may constitute a capacity constraint, which is not permitted under the ADA.

ETA access is a Shared-Ride Service

ETA access is a shared ride, on demand, public transportation service. You can expect multiple pickups and drop-offs along your route just like you would expect on ETA paseo.

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. Routes are designed to meet the needs of all riders as efficiently as possible. It is common for other riders to be picked up and dropped off before the first rider reaches their destination.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the vehicle to pass near your drop-off location 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, to help recover from service disruptions elsewhere in the system.

Driver Assistance – Door-to-Door

Drivers will get out of the vehicle and let you know they have arrived. They can assist you between the exterior/lobby door and the vehicle (if they do not lose sight of their vehicle for more than a few seconds), offer an arm for stability, deploy the vehicles ramp or lift, and are responsible for using the proper securement devices to make sure all riders are safe and secure. Should you need additional assistance please plan and travel with a PCA. (see page 36).

Drivers are unable to enter a residence (including a garage), enter a building to look for a passenger, access driveways, or lose sight of their vehicles. Drivers cannot make unplanned stops, secure child safety seats, assist with personal care, or accept any form of tips. If you had a great experience, we encourage you to submit a compliment to ETA access Customer Service (915) 247-0505.

Customers should be waiting before the vehicle is scheduled to arrive. The driver will only wait five (5) minutes (from the time the vehicle arrives, or from the start of your confirmed be-ready window, whichever occurs later) for you to appear before leaving. You must be waiting where you can tell if the vehicle has arrived.

Service Limitations

Eligibility for the service does not always mean that the service will be able to serve you in every situation. For example, if your pick-up or drop-off location is outside the service area you may need to establish an alternative location within our service area. If it is determined that a pickup or drop-off location is not safe to maneuver in any one of our vehicles, we will not be able to serve that location (i.e., dangerous double parking, required back up of vehicles, low hanging branches, no safe area to load client, steep or narrow roadways, etc.). In these cases, arrangements may be made for an alternative pickup location that is safe.

Reasonable Modification Requests

Under the ADA, ETA access may modify ADA paratransit policies and procedures to assist customers. Accommodations are not considered reasonable if they endanger the paratransit driver or others, place an undue financial burden, or change the nature of the ADA paratransit service as described within this Rider's Guide.

Customers may request reasonable modifications at any time by calling ETA access (915) 247-0505 during the eligibility process or while scheduling trips, or on the day of the trip if the need arises. Reasonable Modification can be requested by telephone, or by email, letter, in-person, fax, or online. Reasonable Modifications are typically granted for the duration of the current eligibility certification period and may be re-evaluated at the time of recertification.

Examples of Reasonable Modifications include but are not limited to:

- Requesting to be picked up or dropped off at a specific entrance, rather than at the entrance location that was pre-designated by ETA.
- If a customer with diabetes or another medical condition requests to eat or drink aboard a vehicle to avoid adverse health consequences, the request should be granted.
- A customer's request to take medication while aboard a vehicle should be granted.

Examples of Modification Requests that are not deemed reasonable include but are not limited to:

- A customer's request for an exclusive paratransit trip may be denied as a fundamental alteration of service. Paratransit is by nature a shared-ride service.
- Dedicated driver or vehicle (i.e., sedan rather than a small bus/cutaway, to provide a more comfortable ride) may be denied.
- A customer's request that the driver take charge of a service animal may be denied.
- A customer's request for a specific driver may be denied.
- Drivers are unable to handle gears or maneuver a customer's mobility device.

For more information on Reasonable Modification, refer to DOT 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37 "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities: "Reasonable Modification of Policies and Practices" at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-13/pdf/2015-05646.pdf>

Personal Care Attendants

A PCA is someone whose services or presence is required by the customer to meet his or her personal needs or to assist in traveling. Paratransit customers are responsible for providing their own PCAs. Customers should inform the reservationist when they will be traveling with a PCA to ensure an extra seat is reserved on the paratransit vehicle. One (1) PCA may ride free with an eligible customer. The PCA and the eligible customer must have the same pickup and drop off locations.

Though the need for a PCA is normally documented during the eligibility certification process, customers may inform ETA access at any time regarding changes to their abilities that require the assistance of a PCA.

Companions

A companion is a friend, relative, or other person who accompanies a paratransit customer on a trip who is not a PCA.

Customers shall inform the trip scheduling reservationist when they will be traveling with a companion to ensure an extra seat is reserved on the paratransit vehicle. Companions must share the same pickup and drop-off locations as the customer. Companion trips fares are the same as the customer they are accompanying.

ETA access shall accommodate one (1) companion upon request. Additional companions may be requested on ride if space permits.

Service Animals

Under Title II and Title III of the ADA regulations, a service animal is defined as an animal that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability to include physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disabilities. The task(s) performed by the service animal must be directly related to the person's disability.

Service animals may travel on paratransit vehicles to assist individuals with disabilities, subject to the following conditions:

- Service animals must remain on a leash and under full control of the customer at all times.
- Service animals must not misbehave (e.g., soiling the vehicle or growling at or harassing customers, the operator, or other service animals).
- Service animals should generally remain in a down or sit position. Service animals may not block the aisle of the vehicle.
- Service animals shall not occupy vehicle seats unless space limitations prevent the service animal from remaining off the seat.
- Service animals shall be in a state of cleanliness in the interest of other paratransit passengers and the paratransit driver.

Customers shall inform the reservationist when they will be traveling with a service animal to ensure sufficient room on the paratransit vehicle.

If your service animal is out of control (which includes any behavior that infringes on the rights of other customers/clients, passenger, drivers, or individual, including sniffing, begging, growling, whining, barking, wandering, jumping, or any other disruptive behavior), is sick, or eliminates in public; ETA access may ask that the service animal not accompany the rider on our service because of 'out of control' behaviors. Only the service animal can be excluded for 'out of control behavior and not the handler.

Pets

Customers may also travel with a pet if in an approved cage and under the control of the customer at all times.

Mobility Devices

Customers may use wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and other mobility devices that are able to fit on the paratransit vehicles. A wheelchair is a mobility device belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

In accordance with 49 CFR section 37.165, we will transport individuals using wheelchairs if their devices meet the definition of a wheelchair and can be accommodated on our accessible vehicles (e.g., they fit on the lift or ramp and in the securement area). ETA access may decline to transport a wheelchair/occupant if doing so would be inconsistent with “legitimate safety requirements,” as discussed below. At a minimum, all occupied wheelchairs weighing up to 600 pounds and measuring 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length.

ETA access will make every attempt to accommodate our riders, however, if your mobility device exceeds the dimensions above it is considered oversized, we may not be able to transport you as it may damage the mobility device, vehicle, lift, or ramp, and may impose an unreasonable safety hazard.

A ride request involving an oversized chair will be placed on stand-by until ETA access can determine if our fleet and routing are available to accommodate the wheelchair. ETA access will accommodate oversized wheelchairs and scooters whenever possible.

Customers who are concerned about the size of their mobility devices and whether the device will fit on board paratransit vehicles should call ETA access (915) 247-0505 to arrange to have the device measured.

Mobility Devices and Customer Safety

Customers who are transferable can move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle and back with a minimum of assistance. A minimum assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the customer moves in and out of the device. Drivers are prohibited from lifting or carrying customers.

Customers may board separately from their mobility devices but must be able to control the movement of the mobility device into the vehicle.

Drivers are not allowed to control the movement of a mobility device.

For safety reasons, customers using three-wheel scooters are strongly recommended to transfer out of their scooter into the seat of the paratransit vehicle whenever possible.

All mobility devices must be properly secured on ETA access vehicles. ETA also recommends, but do not require, the use of lap belts and shoulder harnesses. Wheelchairs that need to be reclined more than 45 degrees cannot be transported since we cannot safely secure the client.

Drivers have the discretion regarding transporting mobility devices that pose an immediate safety threat to others aboard a paratransit vehicle. ETA access will work with customers to address the safety of their mobility devices.

Wheelchairs and scooters including attachments are unable to block an aisle and interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency, and the operator could deny carriage of that wheelchair based on safety requirements.

Drivers cannot assist customers who use mobility devices up or down steps or other obstructions over five eighths (5/8) of an inch in height. A ramp must be available, or the customer must have someone available at the pickup and drop-off location to help negotiating obstacles.

Miscellaneous Medical Equipment

Customers may travel with oxygen tanks and respirators when using paratransit service. For safety reasons, oxygen tanks and respirators must be secured to prevent oxygen tanks from falling or becoming dislodged and striking other objects, customers, or riders in the vehicle.

Packages on Paratransit Vehicles

Customers may bring up to three (3) grocery bags or the equivalent, including packages, small suitcases, or a small personal shopping cart, if they can manage and control their items without assistance. Shopping carts must not exceed 30" H × 18" W × 18" D (excluding handles/wheels), be easily maneuverable, and have contents secured within the frame. Strollers must be fully collapsed, children removed, and any children transported in a proper safety seat provided by the passenger. All items must fit on the passenger's lap, in front of, under their seat, or secured in the cart, and must not block aisles, seats, or wheelchair areas. ETA access staff are not required to carry or manage items, and unoccupied, oversized, or unsafe items may result in denial of boarding.

Replacement ID Cards

There is a \$5 replacement card fee, and the number of replacement cards issued may be limited. For more information ETA access at (915) 247-0505 during business hours.

Lost & Found

Drivers are not allowed to return any items that have been left inside a vehicle. If an item has been left inside a vehicle, please contact ETA access immediately and provide details of the item. If the item is located, you may pick the item up at ETA access, located at (Transdev, 700 W San Francisco, El Paso, TX 79901).

Please note ETA access is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Lost and Found items are kept for 30 days then discarded.

General Policies

- Customers should carry their paratransit identification cards with them when using ADA paratransit service. Drivers may check customer paratransit identification cards.
- Customers are required to wear seatbelts while on paratransit vehicles.
- Drivers may assist with seat belts.
- Smoking is NOT allowed onboard
- Eating, or drinking, is NOT allowed onboard unless the customer must eat/drink to address a health condition.
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs while onboard is prohibited.
- Radios, or loud music devices, are not permitted to be played aloud while onboard. Use headphones.
- Customers shall NOT bring explosives, flammable liquids, acids, or other hazardous materials onboard. Oxygen is allowed.
- Customers are responsible for securing and removing their child's car seat.

Seriously Disruptive Behavior

Seriously Disruptive Behavior is defined as; violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct; individuals who pose significant risk to the health and safety of others. Behavior by an individual that is in some way truly disruptive to service provision and the event was both intentional and within the customer's control as verified by the customer or their representative.

Examples of Seriously Disruptive Behavior include, but not limited to:

- Getting out of a seat while a paratransit vehicle is in motion.
- Leaving a paratransit vehicle while it is parked to pickup or drop-off another customer.
- Disturbing a paratransit vehicle operator while the operator is driving.
- Disturbing other customers.
- Refusing to wear a seatbelt or refusing to exit the vehicle.
- Violent behavior.
- Physically or verbally threatening vehicle operator or other customers.
- Engaging in conduct or activity that is a danger to the customer, other customers, or the driver.
- Smoking onboard a paratransit vehicle.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment.

Notification letters are sent to customers with complete details about seriously disruptive behavior incidents, information on how to appeal a specific seriously disruptive behavior incident, the appeal process and their rights including the right to be heard in person and the provision of free transportation to and from the appeal.

The appeal process will be conducted by administrators who were not involved in the original determination of the seriously disruptive behavior so they may be objective. Customers may request an appeal of a seriously disruptive behavior service suspension by letter, email, or telephone within 30 days of the date suspension notification by contacting ETA access. ETA access may recommend that a customer travel with a PCA to assist the customer control his or her disruptive behaviors.

To Appeal a Seriously Disruptive Behavior Suspension, contact us at:

ETA Administration

800 E. Overland Ave, Room 423, El Paso, TX 79901

(915) 273-3838; 711 TTY | TDD

If needed, ETA administration staff will assist a customer to submit an appeal of a seriously disruptive behavior service suspension.

ETA ACCESS CUSTOMER SERVICE

Quality Service and Customer Feedback

ETA access is committed to providing all riders with safe and reliable transportation service. Each customer is important, and we encourage customers to provide us with feedback so we can provide you with quality service.

To submit a complaint, compliment, or suggestion regarding ETA access service, please contacting ETA access Customer Service at (915) 247-0505, 711 (TTY). Or, visit us online at www.elpasotransportationauthority.org to fill out a feedback form, and you will be provided a reference number by email to help you track you request.

Our formal complaint process includes an investigation and to assist in the process we recommend submitting the following information as soon as possible:

- Customer paratransit identification number;
- Exact date and time of the trip;
- Description of the incident; and,
- Address of the pickup location or destination.

All complaints are taken seriously, and every effort is made to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Tracking numbers are assigned to each complaint received by ETA access and are provided to customers for their future reference. A complete description of the complaint process and how to appeal any resolution if unsatisfactory is available at www.elpasotransportationauthority.org.

If a customer believes that ETA access has not responded appropriately to a complaint, customers may call ETA Administration at (915) 273-3838, or TTY | TDD 711 for assistance.

ETA drivers and staff strive to provide customers with excellent customer service so when you have an exceptional experience, we appreciate you taking the time to submit those compliments so we can recognize those staff members.

Title VI

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” ETA access have adopted policies that promote equal access and quality service to all our customers.

Any person with a disability who believes that he/she has been discriminated against in any of ETA’s transportation services is encouraged to contact ETA at (915) 273-3838 or 711 (TTY) for assistance or to file a complaint. ETA’s Civil Rights Complaint and Grievance Procedure information is available at:

<https://www.elpasotransportationauthority.org>.

Contacting the Federal Transit Administration

ETA access, and their customers or ADA paratransit eligibility applicants are responsible for addressing service and Civil Rights concerns at the local level first. If a customer or eligibility applicant feels that ETA access has failed to comply with the federal ADA paratransit regulations regarding any aspect of its paratransit service program, the customer or applicant may contact the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights at the following:

Address:

Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights
Attention Complaint Team
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Phone: 1(888) 446-4511

Website: www.fta.dot.gov

Information in the ETA Access Rider's Guide is subject to change.