VIA Metropolitan Transit

P. O. Box 12489 • 1021 San Pedro Avenue • San Antonio, Texas 78212

VIAtrans Phone: 210-362-5050 Fax: 210-362-2563

www.VIAinfo.net

VIATRANS SERVICE
GENERAL INFORMATION

VIAtrans Reservation Office: (210) 362-5050

Toll Free: 1-866-362-5050

VIAtrans Reservations (refer to page 7)

Trips can be scheduled from one (1) to four (4) days in advance. No same-day reservations.

Hours: Seven days a week, 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. to make reservations from one (1) day to four (4) days in advance.

Extended Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for all advance reservations **except one (1) day**.

VIAtrans Cancellations (refer to page 10)

Customers can cancel VIAtrans trips 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Call (210) 362-5050 to speak with a Reservation Agent from 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. or to use the automated cancellation system 24 hours a day.

Where's My Ride? (refer to page 19)

Hours: Monday-Sunday, 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Will-Call Request (refer to page 10)

Hours: Monday-Sunday, 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Accessible Services

VIA Metro Center
1021 San Pedro Avenue
P. O. Box 12489
San Antonio, TX 78212

Telephone Numbers

(210) 362-2140
Toll Free: 1-866-362-4200
Fax: (210) 362-2563

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Customer Service Department

Telephone Number (210) 362-2020

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VIATRANS SERVICE CUSTOMER GUIDE

1. INTRODUCTION

The VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority provides public transportation service throughout the San Antonio area. VIA was created by public vote in November 1977 and is governed by an 11-member Board of Trustees. VIA's mission is to strengthen regional mobility, development, and sustainability by providing an outstanding multi-modal transportation system.

VIA provides nearly 50 million transit trips every year. Most VIA customers travel on buses which follow specific routes and schedules. VIA buses connect neighborhoods to medical facilities, stores, places of employment and other important destinations within VIA's service area. All VIA buses have ramps for ease of access by people who use wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility devices or who have difficulty climbing steps. VIA bus operators are trained to be courteous and helpful to all customers.

Some people have disabilities that prevent them from using VIA bus service for some or all transit trips. These individuals can be approved to use the VIAtrans van service. VIAtrans is an advance reservation "paratransit" service that travels to and from specific locations as requested by VIAtrans customers. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires VIAtrans to be comparable to the bus system with respect to the service area, days and hours of operation, and system capacity. VIAtrans is not a medical service provider. If medical transportation service is needed, please contact EMS or similar transportation provider.

VIAtrans must comply with a variety of governmental rules and regulations. In order for customers to effectively use the VIAtrans system, it is important to understand how VIAtrans is designed; how it operates; and what services can or cannot be provided. This VIAtrans Service Customer Guide is designed to help customers get the maximum benefit from VIAtrans service. It contains specific information, and answers typical questions VIAtrans customers may have. If there are other questions, or if anything in this Guide is unclear, please contact VIA. We are here to provide safe, reliable and efficient transportation for people with disabilities.

WHAT IS VIATRANS SERVICE?

VIAtrans paratransit service is demand-responsive, origin-to-destination service with curb-to-curb service for people with disabilities who are unable to use VIA buses. “Curb-to-curb” means the vehicle will pick-up customers at the curb of the pick-up address and drop-off customers at the curb of the drop-off address. VIAtrans vans typically stop at curbside to pick up or drop off customers at their requested locations. Assistance to or from a van can be provided in certain cases.

Customers needing assistance beyond the curb on a regular basis need to contact Accessible Services at (210) 362-2140 to apply for assist-to-door service. As always, customers needing assistance when being picked up should let the Van Operator know what type of assistance is needed.

VIAtrans is a shared-ride service operated with accessible vehicles. VIA also uses independent contractors to provide trips for VIAtrans customers. The vehicles used by VIAtrans and contractors have lifts or ramps to accommodate VIAtrans customers who travel in wheelchairs, scooters, or who cannot use steps.

WHAT IS THE VIATRANS SERVICE AREA?

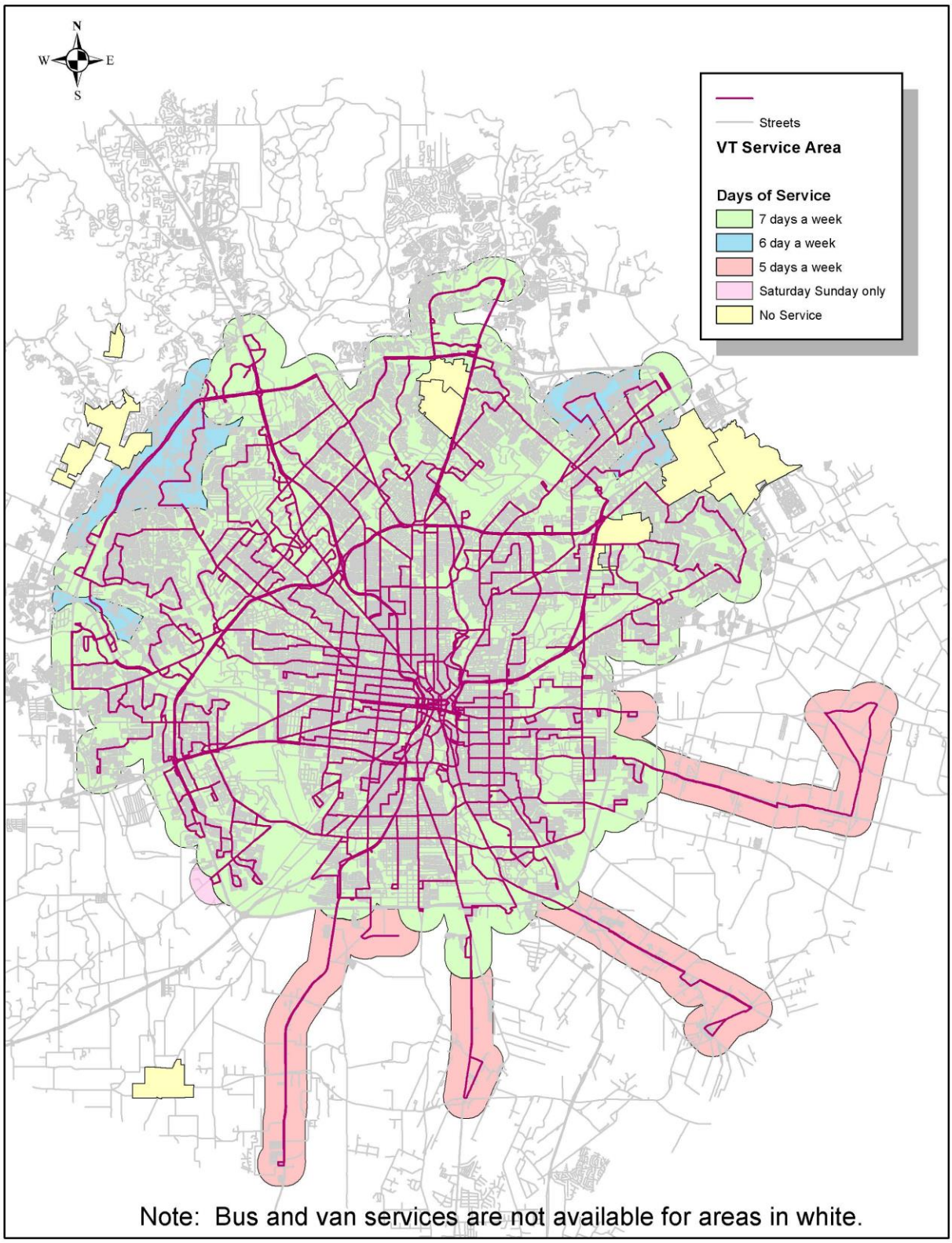
VIAtrans provides paratransit service within ¾ of a mile from fixed route bus service. VIAtrans can pick up and drop off customers at any address along and within Loop 410 every day of the week. Between Loop 410 and Loop 1604, VIAtrans serves most addresses north of Highway 90 West and IH 10 East. VIAtrans also serves many addresses along US 181 South and US 281 South. VIAtrans does not provide service within the cities of Windcrest, Live Oak, Universal City, Hill Country Village or Hollywood Park because these cities have chosen not to participate in the VIA transit system.

The VIAtrans service area changes slightly on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays when some bus routes outside Loop 410 are not active. The service area boundaries are shown on page 3.

VIAtrans vehicles can only travel on paved roads. Due to safety reasons if a pick-up or drop-off location is located on a dirt road that is not safe enough for the van to drive on, the customer must wait at the closest curb of a paved

street in order to be picked up by a VIAtrans vehicle. Assist-to-door service is not available for customers whose residence is located on an unpaved road. Customers who have questions about VIAtrans service to or from a specific address can call VIAtrans Reservations at (210) 362-5050.

VIATRANS SERVICE AREA MAP



2. ELIGIBILITY

IF I HAVE A DISABILITY, DO I AUTOMATICALLY QUALIFY FOR VIATRANS SERVICE?

All VIAtrans eligibility determinations are based on the paratransit criteria and guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In keeping with ADA criteria, VIAtrans eligibility is not based on an individual's medical diagnosis but on their functional ability to use regular city bus service. As part of the VIAtrans eligibility determination process, applicants may be asked to participate in physical functional assessment performed by a skilled trained professional therapist. The functional assessment is used to identify the applicant's special travel needs and accommodations for transit travel. The functional assessment performance report along with all available medical documentation and application information are reviewed by a VIA Eligibility Specialist who will make the eligibility determination. Minor children under six (6) years old, even if they have a disability, are not eligible for VIAtrans service.

VIAtrans service is available for people with physical, cognitive, visual or other disabilities that **prevent** them from using VIA's fixed route bus services for some or all transit trips. Having a disability does not mean that someone is necessarily eligible for VIAtrans services.

While VIAtrans service is available to ADA-eligible people, all people in the VIA service area, including people with disabilities, are encouraged to travel on VIA's fixed-route buses wherever and whenever possible. VIATrans customers and their companions can ride the bus for free with their VIAtrans ID.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR VIATRANS SERVICE?

As part of the VIAtrans eligibility and recertification process customers may be asked to participate in a Functional Assessment to assess their ability to perform tasks necessary for independent travel on VIA buses. The Functional Assessment performance report along with the application information and any supplemental documentation are reviewed by a VIAtrans Eligibility Specialist who will make a determination regarding an applicant's eligibility for paratransit service. Customers are notified by mail

of their eligibility status within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of all the required documents.

VIAtrans applications may be obtained by mail from Accessible Services by calling (210) 362-2140; from any VIA transit service center; or the application may downloaded from the VIA website at www.viainfo.net/VIAtrans.

TYPES OF SERVICE ELIGIBILITY AVAILABLE

People with mobility impairments who want to use VIAtrans service must become certified for the service. Eligible customers will be approved for either unconditional or conditional use of the VIAtrans system.

Customers with unconditional eligibility can request any trip throughout the VIAtrans service area. Every three years, VIAtrans staff will contact customers to assure that current information (such as telephone numbers, person to call in case of an emergency, etc.) is on file.

Customers with conditional eligibility need VIAtrans for some trips but can use bus service for other trips. This is explained in detail when conditional customers are approved. People with conditional eligibility will also be contacted every three years to update their file and to ask if their travel abilities and limitations have changed significantly. This “recertification” process may include a functional assessment.

WHAT IF MY APPLICATION IS NOT APPROVED?

An initial decision of conditional eligibility, or any subsequent change in any customer’s eligibility status, can be reviewed by VIA staff at the customer’s request. There is also a formal appeals process if a customer disagrees with VIA’s staff decision. If an application for service is not approved, VIA will send a letter to the applicant explaining the specific reason(s) for the denial. The letter will tell the applicant how to proceed if he or she wishes to appeal the decision.

3. RESERVATIONS AND CANCELLATIONS

WHERE DO I MAKE A RESERVATION?

Registered VIAtrans customers may make a reservation (book a trip) through the following methods:

a. Through the automated telephone system at (210) 362-5050 (option #2); or
b. Through a VIAtrans Reservation Agent at (210) 362-5050 (option #1).

AUTOMATED TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The automated telephone system will allow customers to create, cancel, and confirm trips in real time, 24-hours a day, seven days a week by calling 210-362-5050. Trips booked through the automated telephone system may be reserved up to four (4) days in advance (up until 4:45 p.m. the day before the trip).

VIATRANS RESERVATIONS CENTER

To make a trip reservation, call the VIAtrans Reservation Center at (210) 362-5050 or toll free at 1-866-362-5050.

Reservation Agents are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. to schedule Paratransit trips. Trip reservations can be made up to four (4) days in advance. On Monday through Thursday (excluding holidays) the Reservation Center is open until 8:00 p.m.; however, next day reservations must be made before 4:45 p.m. VIAtrans does NOT offer same day service. Customers cannot make next day trip reservations after 4:45 p.m.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE A TRIP?

To make a trip reservation, call the VIAtrans Reservation Center at (210) 362-5050 or toll free at 1-866-362-5050.

Reservation Agents are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. to schedule paratransit trips. Trip reservations can be made up to four (4) days in advance. On Monday through Thursday (excluding holidays) the

Reservation Center is open until 8:00 p.m.; however, next day reservations must be made before 4:45 p.m. the day before the customer's trip. VIAtrans does NOT offer same day service.

All trips will be scheduled within one (1) hour (before or after) the requested time as permitted by ADA regulations. This means the exact time requested may not always be available and thus is not guaranteed. Trips will be scheduled within a period of time called the 30-minute ready window (10 minutes before and 20 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time). This 30-minute ready window will be the timeframe during which a passenger can expect the pick-up to occur.

When making a reservation, be prepared to provide the following information:

1. VIAtrans identification number.
2. First and last name.
3. Date of travel.
4. The time the customer would like to be picked up.
5. Complete pick-up address, including an apartment number, suite number, gate or security code, building identification, zip code and telephone number. Note: Same day changes to an address cannot be made, so make sure the address is correct.
6. Complete destination address, including building, suite or apartment number, zip code and telephone number. Note: Same day changes to an address cannot be made, so make sure the address is correct.
7. Whether a personal care attendant (PCA), service animal and/or companion/child will be traveling with the customer. (One PCA and one companion are allowed to ride with the passenger.)
8. If traveling with an assistive device, such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, oxygen tank, etc. Last minute changes to assistive devices may result in no service for that day.
9. Inform the Reservation Agent of any changes to his/her permanent address or telephone number.

Customers who call during the last hour of the day to schedule a trip may have longer telephone hold times than at other times. To avoid delays, VIA suggests customers call earlier in the day to schedule a trip.

Abusive, threatening, or obscene language spoken on the telephone to a VIA employee will not be tolerated and can be grounds for suspension of VIAtrans service. Refer to "Rules of Conduct" on pages 28 and 29 of this guide. All telephone calls made to VIAtrans Reservations are recorded.

DOES VIATRANS PROVIDE TRIPS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

VIAtrans can provide trips for customers to attend classes at post-secondary academic or vocational institutions within the VIAtrans service area, but VIA will not provide trips to school-age children (K-12) for required educational purposes. Transportation to and from classroom activities, if needed, is the responsibility of the public elementary or secondary school a child attends. VIAtrans can, however, transport K-12 children to or from a school for voluntary activities (e. g., to attend a football game) or personal reasons (such as a doctor's appointment or after-school employment.)

HOW DO I CONFIRM MY TRIP?

Trips will be confirmed at the time a trip reservation is scheduled. The Reservation Agent will repeat the date, time, addresses, and any other details of the trip. The evening before travel, the VIA automated telephone system will call customers reminding them of their trips for the next day and giving them the option to cancel the trip, if needed. Reminder calls will not be made for subscription trips.

Customers may use the automated reservation system any time or day by calling (210) 362-5050 and selecting number 2 – Automated Reservations to confirm a reservation. The automated reservation system will walk the customer through the confirmation process. Customers will be given a confirmation number at the end of the call. Please be sure to write this number down in case there is a dispute.

Helpful Tip

When scheduling a trip, customers can eliminate confusion and unnecessary follow-up calls by having pencil and paper near the telephone to write down the pick-up and return times given by the Reservation Agent.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHEN MY DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT WILL END?

Occasionally, customers need open-ended return times because they do not know when they will be ready to be picked up. Open returns or will-call trips go beyond what is required by ADA regulations. Customers are never asked to disclose the purpose of their trips except when they choose to schedule these optional will-call trips. Will-call trips are limited to returns from a medical appointment or jury duty.

Customers must let the Reservation Agent know at the time reservations are made that they want a "will-call" return trip. Will-call pick-ups are activated when customer notifies the VIAtrans reservation agent that they are ready to be picked up. VIA will dispatch a VIAtrans vehicle or Yellow Cab Taxi as soon as possible. However, under certain peak times and high use circumstances it can take up to two hours before the vehicle arrives to the pick-up location. Will-call pick-ups are not recommended unless no other options are available. Will-call pickups cannot be provided after 8:00 p.m.

HOW DO I CANCEL A TRIP?

Cancellations are a large source of system inefficiency for VIAtrans service. Please cancel trips with as much advance notice as possible so that rides can be made available to other VIAtrans customers.

To avoid a late cancellation penalty, customers must cancel their trip at least one hour before the negotiated pick-up time. If a customer has a no-show for a pick-up trip, the customer must cancel the return trip unless the trip is still needed. Return trips will not be automatically cancelled.

Customers can cancel VIAtrans trips seven days a week by calling (210) 362-5050 or toll free at 1-866-362-5050. Reservation Agents are available from 4:00 AM to 1:00 AM to handle cancellations. To avoid a no-show, customers must cancel their trip at least one hour before their negotiated pick-up time.

Customers may use the automated reservation system any time or day by calling (210) 362-5050 and selecting option number 2 – Automated Reservations to cancel a reservation. The automated reservation system will

walk the customer through the cancellation process. Customers will be given a cancellation confirmation number at the end of the call. Please be sure to write the confirmation number down in case there is a dispute about a cancellation.

Contact VIAtrans Reservations to be set-up to use the automated reservation system.

WHAT IF I NEED SAME DAY TRANSPORTATION SERVICE?

While VIAtrans does not offer same day transportation service, even for emergency situations, VIAtrans customers can use VIAtrans Taxi Subsidy Service seven days a week. Taxi subsidy trips can be arranged by calling Yellow Cab at (210) 666-6666. Taxi subsidy service vehicles will accommodate most wheelchairs and scooters. Please refer to page 28 for more information.

CAN I MAKE CHANGES TO MY TRIP?

VIAtrans customers may make changes to trip locations or times before 4:45 p.m. the day before their trip. VIAtrans operators are not authorized to make trip changes.

4. VIATRANS SERVICE

WHAT ARE THE SERVICE HOURS?

Service hours mirror VIA fixed route buses serving the customer's points of origin and destination. VIAtrans service is not available on days, times or locations when the corresponding fixed route service is not operating.

VIAtrans services are available as early as 4:00 a.m. and as late as 12:30 a.m. depending on the customer's location. Holiday service hours may follow a Saturday or Sunday schedule. For bus schedules, routes, and trip-planning assistance, please call the VIA Customer Service telephone number at (210) 362-2020, or access the VIA website at www.viainfo.net.

WHAT TYPE OF VEHICLE WILL PICK ME UP?

VIAtrans and independent contractors use a variety of branded vehicle types including lift-equipped vans, passenger vans, and mini-vans with ramps. A customer's VIAtrans trip will be scheduled on a van with a lift or ramp if he/she is traveling in a wheelchair or a scooter or if he/she can walk but cannot use steps. VIAtrans will work to accommodate customer's needs in determining the type of vehicle that will transport the customer. Customers cannot select the type of vehicle that will transport them.

Important Note: VIAtrans cannot guarantee space on any van for people who travel in wheelchairs or scooters which are longer than 48 inches (front to back) by 30 inches wide (side-to-side). Some VIAtrans vans cannot accommodate larger wheelchairs or scooters. Please refer to page 19 for additional information.

HOW LONG WILL MY RIDE TAKE?

Paratransit travel time should be comparable to trips with the same origin and destination on VIA fixed-route bus system including transfers, walking, and wait times. This comparison exists except when circumstances are beyond our control, such as during bad weather, traffic congestion, construction, etc. The average trip time can range from 20 minutes to two hours depending on the path and distance between the pick-up location and

the destination. The farther a customer travels, the longer the trip may take. Trips taking a customer straight to his or her destination cannot be requested or guaranteed.

WHEN WILL MY VAN ARRIVE?

"Pick-up window" is changed to "ready window." This is the time the customer must be standing at the curb for the VIAtrans vehicle to pick them up: between 10 minutes before or 20 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time.

In order for VIA to pick up all VIAtrans customers on time VIA schedules customers' trips using a 30-minute ready window. At the time a customer makes his/her reservation, the Reservation Agent will inform the customer that the van can arrive at his/her location between 10 minutes before or 20 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time.

Below is an example of the 30-minute ready window. The example assumes an 8:00 a.m. negotiated pick-up time:

7:45 a.m. Van Operator arrives early. The customer decides if he/she wants to board the van at this time.

****

7:50 a.m. Ready window begins (10 minutes before 8:00 a.m.)

Customer's Ready Window

7:55 a.m. Customer must be on board the van at this time to not be considered a no-show.

7:56 a.m. Van Operator notes the customer as a no-show and leaves to pick-up the next customer.

8:20 a.m. Ready window ends (20 minutes after 8:00 a.m.)

****

8:21 a.m. If the van is not at the customer's location by this time, the van is considered to be late. Customer calls "Where's My Ride?" at

(210) 362-5050 to get an estimated arrival time. Customer is not charged with a no-show if he or she decides to take alternate transportation to their destination.

WHERE DO I WAIT FOR MY RIDE?

Not all pick-up locations are identical. To help customers determine where to wait for the van when there is no VIA loading area designated by a VIAtrans sign, follow these guidelines:

- Customers living in a single-family home should wait outside their front door where they can see or hear the van at least 10 minutes before their negotiated pick-up time.
- Customers living in an apartment complex should wait at a predesignated location where the Van Operator can see them.
- Customers in an office building (high rise, hospital, etc.) should wait on the ground level outside at the main entrance.
- Customers in a building such as a hospital where there are two sets of doors (a foyer) should wait outside in an area where the Van Operator can see them.
- Customers in a location that is not accessible to the Van Operator (i.e., an apartment complex, business complex, etc.) should wait outside and should remain as close to the entrance as possible.
- For those customers who are visually impaired, wait outside at a location where the operator can see the customer (for example, outside by the door of a lobby).

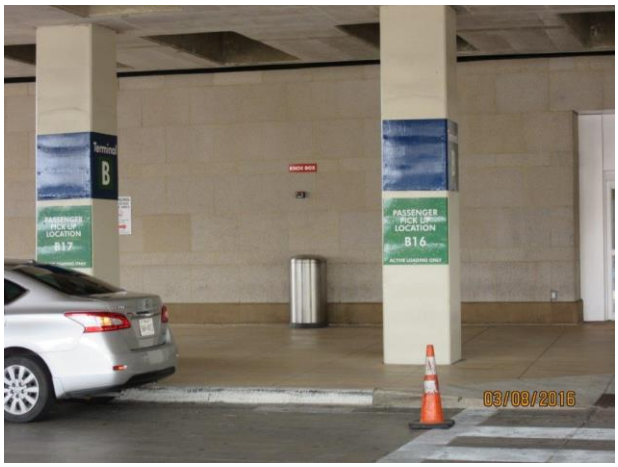
When the temperature forecast exceeds 100 degrees between noon and 7:00 p.m., or the temperature is 32 degrees or colder from 4:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Van Operators will go to the door of a single-family home and ring the doorbell or announce their arrival at the entrance to a business or facility. VIA will notify customers when this procedure is in effect.

If a customer is having trouble with the van finding the customer at a particular location, contact Reservations to request a review of the location for a VIAtrans sign.

AT WHAT LOCATIONS IN THE SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WILL CUSTOMERS BE PICKED UP AND DROPPED OFF?

Customer Pick-up Location

Customers being picked up from the San Antonio International Airport will need to go to the lower level to the Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level in Terminal A-B and wait at the end of Terminal B just past the pick-up location B16 and B17 signs.



Customer Drop-off Location

Customers being dropped-off at the San Antonio International Airport will be dropped-off at the upper level at the end of terminal A just past the Shuttle Drop-Off Sign.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY VEHICLE ARRIVES?

Van Operator will wait 5 minutes for a customer to board the vehicle when arriving within the 30-minute ready window. If a customer does not board the vehicle within the 5-minute wait time, the operator will mark the customer as a no-show and will depart the location.

The VIAtrans Operator is not required to call the customer when the vehicle arrives or before leaving the pick-up location. Customers are expected to be ready to board the vehicle upon its arrival. However, VIA's automated telephone system can call customers the night before to remind customers of their next day trip(s) and can also call the customer five minutes before the van arrives. Contact VIAtrans Reservations to request this service.

When the vehicle arrives, the customer is required to present a valid VIAtrans ID and the exact fare or a valid coupon. Please note: The operator cannot take you to your requested destination without the required fare.

If the Van Operator arrives before the pick-up window (more than ten (10) minutes before the pick-up time), the five (5) minute wait time will begin ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Van Operators may arrive early; however, it is the customer's choice whether to board the van early or wait until the pick-up window timeframe begins.

For example, if a customer has a 1:00 p.m. negotiated pick-up time and the Van Operator arrives at 12:30 p.m., the Van Operator must wait until 12:55 p.m. to allow the customer to board the van. If the customer has not boarded the van by 12:55 p.m., the Van Operator will leave and record the trip as a "no-show."

CAN THE VIATRANS OPERATOR ASSIST ME?

Yes; VIAtrans provides "Assist-to-Door" service for customers who cannot independently walk or roll from the front door of their home to a VIAtrans van parked at curbside. The VIAtrans Operator will knock on the door or ring the doorbell if the front door is close to the street. This service is not available at apartment complexes where the front door is not visible from the vehicle.

Examples of people needing "Assist-to-Door" services include customers

who:

- are unable to self-propel a manual wheelchair;
- cannot follow the path to or from a van without guidance; or
- need help to maintain his/her balance.

Assist-to-Door service can also be provided at a customer's destination (bank, shopping center, church, medical office, etc.) and for the return trip back home. Customers who are approved for this service can expect the van operator to:

- Physically push the customer's manual wheelchair from the door of the home or facility;
- Offer directions, verbally or by light touch, to keep the customer on the right path; or
- Allow the customer to hold the van operator's hand or forearm for balance.

Van Operators will not, however, take control of an electric wheelchair or bear a customer's weight. Van Operators are also not authorized to:

- Assist passengers on unsafe or steeply inclined mobility ramps or stairs;
- Walk through the door of a house, apartment, or building;
- Lock/unlock doors or activate/deactivate house alarms;
- Load or unload a customer's personal items; or
- Push a wheelchair over a curb or steps.

This service is unavailable at workshops, dialysis clinics or adult day activity centers where staff are available to help and is not offered to customers with "Do Not Leave Alone" status. Customers must also promptly appear when the van arrives. VIAtrans sends phone calls when a van is on the way, and Assist-to-Door is not designed for van arrival notification purposes.

Customers who need occasional assistance at their home should inform the Reservation Agent when making a reservation. Customers who require Van

Operator assistance at the origin and/or destination stage of all VIAtrans trips must complete a brief application to establish the need for “Assist-to-door” assistance at all origins and destinations. Approval is contingent on a safety inspection at a customer's residence to confirm the presence of a suitable ramp, steps and/or pathway and a reasonable distance between the customer's door and a waiting van. Please contact the Accessible Services staff by phone at (210) 362-2140 or e-mail access@viainfo.net for an application or more information.

Van Operators can also assist customers upon request to or from the van at an unfamiliar location or down steps. Van Operators can only assist customers in wheelchairs up and down one step. Customers who need occasional assistance from the front door of their home should inform the Reservation Agent when making a reservation.

To promote access to van and bus service for customers who are disabled, VIA will consider exceptions to existing rules and procedures on an as-needed basis. These exceptions, also known as “accommodations,” typically relate to operator assistance and could also involve pick-up or drop-off locations, fare payment, medication issues and similar situations.

Accommodation requests must be reasonable and cannot be approved if the assistance:

- Would result in a direct threat to the health and safety of Bus or Van Operators or other customers;
- Requires a fundamental alteration to the design and operation of VIAtrans (or VIA bus) service;
- Conflicts with ADA-based regulations; or
- Is based on customer preference rather than actual need.

Customers should contact VIA in advance by e-mail or phone at (210) 362-2020 if a disability-related accommodation is needed in order to use VIA buses or VIAtrans vans. A complaint process is available if an accommodation request is declined.

WHAT IF MY VEHICLE IS LATE?

Customers may call “Where’s my ride?” 15 minutes after their negotiated pick-up time to find out where their van is. VIAtrans’ goal is to pick up customers on time; however, sometimes circumstances beyond our control can cause a vehicle to be late. Circumstances can include traffic accidents, emergency situations with another customer, weather related incidents, etc. Please allow for these type of situations when scheduling trips on VIAtrans service.

If the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute ready window, call “Where’s My Ride?” at (210) 362-5050 or toll free at 1-866-362-5050 Monday-Sunday from 4:00 AM to 1:00 AM.

NOTE: VIA is not responsible for any late fees or payments to a facility for picking up a customer late. Caregivers should make prior arrangements with their service agency in case the van is late picking up a customer; i.e., using taxi subsidy service, having someone else pick up the customer, etc. If the van is late (it arrives 21 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time), VIAtrans customers are not charged with a no-show if they are not there or decline the ride when the van arrives.

CAN VIATRANS TRANSPORT ALL WHEELCHAIRS OR SCOOTERS, REGARDLESS OF SIZE?

No; VIAtrans vans cannot accommodate all mobility devices.

VIAtrans vans with lifts have two or three spaces designed for customers who travel in mobility devices. Vans with ramps have one space for a mobility device. Each space will accommodate a passenger traveling in a mobility device (wheelchair or scooter) which is not more than 48 inches in length, 30 inches in width and have a total weight (passenger + mobility device) of 600 pounds or less on older lift-equiped vans and 1,000 pounds or less on the new lift-equipped vans.

Some, but not all, of these spaces have enough room for a wheelchair or scooter that is longer than 48 inches by 30 inches or weighs more than 600 pounds. VIAtrans cannot reserve these “oversize” spaces for specific customers. If a customer travels in a large wheelchair or scooter and

oversize space is available in the van when it arrives at the beginning of his/her trip, VIA will transport the passenger and will make arrangements for the customer to get back home.

For our customers' safety, please be sure that wheelchairs or other mobility devices are clean, safe and in good working condition before traveling with VIAtrans. If a mobility device is demonstrated to be inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements, the customer may not be transported. If possible, electric wheelchairs and scooters should be fully charged before the start of any VIAtrans trip. VIAtrans is not responsible for damages or injuries related to unsafe, inadequate or defective mobility devices.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A SEATBELT WHEN RIDING IN A VIATRANS VEHICLE?

Yes, by state law all passengers riding on VIAtrans vehicles must wear a lap and shoulder seatbelt during the entire time they are riding on the vehicle. VIAtrans vans with lifts or ramps also have separate securement systems to stabilize wheelchairs and scooters. Passengers who refuse to wear a seatbelt or remove their seatbelt while the van is in motion may be suspended from VIAtrans service until they agree to comply with this law.

Some wheelchairs and many scooters may not be designed to be transported in a van or bus. VIAtrans passengers traveling in wheelchairs or scooters can suggest how and where the securement belts should be attached to their mobility device but the final decision belongs to the Van Operator. The Van Operator may ask a customer in a wheelchair to remove bags placed on the wheelchair in order to properly secure a wheelchair.

CAN I TAKE A WALKER/ROLLATOR ON THE VAN?

Customers who use a walker or rollator must notify the Reservation Agent at the time of making a trip reservation that they will be using a walker or rollator. Walkers and rollators take up a wheelchair space that must be reserved for the customer. Customers who fail to notify VIAtrans that they are taking a mobility device on their **trip may not be transported** if there is no room on the vehicle to secure the device. If after making a trip reservation

a customer decides to travel with a different mobility device, the customer must call VIAtrans Reservations before 4:45 pm the day before his/her trip.

CAN I PICK WHERE I SIT IN THE VEHICLE?

The Van Operator will determine where everyone sits based on everyone's destination. The Van Operator will not ask a customer to move to accommodate another boarding customer unless it is operationally necessary. Customer cannot reserve a specific seat on any VIAtrans vehicles.

WHAT IS A SUBSCRIPTION TRIP?

A subscription trip is defined as a reservation that will be repeated at the same times and days of the week from the same location. This trip must be made a minimum of three (3) times a week for minimum of 30 days. Trips to a dialysis center, adult day care center, or employment are examples of trips that qualify for a subscription.

Customers are required to schedule this trip for a two-week period before becoming eligible to apply for subscription service. Any changes in frequency or time during this two-week period will result in an additional week wait period before subscription service can begin.

A subscription request can take from two (2) weeks to thirty (30) days before being approved. If not approved for subscription service after thirty (30) days, the request is cancelled, and the customer must re-apply for this service. Any changes to a subscription trip (pick-up address, destination, time and/or mobility device) which has an effect on the route will cause the trips to be canceled and the customer will have to re-apply for the service. Frequent cancellations could also result in the termination of a subscription trip. Customers in certain circumstances (i.e.; vacation, hospitalization, etc.) may cancel up to thirty (30) days of subscription service trips without penalty by contacting VIAtrans' Scheduling Department.

Because many facilities are closed during the holidays, subscriptions trips will not be provided on the following holidays:

- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day (Dec. 25th)
- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)

For all other holidays Schedulers will call the agencies to see if they are open. If they are closed, then all subscriptions to that agency will be cancelled. Schedulers will also cancel subscriptions trips to any location that reports that the facility will be closed.

For questions regarding subscription trips, especially on holidays, please call the VIAtrans Scheduling Office at (210) 362-5120.

5. NO-SHOW

WHAT IS A NO-SHOW?

A “no-show” is when the customer fails to board or is not present for boarding when the VIAtrans vehicle arrives to pick him/her up. No-shows also include showing up late for a pick-up, late cancellations (calling VIAtrans less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time), or cancellations at the door. No-show incidents are set to zero at the beginning of every month.

A no-show occurs:

- when a customer fails to board the VIAtrans vehicle within five (5) minutes after the van arrives within the pick-up window;
- if a customer violates VIA policies and as a result the customer is not transported (for example, refuses to pay the fare, has more bags than the customer can carry, etc.); or
- when a customer cancels their trip less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

For example, a customer has reserved a 9:00 a.m. pick-up at their residence. The VIAtrans vehicle arrives at 8:55 a.m. The customer fails to board the vehicle by 9:00 a.m. The vehicle leaves at 9:01 a.m. and the customer is given a no-show. However, if the VIAtrans vehicle arrives at the customer’s address more than twenty (20) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, the customer may cancel that trip without penalty and will not receive a no-show.

If a customer receives a no-show and is not taken to their destination, the customer must cancel the return trip if it is not needed. VIA will not automatically cancel the return trip.

If a customer still needs a ride after receiving a no-show, he or she can also contact Yellow Cab under the taxi subsidy program for a trip at (210) 666-6666. Refer to page 33 regarding **VIAtrans Taxi Subsidy Service**.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR EXCESSIVE NO-SHOWS?

VIAtrans keeps a record of all no-show incidents. If a customer schedules less than forty trips in a given month and has four or more no-shows, he or

she is in violation of the No-Show Policy. Customers who travel more frequently are in violation if the number of incidents equals 10% or more of their scheduled trips. Reservations cancelled more than one hour in advance are not counted as “scheduled trips.”

Penalties are as follows:

1. The first month: waiver or warning notice
2. The second month: 7-day suspension
3. The third month: 14-day suspension
4. The fourth month: 21-day suspension
5. Subsequent months: 21-day suspension

Suspended service means that VIAtrans will not accept new reservations for trips during the designated suspension period. Additionally, VIA will cancel any previously made reservations for the designated suspension period. Customers suspended from VIAtrans service will not be permitted to ride as a personal care attendant or a companion.

General questions regarding the No-Show Policy may be directed to VIA Accessible Services at (210) 362-2140. If a customer has questions regarding a particular trip incident occurring in the current month, he/she can call the VIA Customer Service office at (210) 362-2020 or send an email through VIA’s web site at www.viainfo.net/VIAtrans.

WILL I BE NOTIFIED IF I GET A NO-SHOW?

No-show occurrences are reviewed daily for customers who have three or more no-show incidents. When a customer incurs a third no-show incident in a calendar month, VIA will investigate the no-shows to determine if there is a pattern or practice of intentional or repeated incidents. The customer will receive telephone notification that any additional no-show incidents in that month may result in a violation and the customer’s service may be suspended.

No-show events that are beyond a customer’s control will not be counted. Suspension notification letters are sent to customers who have violated the no-show policy. Each letter clearly identifies the dates of each incident from

the previous month, as well as the future dates when the customer's service will be suspended.

HOW CAN I APPEAL A NO-SHOW SUSPENSION?

A customer will be notified in writing of a pending suspension of service. VIA will allow the customer time to appeal the suspension by explaining the circumstances surrounding any of the specific no-show incidents charged to the customer in any given month.

The customer must submit his/her appeal before the date of the pending suspension. To appeal by telephone, please call (210) 362-2020 and ask for Customer Concerns. To appeal in person, please go to the address listed below and ask for Customer Concerns. Written appeals should be mailed to:

Accessible Services
VIA Metropolitan Transit
1021 San Pedro Avenue
P.O. Box 12489
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Once an appeal has been submitted, the customer may continue to ride VIAtrans service until the investigation is completed and a final decision has been made regarding suspension of service.

6. PASSENGER INFORMATION

WHO CAN RIDE WITH ME?

Personal Care Attendant

A “personal care attendant” (PCA) is someone who provides assistance to a VIAtrans customer during or after a VIAtrans trip. One PCA can accompany a registered VIAtrans passenger at no charge. The customer’s file must indicate that he/she is eligible to have a PCA travel with him/her, and a space must be reserved for the attendant when scheduling a trip. A PCA cannot be a VIAtrans customer who also is required to have a personal care attendant ride with him/her. The PCA must be able to care for the VIAtrans passenger’s needs; i.e., carry bags, assist the passenger in getting to their destination, etc. VIAtrans customers who are on suspension from riding the service cannot ride VIAtrans as a PCA.

Companion

One companion is welcome to ride with a VIAtrans customer at the regular VIAtrans fare per trip. When making a reservation a space for a companion, whether adult or child, must also be reserved for the companion. Seating for more than one guest is on a "space available" basis when scheduling a trip.

Infants and Young Children

Customers traveling with a child younger than eight (8) years old will be required to provide a car safety seat unless the child is taller than 4’9”. Customer must secure the child’s car safety seat in VIA’s vehicle. If the customer cannot do this, the customer must bring someone with them who can do this. The customer will be responsible for securing the car safety seat. Children cannot be transported in strollers and two or more children are not allowed to occupy one seat. Children cannot ride on a customer’s lap. VIA DOES NOT PROVIDE CHILD SAFETY SEATS.

Service Animals

Guide dogs and other service animals are permitted on all VIA vehicles and are allowed to accompany the customer if this need is indicated in the customer’s file. A “service” animal is one who has been trained to perform tasks for the customer and must remain in the customer’s control during a VIAtrans trip. This definition does not include “comfort” animals. When scheduling a trip, please inform the Reservation Agent if a service animal will be accompanying the customer. A service animal does not take up a

seat on the van and is required to sit on the floor as close to the customer as possible.

Small non-service animals are allowed on all transit vehicles. Pets must be contained in secure, clean, hand-held, and leak-proof cages. The cage/carrier must be small enough to fit on the owner's lap.

HOW MANY PACKAGES CAN I BRING ON THE VEHICLE?

Carry-on packages are limited to two bags or similar-sized packages that can be carried by the customer onto VIAtrans vehicles. Operators are not required to carry passenger’s personal belongings. Also, items must be held in the passenger’s lap.

VIAtrans vehicles are not designed to accommodate large grocery carts. Customers may bring a small personal grocery cart and they must let Reservation Agents know at the time the reservation is made that they will be bringing a personal cart, so space can be reserved on the van. Customers who plan on doing extensive shopping (i.e., having more than two (2) bags, a case of water, etc.) should consider using taxi subsidy service or making other arrangements for the return trip home.

CAN OXYGEN TANKS BE BROUGHT ON THE VEHICLE?

If a patron requires the use of oxygen, it must be identified, inspected and evaluated at the certification interview. Any change in the size or number of oxygen storage container(s) identified during the certification process must be reported to VIA prior to making a trip reservation. Any change in patron status regarding the use of oxygen must be reported to VIA immediately.

CAN VISITORS USE VIATRANS SERVICE?

Out-of-town visitors who are ADA certified in other cities or who have obvious mobility limitations can use VIAtrans services on a temporary basis. Visitors must contact the VIAtrans Accessibility Services Office Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., at 210-362-2140 no later than two (2) business days before service is required.

Once this is done, advance reservations can be made up to four days in advance. Visitors will receive a temporary ID number in order to make trip reservations. The policies and procedures in this guide apply to visitors.

VIAtrans does not provide same day transportation service. Visitors can use VIAtrans Service for 21 days out of any 365-day period. Receiving service beyond 21 days will require the person to apply for VIAtrans service and an eligibility determination by VIA Accessible Services.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Passengers are asked to follow these rules of conduct to ensure the safety and comfort of all passengers and the Van Operator:

- No loud conversations on cell phones.
- No eating, drinking or smoking on board the van. However, eating a piece of candy or cookie and drinking liquids from a spill-proof bottle for health reasons is allowed as long as the food items do not make a mess on the van.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering in the van.
- No illegal possession, use, distribution or sale of any controlled substance.
- No consumption of an alcoholic beverage or possession of an open container of any alcoholic beverage on a VIA vehicle.
- No abusive, threatening or obscene language or actions.
- No discharge of bodily fluids or open wounds or spitting.
- No vandalizing of any VIA vehicle, VIA facility or VIA property by writing, marking, scribbling, defacing or causing destruction to the van or VIA property in any manner.
- No begging, soliciting or panhandling from another person.
- No deliberate fare evasion.
- No physical abuse of another passenger or the Van Operator.
- Customers are not permitted to carry guns or any other weapons on any vehicle owned by VIA or owned by a VIA contractor.
- No radios, MP3 players, compact disc players or other sound generating equipment are to be played aboard the vehicles unless the customer uses earphones or a headset.

- For safety reasons, please limit unnecessary conversation with Van Operators when the vehicle is in motion.

Passengers who violate the Rules of Conduct are subject to penalties up to and including suspension of service. These Rules also apply when riding a VIA bus. For more information regarding VIA's Code of Conduct while on a VIA vehicle, go to www.viainfo.net/BusService/CodeOfConduct.aspx.

VIA will not provide service to customers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal behavior, or who present a direct threat to the health or safety of others. VIAtrans customers are accountable for the conduct of their personal care attendant (PCA) and/or companions including children. A PCA or companion whose conduct disrupts VIAtrans service will be immediately notified of their unacceptable behavior and continuation of such behavior could prohibit the PCA or companion from riding VIAtrans service on future trips.

A passenger or his/her caregiver or companion or PCA who engages in physical or verbal abuse, causes physical injury to another passenger or Van Operator, or damages VIA property may be subject to immediate suspension and possible criminal prosecution. Federal regulations allow VIAtrans the right to refuse service to individuals with disabilities who engage in violent or seriously disruptive conduct. VIA may also require such a passenger to travel in the company of a responsible PCA for all future VIAtrans trips.

WHAT DO I DO IF I LEAVE AN ITEM ON A VAN?

All items (books, packages, umbrellas, etc.) left on a van at the end of each day are taken to VIA's Lost and Found Department located at 1021 San Pedro Avenue. The Lost and Found Department will process the articles the following business day and hold them for fourteen (14) calendar days. Once the fourteen (14) calendar days have elapsed, any articles that were not returned to the owner are discarded appropriately.

Please note, the Lost and Found Department was established as a convenience for our customers. VIA is not liable for any lost articles left on our vehicles. Customers can call (210) 362-2006 after 11:00 am the following day the article was lost, to inquire if their article was found. Lost articles can be claimed at the VIA Metro Center.

7. VIATRANS FARES

WHAT ARE THE VIATRANS FARES?

For the most up-to-date information on VIAtrans fares, call Customer Information at (210) 362-2020 or go to VIA's website at www.viainfo.net for the latest fare information.

All passengers, regardless of age, must pay the exact cash fare or VIAtrans ticket when boarding the van. Operators do not provide change. Customers will not be transported unless the fare is paid when boarding the van.

Please note: Operators are not allowed to accept tips or gratuities.

IS THERE A REDUCED FARE PROGRAM TO RIDE VIATRANS SERVICE?

While there is no reduced fare for VIAtrans service, VIAtrans customers may ride the fixed route bus for free by showing a VIAtrans identification card when boarding a bus.

Under Federal Transit Administration regulations VIA is allowed to charge up to twice the amount of a bus fare. VIAtrans fares are currently less than this amount (i.e., $2.00 versus $2.60). Essentially, VIAtrans customers are receiving the benefit of a reduced fare.

8. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

HOW DO I UPDATE MY PERSONAL INFORMATION?

If a customer moves, changes his/her telephone number, or a customer's disability situation changes, the customer should contact VIAtrans Reservations at (210) 362-5050 with updated information. This will ensure that VIAtrans has the correct information on file.

SECURITY AWARENESS

SEE Something, SAY Something

Customers can help keep our community and transit system safe and secure by staying alert to their surroundings and reporting suspicious situations or behaviors. If a customer SEES something suspicious then SAY something to a VIA Representative or to the local authorities by calling 911.

What is suspicious?

When a customer notices something or someone that seems out of place, like an unattended package or someone entering a restricted area, stay alert and call 911 to alert the authorities. Report only suspicious behavior or situations.

Spread the Word

Customer should share the SEE Something SAY Something message with those around them. A poster and informational flyer are available on VIA's website.

SEE Something SAY Something is a national campaign shared throughout the United States

HAVE A SERVICE COMMENT?

VIA welcomes any comment, positive or negative, that will help improve our service. Customers are encouraged to contact VIA's Customer Service Department at (210) 362-2020.

Comments can be submitted by mail to the following address:

Customer Concerns Department
1021 San Pedro Avenue
P.O. Box 12489
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Electronic feedback can be submitted on VIA's website at www.viainfo.net; select the "Contact Us" link on the home page.

When making a comment, please have the following information available so that the incident can be thoroughly investigated:

- Name of VIA Employee involved
- Location of Incident
- Date and Time of Incident
- Vehicle Number
- Description of Incident
- Name of Individual(s) Involved in the Incident
- Summary of the Incident

Additional information may also be requested.

Customers wanting a response to their comment need to indicate how the response is needed; i.e., in writing, by telephone, or by email. On average, comments will be processed within seven to ten business days.

9. OTHER VIATRANS SERVICES

VIATRANS TAXI SUBSIDY SERVICE

For customers who need a same-day trip but didn't make a reservation the day before may wish to use VIAtrans Taxi Subsidy Service. Taxi service allows VIAtrans customers the freedom to travel when they want. Taxi trips can also be reserved in advance.

Here is how it works:

- VIAtrans customer calls Yellow Cab at (210) 666-6666 to request a trip and lets the cab company know he/she is a VIAtrans customer.
- When the taxi arrives the customer shows his/her VIAtrans ID card to the Cab Driver.
- The customer and any companion(s) riding with the customer must pay $2.00 each at the start of trip. Yellow Cab also accepts VIAtrans tickets. A Personal Care Attendant rides free.
- VIA pays the next $9.00 metered rate fare.
- At end of the trip, the customer pays any fare in excess of $11.00.
- Each VIAtrans customer may ride a maximum of 20 times a month.

VIAtrans Taxi Subsidy Service operates Monday through Friday from 4:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, and Saturday and Sunday from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Taxis can only transport customers within VIA's service area.

Yellow Cab cannot transport customers in oversized (wheelchairs that are more than 48" in length, 30" in width and have a total weight (passenger + mobility device) of more than 600 pounds) because taxi vans are manufactured to handle these types of wheelchairs only. If a customer is a no-show on the VIAtrans taxi subsidy service, the no-show can count as a no-show on VIAtrans service.

Please be aware that not all accessible vans may be available throughout the day due to other customer's demand for service. For questions or comments regarding service issues with Yellow Cab, contact Yellow Cab at (210) 666-6666.

DO NOT LEAVE ALONE PROGRAM

Some customers have severely limited awareness or decision-making skills and cannot travel on their own. These customers are classified as “Do Not Leave Alone” or DNLA. DNLA service is available only upon request.

Customers who have DNLA status will not be allowed to leave a VIAtrans van alone when they reach their destination; and a responsible individual (must be at least 18 years or older) must sign-off that they received the DNLA customer. Contact VIA Accessible Services at (210) 362-2140 for more information about the DNLA program.

What are the caregiver’s responsibilities?

Caregivers must bring the customer to the van when it arrives. The caregiver must acknowledge (by signature) that arrangements have been made for a responsible person to meet the customer at the end of his or her trip.

If at the drop-off location the VIAtrans operator is unable to locate a responsible person to leave the customer who has DNLA service, the customer will remain on board the van until a responsible person is located. The vehicle may continue in service with the customer on board. If the failure to follow these procedures causes a delay in VIAtrans service, DNLA service may be suspended or cancelled.

Are there penalties for not having someone available to sign?

DNLA service goes beyond what is required by the ADA. It is the responsibility of the caregiver for the VIAtrans customer receiving DNLA service to make sure an adult (18 years or older) is available to sign for the customer.

The following lists the progressive penalties if someone is not available to sign for a customer with DNLA service in a rolling 12-month period:

1. On the first incident that occurs where a responsible individual is not waiting or refuses to sign the DNLA form or operator’s log, a letter will be delivered to the caregiver informing that if there is another incident the customer will be suspended from receiving DNLA service.

2. On the second incident the caregiver will receive a hand delivered letter informing them that the customer is now suspended for three (3) days from DNLA service.

3. On the third incident the caregiver will receive a hand delivered letter informing them that the customer is suspended for seven (7) days from DNLA service.

4. On the fourth incident the caregiver will receive a hand delivered letter informing them that DNLA service has been cancelled and the customer can either choose a six-month suspension for VIAtrans service, or ride VIAtrans service with a mandatory PCA for six months.

“Suspended from DNLA service” means that customers may continue to use VIAtrans service but VIAtrans operators will no longer obtain a signature when dropping off the customer and will drive away after the customer leaves the van. It is the caregiver’s responsibility to provide a personal care attendant to ride with the customer who is no longer eligible for DNLA service.

Cancellation of DNLA service is a permanent suspension. The customer may continue to ride VIAtrans service but the signature and transfer of responsibility procedures will no longer be provided. At that point it will be the caregiver’s responsibility to arrange for a PCA to ride with the customer or seek a different (other than VIAtrans) mode of transportation.