



CARE-A-VAN

Paratransit Service

Rider's Guide



Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority

www.gocarta.org • 423-698-9038

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Introduction

CARTA CARE-A-VAN, also called paratransit, is an origin-to-destination, shared-ride service that complements the Chattanooga fixed-route bus service. This service is designed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The CARTA CARE-A-VAN Riders Guide is designed to inform eligible consumers about CARTA CARE-A-VAN service.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law, not a transportation law, or a social program law. The Americans with Disabilities Act clearly requires non-discriminatory access to fixed-route service, with complementary CARTA CARE-A-VAN service acting as a “safety net” for people who cannot use the fixed-route bus system. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, complementary CARTA CARE-A-VAN service is not intended to be a comprehensive transportation system for individuals with disabilities. In other words, the Americans with Disabilities Act does not attempt to meet all the transportation needs of people with disabilities. Instead, the Americans with Disabilities Act is intended simply to provide individuals with the same mass transit opportunities that everyone else gets. In fact, the CARTA CARE-A-VAN system must be equivalent to the in-service criteria of the fixed-route system. For example, the service area and days/hours of service for CARTA CARE-A-VAN and fixed-route service must be comparable.

This guide includes rules, regulations and guidelines for use of the CARTA CARE-A-VAN system and will answer most questions about CARTA CARE-A-VAN operations. All CARTA CARE-A-VAN customers should review this handbook carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise. For additional information, you may write to CARTA CARE-A-VAN at 1617 Wilcox Blvd., Chattanooga, TN 37406, visit in person, call any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at 423-698-9038, fax to 423-698-8555.

General information about CARTA is also available online at www.GoCARTA.org.

CARTA CARE-A-VAN Services

CARTA CARE-A-VAN operates two (2) services:

1) operates following federal guidelines on a scheduled basis for residents and visitors within 3/4 of a mile on each side of the fixed-routes, which can be referred to as the Americans with Disabilities Area or program level; and

2) voluntarily operates following a scheduled basis for residents and visitors within Chattanooga city limits and regionally in parts of Hamilton County.

Together, CARTA CARE-A-VAN is a vehicle service that is specially equipped with wheelchair lifts and other accessibility features that allow maximum mobility for customers with disabilities.

Shared Rides

CARTA CARE-A-VAN is a public, complementary (to fixed-route), and shared service. This means that other riders with different origins and destinations may be picked up and dropped off along the way. A CARTA CARE-A-VAN trip will take a comparable amount of time as the same trip would take on a fixed-route bus, including transfers and wait times.

We ask for your patience and understanding that our vehicles are subject to the same travel conditions and road hazards which cause delays and detours for private vehicles and may delay our schedules beyond our control.

Eligibility for CARTA CARE-A-VAN Service

CARTA CARE-A-VAN service is available only to customers who meet the following criteria:

- Persons who are certified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as having disabilities.
- Functional limitations prevent them from using the regular fixed-route buses.
- There are parts of the regular fixed-route system that cannot be used because of a disability.
- Their pickup point (origin) and destination is within the service area.

An individual is eligible if they have a permanent or temporary disability as described below.

Permanent Disabilities:

CATEGORY 1

This category consists of persons who are unable to board, ride or disembark from the bus even if they are able to get to the stop and the bus is accessible. Persons in this category include individuals with mental or physical impairments who cannot navigate the bus system. Examples of navigating the system include recognizing destinations and understanding the transfer process.

CATEGORY 2

This category consists of persons with specific impairment-related conditions who cannot travel to or from a bus stop. The specific impairment-related condition must prevent the person from using regular, fixed-route transit. A person is eligible if traveling to and from a bus stop is impossible when architectural and/or environmental barriers are combined with the specific impairment-related condition.

CATEGORY 3

This category includes individuals who have a condition that prevents them from traveling to or from a boarding or disembarking location due to their impairment. Examples of such conditions include chronic fatigue, blindness, or a lack of cognitive ability to remember and follow directions. The condition must prevent the individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location. Only if it is apparent from the facts of a particular case that an individual cannot find a reasonable alternative path to a location should eligibility be granted.

Temporary Disabilities

Persons with temporary disabilities may be eligible for CARTA CARE-A-VAN service. The standards for eligibility are the same as those for permanent disabilities. Persons with temporary disabilities who are eligible for service will be provided service only for the duration of their disability.

Visitors

CARTA CARE-A-VAN will honor paratransit certifications from other transit systems. An individual from out-of-town requesting service must present proof of their certification. A letter stating CARTA CARE-A-VAN eligibility is acceptable. Documentation must include the name of the eligible individual, the name of the certifying paratransit provider, the telephone number of the provider's paratransit coordinator, an expiration date (if any), and any conditions or limitations on eligibility. If the individual has indicated the need for a Personal Care Attendant, this must be noted in the documentation. If the person does not have an identification card or other documentation from their local area, CARTA CARE-A-VAN will require the person to provide the scheduler with

documentation of their place of residence and their disability if the disability is not apparent.

CARTA CARE-A-VAN will not provide service to a visitor for more than twenty-one (21) days from the date of the visitor's first trip. Visitors will be required to apply for CARTA CARE-A-VAN to receive transportation beyond the twenty-one (21) day period. However, the twenty-one (21) days can be consecutive or divided over several shorter visits. A visitor who expects to be in the Chattanooga area for more than twenty-one (21) days should apply for a CARTA CARE-A-VAN photo ID card as soon as possible after arriving in the service area.

CARE-A-VAN Service Areas Definitions

Program 1 – ADA Paratransit Service (ADA Area/Federally Required Service)

This is the core ADA service area.

- Covers areas within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed-route
- Required by federal law under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Both your pickup AND drop-off must be inside this area

If both locations are inside this boundary, your trip qualifies as Program 1 (ADA Service).

Program 2 – Chattanooga City Limits (Non-ADA Area/Not Federally Required)

This area is:

- Inside Chattanooga city limits
- BUT outside the ADA service boundary

Important to know:

- This service is not required by federal law
- It is offered based on available resources

If either your pickup OR drop-off is in this the Chattanooga city limits, but outside of the ADA area, your trip is classified as Program 2.

Program 3 – Regional Service (Non-ADA Area/Not Federally Required)

This covers:

- Areas outside the ADA boundary and city of Chattanooga limits
- Within contracted city or county's service areas

Important to know:

- This service is not federally required
- It depends on local funding and vehicle availability

If either your pickup OR drop-off is outside Chattanooga city limits, your trip is classified as Program 3.

Applications

All prospective users of the CARTA CARE-A-VAN program must complete an application form to be eligible. Application forms are made available to you by the following: the CARTA website at www.GoCarta.org, by calling 423-698-9038, or by visiting or writing to CARTA CARE-A-VAN, 1617 Wilcox Boulevard, Chattanooga, TN 37406.

When you receive your application forms, please complete all sections. Incomplete applications will not be accepted for processing and will be returned to you for completion. This will delay the eligibility determination for CARTA CARE-A-VAN service.

Part A: Certification of Eligibility Application

SECTION I - General Information:

The applicant must provide all requested information including identifying persons (if any) who assisted them with the application. All information given will be verified, and providing false or misleading information will result in denial/termination of service.

SECTION II – Questions on Using CARTA’s Fixed-Route Bus Service:

Requests additional information from the applicant regarding the use of CARTA’s fixed-route bus services.

SECTION III – Information on Disability & Mobility Equipment:

This part of the CARTA CARE-A-VAN application requests additional information regarding the individual’s disability and asks the applicant to identify any mobility aids they may use.

SECTION IV – Acceptance & Understanding of CARTA CARE-A-VAN Policies:

This part of the application requires that the applicant read and sign their name stating they understand the application and CARTA CARE-A-VAN policies. They can also designate to who they would like us to release their information.

Part B: Physician Verification of Disability Form

This form must be completed by a licensed or certified professional familiar with the applicant’s disability. The professional can be either a Physician, Nurse, Occupational or Physical Therapist,

Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QMRP), Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP), Rehabilitation Counselor or an Independent Living Specialist. Ask the professional to complete the medical section of the Certification of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) CARE-A-VAN Eligibility and return it to you.

Contact Information:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| CARTA Care-A-Van Office | 423-698-9038 |
| Fax | 423-698-8555 |

Return the completed application to CARTA CARE-A-VAN, 1617 Wilcox Boulevard, Chattanooga, TN 37406 or by emailing CAVeligibility@gocarta.org.

The Application Process

Within twenty-one (21) days of receiving a completed application, CARTA CARE-A-VAN will contact the applicant to schedule an in-person interview to determine their eligibility. If the applicant is approved, they will receive an approval letter and obtain a CARTA CARE-A-VAN photo ID Card at the CARTA business office at 1617 Wilcox Blvd., Chattanooga, TN 37406.

If the application for CARTA CARE-A-VAN eligibility is denied, the applicant will receive a letter of denial with an explanation of specific reasons for the decision. The letter of denial will include instructions on filing an appeal. See the Appeals Process on Page 21.

If CARTA CARE-A-VAN has not made a determination of eligibility within twenty-one (21) days following the receipt of a completed application, the applicant will be treated as eligible and provided service until confirmation of approval or is determined to be ineligible for CARTA CARE-A-VAN service.

Photo Identification Cards

The photo ID card allows an applicant to schedule rides with CARTA CARE-A-VAN. Each rider is given a registration number that appears on the photo ID Card. The photo ID card must be presented to the driver along with the fare every time a rider boards the vehicle.* CARE-A-VAN identification cards are not transferable. CARTA CARE-A-VAN customers who allow another person to use their cards may be suspended from service.

The photo ID card will be wallet-sized, and will contain the following information:

1. Name of the eligible individual and ID number
2. Transportation Provider: CARTA CARE-A-VAN
3. Expiration date

* PLEASE NOTE: Your first photo ID card and trip to and from the photo session will be provided at no charge. For conditional customers, the photo ID also allows you to ride CARTA's fixed-route buses fare free. Replacement cards are available. The first one is free and then \$5.00 for each additional one.

Recertification

All CARTA CARE-A-VAN customers are required to recertify between 3-5 years. Recertification forms will be mailed well in advance in order to allow maximum time for riders to provide updated information from their health care providers. Please notify the CARTA CARE-A-VAN office if there are significant changes in your physical condition or location that may affect your Trip Category status.

PLEASE NOTE: Service cannot be provided to persons whose eligibility has expired. If you would like a continuation of service, please be sure to submit your recertification application as soon as possible.

CARTA Business Office Hours

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Monday-Friday | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. |
| Saturday | CLOSED |
| Sunday | CLOSED |

Telephones are Answered During the Following Hours

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Monday-Friday | 4:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. |
| Saturday | 4:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. |
| Sunday | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. |

PLEASE NOTE: These times are different from Trip Reservation hours. See Page 13 for the hours reservations are accepted.

After-Hours Reservation and Cancellation Procedure

If calling outside of regular scheduling hours, customers may submit trip requests or cancellations by leaving a message on the voicemail system.

PLEASE NOTE: This excludes next-day trips. This is for changes to future trips that are two (2) or more days away only.

The next available staff member will return your call to confirm your request. To ensure timely processing, please include your full name, desired trip date and time, and contact number.

Holidays

There will be no CARTA CARE-A-VAN service on the following holidays:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|
| New Year's Day | Easter Sunday | Labor Day |
| Memorial Day | Thanksgiving Day | |
| Fourth of July | Christmas Day | |

Holiday Reservation and Cancellation Procedure

On designated holidays when staff are unavailable, customers may submit trip requests or cancellations by leaving a message on the voicemail system. The next available staff member will return your call to confirm your request. To ensure timely processing, please include your full name, desired trip date and time, and contact number.

Fares and Payment Policy

Every CARTA CARE-A-VAN customer is required to pay a fare for each one-way trip payable with digital fare or in cash. All fares are subject to change. Riders paying with cash should have exact change. Please keep photo ID cards in a safe place. CARTA CARE-A-VAN is not responsible for lost or stolen tickets and will not replace or give credit for any lost or stolen tickets. CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers cannot accept cash gifts or tips from riders. Photo ID cards must be presented each time a customer boards the vehicle, along with fare.

FARES

- One-way within City of Chattanooga limits: \$3.00
- One-way to/from Red Bank or East Ridge: \$3.50

There is no charge for children under six (6) years of age and an approved Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Children between the age of six (6) and sixteen (16) years of age are \$0.50 per one-way trip. All additional adult non PCAs are required to pay the appropriate fee when transportation is rendered. All children under the age of four (4) years of age, traveling with a client must be in a client provided child restraint seat. When booking your trip you must inform CARTA CARE-A-VAN staff if additional passengers meeting the requirements above will be traveling with you.

Trip Eligibility

The eligibility for each trip request is determined by the scheduler or dispatcher based on information provided in your application. Factors such as weather, terrain and site accessibility are considered. Having a CARTA CARE-A-VAN photo ID card does not guarantee that your trip is CARTA CARE-A-VAN-eligible. Trips that may be adequately served by a CARTA fixed-route bus will be denied CARTA CARE-A-VAN-eligible status. CARTA CARE-A-VAN service may still be offered, however, if space is available.

Conditional / Unconditional Eligibility

In all cases, eligibility will be determined to be either “conditional” or “unconditional.” An individual with “conditional eligibility” is one who is approved for some trips or under certain conditions. An individual with “unconditional eligibility” is one who is approved for all trips.

Appeal Process for Eligibility and Policy Violations

An individual who wishes to appeal a decision of eligibility has sixty (60) days from the date of notice in which to submit a request to the CARTA CARE-A-VAN Appeals Committee. The committee will respond within thirty (30) days from submission of the appeal. If CARTA CARE-A-VAN has not made a decision within thirty (30) days after the hearing, temporary service will be provided. This temporary service will continue until a decision on the appeal is reached.

Customers who are suspended from use of CARTA CARE-A-VAN service due to violation of the No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation policy as defined above may appeal the determination within ten (10) days of the Notice of Suspension to the CARTA CARE-A-VAN Appeals Committee. The Committee will issue a decision in writing, or in the format required by the customer, within ten (10) days from submission of the appeal.

Appeals can be made in person, by telephone 423-698-9038 or fax to 423-698-8555, or in

writing to CARTA CARE-A-VAN, 1617 Wilcox Blvd., Chattanooga, TN 37406. Be sure to specify the reason for cancellation.

PLEASE NOTE: If a customer is waiting to be picked up at an accessible designated point where they may be contacted by CARTA CARE-A-VAN and has waited five (5) minutes past the end of the reservation window, they may leave without being penalized for a No-Show.

Service Procedures

Trip Reservations

All rides must be scheduled by calling CARTA CARE-A-VAN at 423-698-9038, Option 1. There are no restrictions on trip purpose.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), no trips can be given priority. Medical trips, work trips and recreational trips are of equal priority.

Trip reservations are accepted during normal business hours:

Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Before and after office hours and on holidays, trip requests and notices of cancellation may be left on voicemail for processing.

Currently, trip reservations are accepted fourteen (14) days in advance of the time the service is needed. We recommend all trips be scheduled as far in advance as possible. CARTA CARE-A-VAN does not offer same-day service.

To reserve a ride for a specific appointment time, be sure to:

- Allow enough time to get from the bus to your destination.
- Be aware of opening and closing times at your destination so you do not have to wait outside the building; your arrival may be as early as thirty (30) minutes before your appointment.

When scheduling a CARTA CARE-A-VAN trip, the following information is required:

- Name and Current Address
- Pick-Up Date and Time
- Pick-Up Address
- Destination Address

- Drop-off Time for Appointment
- Pick-up Time for Return Trip if Desired
- Number of Guests, if any
- Accompanying Personal Care Attendant (PCA) if applicable, and if assistance is needed beyond the curb.

A trip is defined beginning with the pick-up location and ending at the destination location. No individual or agency can request trips for several riders at one time.

Vehicles and Drivers

CARTA CARE-A-VAN service may be provided using a variety of vehicles. CARTA CARE-A-VAN reserves the right to determine whether services will be delivered using its own operators and vehicles or using operators and vehicles of other entities. You must ride in the vehicle that is sent for you. Special requests for specific vehicles and vehicle operators cannot be honored.

Reservation Timeframe

CARTA CARE-A-VAN may offer travel times one (1) hour before or one (1) hour after the requested travel time. At the time a reservation is made, the rider will be given a thirty (30) minute timeframe. The time you are given is called your “pickup window”. The pickup window is the time that the CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicle will arrive. For example: The pickup time is 9:15 a.m. The rider will be given a thirty (30)minute window from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

This means that the rider is to be present by 9:00 a.m. and ready to board the vehicle upon its arrival. Customers should wait where they can see the vehicle or where they can be seen by the driver. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers can only wait five (5) minutes upon arrival before proceeding on their route. A customer will be charged with a “No-Show” if the vehicle arrived to pick them up within their window and the customer was not ready to go within five (5) minutes.

Request For Reservation Changes

If you place a request for a reservation and call at a later date requesting a change in pickup time(s), date(s), place of origin or destination, this will be considered a new reservation request, and your original request will be cancelled.

No same day changes are allowed outside of the timeframes provided under No-Show/ Short-Notice Cancellation Policy for the timeframes.

Clients must ensure that CARTA CARE-A-VAN has their current phone number on file to allow the interactive voice response (IVR) system to recognize them and allow us to process requests and cancellations efficiently.

Standing Order Services

If you require service from the same origin, to the same destination, on the same day, at the same time of day at least three (3) times per week for a minimum period of ninety (90) days, you may place a request for standing order service. When a rider subscribes for service, his or her trip is scheduled automatically. Customers with a standing order need not call to schedule their trip but must call CARTA CARE-A-VAN at least ninety (90) minutes in advance, when possible, to cancel their ride. CARTA CARE-A-VAN will terminate any subscription service that is canceled 10 percent (10%) or more of the time during any thirty (30) day period, or if there is a consistent pattern of cancellations or no-shows of any part of a subscription.

PLEASE NOTE: The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act limit the number of customers who may be scheduled for standing order service.

Requests for standing order service status will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Riders who discontinue CARTA CARE-A-VAN service for a period of more than fourteen (14) calendar days will be removed from subscriber status and will be required to call for reservations as needed. Riders may reapply for a standing order service and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis according to space availability. Standing order service is assigned only to riders who use the service at the same time of the week from the same point of origin to the same destination. Subscribers may request a change in service for a maximum of three (3) times per month and retain their subscriber status. Subscribers may request a temporary change, of not more than fourteen (14) days' duration, in reservation time and/or destination. A change of more than fourteen (14) calendar days' duration will require a new request to be submitted to the CARTA CARE-A-VAN office. Subscribers who are suspended from use of CARTA CARE-A-VAN due to policy violations will forfeit their subscription service status. These riders may request subscription service when reinstated as a CARTA CARE-A-VAN customer.

No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy

To provide adequate service to all riders, it is very important that CARTA CARE-A-VAN receives cancellations in advance. Riders are asked, when possible, to call at least 24 hours prior to their pickup time. This allows reservations to be booked for others. The following No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy has been developed to control excessive cancellations or failure to

appear for the service that has been requested.

No-Show

If you have a reservation for transportation on CARTA CARE-A-VAN and fail to appear for the appointment, this will be classified as a No-Show. A doctor's appointment that runs over the expected pick-up time is not considered a No-Show, provided the customer or doctor's office notifies CARTA CARE-A-VAN.

Short-Notice Cancellation

A Short-Notice Cancellation is defined as providing fewer than ninety (90) minutes notice to CARTA CARE-A-VAN that the requested service will not be needed. This also includes "Cancelled Late" and "Cancelled at the Door" incidents. CARTA CARE-A-VAN will not penalize a rider for any No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation beyond the rider's control or due to CARTA CARE-A-VAN error.

Rules Regarding No-Shows

For the purpose of this policy, a Short-Notice Cancellation will be counted as a No-Show.

CARTA CARE-A-VAN will track scheduled trips, No-Shows, and Short-Notice Cancellations by rider. CARTA CARE-A-VAN will identify riders who have, within a thirty (30) day period, a No-Show or Short-Notice Cancellation which meets both of the following criteria:

1. No-Shows (including Short-Notice Cancellations) represent 10 percent (10%) or more of their scheduled trips; and
2. The rider has three (3) or more No-Shows.

Riders who meet the above criteria will be in violation of the No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy. Riders will not be penalized for No-Shows or Short-Notice Cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control or due to CARTA CARE-A-VAN error.

For example, if your medical appointment runs later than you anticipated, you will not be penalized.

The following progressive action will be taken to discourage violation of the No-Show/Short-Notice Cancellation Policy:

1. First No-Show within a thirty (30) day period – Receive a call about the issue.

2. Second No-Show within a thirty (30) day period – A second warning in the form of a letter is issued.
3. Third No-Show within a thirty (30) day period – Rider receives a seven (7) day suspension. This applies if you have three or more trips and 10% of them are a No-Show in a thirty (30) day period.
4. Fourth No-Show within a thirty (30) day period – Rider receives a fourteen (14) day suspension. This applies if you have three or more trips and 10% of them are a No-Show in a thirty (30) day period.
5. Fifth No Show results in a thirty (30) day suspension.

Reset Policy

After ninety (90) days without No Show violations, the time will reset to the First No-Show guideline and starts back over through the fifth (5th) No Show result.

No-Strand Policy

If a customer is transported to a location and the customer fails to board the vehicle at the scheduled return trip, CARTA CARE-A-VAN will provide a return home. Return service will be provided as soon as possible, but may be delayed due to weather, traffic and or scheduling. This policy covers no-show, misdirected and missed trips.

Exceptions:

- Customers who scheduled a one-way trip to a location and no return trip are not covered by this policy.
- Customers who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others are not covered by this policy.

Right of Appeal: Anyone affected by this policy is entitled to request an appeal.

Personal Care Attendants and Guests

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

A Personal Care Attendant is someone designated or employed specifically to assist the CARTA CARE-A-VAN-eligible individual in meeting their needs. CARTA CARE-A-VAN recognizes that a Personal Care Attendant is a mobility aid to the eligible customer. The Personal Care Attendant

must have the same origin and destination as the customer. In addition, CARTA CARE-A-VAN requires that space for the Personal Care Attendant must be reserved at the same time the customer reserves their ride. No fare is required for the Personal Care Attendant. CARTA CARE-A-VAN may recommend that a Personal Care Attendant or guest is with persons who repeatedly become ill or presents behavioral problems while riding in a CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicle.

If you require a Personal Care Attendant, please indicate that on PART-1 of the Eligibility Application. CARTA CARE-A-VAN permits one registered Personal Care Attendant to accompany the customer if the client has indicated on their application that a Personal Care Attendant is required or has since submitted documentation that a Personal Care Attendant is now required.

Guests

Customers who are CARTA CARE-A-VAN-eligible will be allowed to travel with at least one (1) guest, such as a friend or relative. The fare for the guest will be the same as the fare for the customer. Additional guests accompanying the customer will be allowed on a space available basis only.

PLEASE NOTE: CARTA CARE-A-VAN requires the customer to reserve a space for the guest when reserving their own ride. The companion must have the same trip origin and destination as the customer.

Transporting Wheelchairs and Mobility Aids

A wheelchair or mobility aid is any class of three (3) or more wheeled devices that are usable indoors and designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairment. Devices may be operated manually or powered.

All wheelchairs and mobility aids shall be transported and properly secured if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with safety requirements. Safety requirements include circumstances such as a wheelchair of such size that it would block an aisle or would be too large to fully enter a vehicle or would interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.

All wheelchair users must ride in designated securement areas only. Persons who are not wheelchair users but use other mobility aids will be allowed to use the lift mechanism provided that the mobility aid can be physically accommodated by the vehicle.

Forward vs. Backward

For safety reasons, passengers using mobility aids are encouraged to back onto the lift when boarding. However, passengers are not required to do so.

Non-ambulatory riders must be able to sit up without unusual restraints. CARTA CARE-A-VAN cannot transport any rider that is too ill to sit up and be secured in their seat, and/or nauseous, vomiting or bleeding, or who is secreting body waste that may be hazardous to health. The operator will notify the dispatcher of the rider's condition and then, if necessary, advise medical authorities of the rider's need for medical attention.

CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers are not permitted to assist with a wheelchair on unstable or unpaved surfaces, or to lift a passenger or a wheelchair at any time. Assistance will be provided on firm, stable surfaces such as asphalt, concrete or other all-weather material. Drivers may not assist customers on loose gravel surfaces. Ramps must have the most gradual slope practicable. CARTA CARE-A-VAN cannot risk injury to the rider or the driver by aiding on steep or unstable ramps. The maximum running slope is 1:12. The maximum rise for any ramp is thirty (30) inches, and the minimum clear width of the ramp is thirty-six (36) inches.

CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers are not trained to provide mechanical assistance if a rider's wheelchair malfunctions. If the wheelchair is easier to move with the clutch disengaged, the rider should provide the driver with that information as well as instructions for performing the disengagement. Drivers are not permitted to assist with a malfunctioning wheelchair that is extremely heavy and/or difficult to maneuver. The rider should have available the name and telephone number of the repair person or other assistant to call in the event of breakdown. The driver will radio Dispatch to have the call placed for the rider.

Mobility Aid Securement

Mobility aids must be properly secured whenever possible. Drivers will use their best efforts to correctly use the appropriate number of securement points. If the mobility device does not exceed the size and weight limitations for CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles, service will not be denied because the mobility device cannot be secured to the operator's satisfaction, either due to the awkward position of the securement points or the design of the mobility device. The driver will inform the passenger that the wheelchair cannot be secured properly and notify Dispatch. The safety of all passengers is a primary concern.

Service Animals

Customers may travel with service animals trained to assist them. Service animal means any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or fetching dropped items. The customer must inform the scheduler or dispatcher that they are traveling with a service animal when they make their trip booking. Pets (non-service animals) cannot be carried on CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles.

Other Medical Equipment

Customers may travel with portable oxygen or other equipment, provided that the equipment does not violate applicable Department of Transportation rules concerning transportation of hazardous materials. Equipment used in conjunction with a mobility aid should be mounted on the mobility device in a way that does not prevent proper securement of the mobility aid.

On-Board Policies

CARTA CARE-A-VAN strives to provide the most efficient and pleasant transportation possible.

When riding CARTA CARE-A-VAN, please observe the following rules:

- Profanity or abusive language/conduct will not be permitted on the CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles, or when communicating with CARTA CARE-A-VAN staff.
- Weapons of any type will not be allowed on CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles.
- Electronic equipment such as radios and music players must be equipped with headphones when used on CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or using other tobacco products will not be allowed on the CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles. (Medical exceptions may be made to the no-eating rule with appropriate documentation from a physician.)
- Liquids or foods to be consumed when off the vehicle must be in a spill-proof container. Liquids must be in a container with a tight-fitting lid that will not leak if turned upside-down, and food must be in a closed container that will not drip or spill and be in a bag sufficient to contain an accidental spill.
- Bringing on-board non-collapsible strollers, baby buggies, walkers or carts which block the aisle and restrict the free movement of passengers is prohibited. All items must be removed and the device collapsed and placed under or between seats. If the device can fit safely and securely between the seats and out of the aisle, then items may remain loaded.

- Remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.
- Cell phones may be used but keep your conversation short and at a low volume in consideration of other customers and the driver.

Boarding and Exiting the Van

Drivers shall position the vehicle to make boarding as easy as possible for everyone and be available at the vehicle door to aid when boarding or de-boarding, as needed. All passengers must enter or leave the vehicle at the curbside, even on one-way streets. Passengers have the right to determine how they will board (i.e., which way they will face) and boarding direction.

Use of Lifts

Upon request, operators will allow passengers who do not use a mobility aid to use the vehicle's lift or ramp to enter or exit the vehicle.

Assistance

CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers are not required to carry packages for customers. Passengers should only board with the amount of packages they can carry safely themselves.

Please keep in mind that the driver has other customers who need to reach their appointments on time.

Door-to-door assistance is available upon request and should be requested when scheduling trips. Riders may request this service when scheduling trips by either adding a permanent note to their customer profile or requesting it on a trip-by-trip. The driver will assist passengers on and off the vehicle, to or from the door or waiting area where the rider boards and gets off the vehicle and will lend a steady arm and provide directions for the customer.

However, there will be some locations and/or situations where the driver cannot leave the vehicle. If you are able to wait at the curb or a designated location, please do so whenever possible. Your driver will provide assistance beyond the curb upon request but cannot enter your private residence.

Packages

Because the vehicle will be shared, customers must limit their packages to what they can safely

carry on board. Customers are allowed to bring on board only what they can carry in one load. Once on board, the carry-on items must fit within a certain space either on your lap or in front of your area. Drivers are not allowed to get on and off the vehicle to load packages.

Transporting Children

Children traveling as companions or personal care attendants, who are under the age of six (6) or weigh less than sixty (60) pounds, are required by law to use a child safety seat or other safety restraint system. You are responsible for providing such safety equipment and for securing it and the child in CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles.

Illegal or Disruptive Conduct

Service will be suspended or refused to customers who engage in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct. The severity of the incident will determine whether an individual is suspended temporarily or permanently. For example, a person whose behavior threatens or has threatened the safety of CARTA CARE-A-VAN personnel or other customers may be refused service (permanent revocation of eligibility). An individual who contests a refusal of CARTA CARE-A-VAN service may appeal the decision through the Appeals Process (Please see page 12).

Pick-up/ Drop-off Policies

The following general policies apply:

- Drivers will only wait five (5) minutes upon arrival before proceeding on their route. A customer will be charged with a “No-Show” if the vehicle arrived to pick them up within the pick-up window and the customer was not ready to go within five (5) minutes.
- CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles do not enter private driveways.
- Riders must be waiting at the sidewalk, or at another safe waiting area in front of, or as close as possible to, the entrance of the pick-up location. Drivers will wait for a rider at the curb of a public street, in front of, or as close as possible to, the rider’s residence, a building or other designated pick-up location.
- Alley pick-ups and drop-offs may be allowed when safe and accessible as determined by CARTA CARE-A-VAN.
- Upon request, the driver may provide assistance between the vehicle and the door, as long as the driver is able to keep the vehicle in sight.
- Time constraints limit the driver’s ability to assist you beyond the front entrance of your destination. If your destination is a large building or expansive complex, it might be best to have a companion or personal care attendant accompany you to provide assistance.

- Drivers will not enter your home other than assisting in or out of the door threshold. If the operator feels there is an emergency, they will radio the dispatcher for assistance.
- For drop-offs, the driver will drop the rider off at the sidewalk, or another safe waiting area next to the curb, or a public street in front of, or as close as possible to the designated drop-off location. If a rider cannot be left unattended (because of his or her disability or impairment), a guest or Personal Care Attendant is required to receive the passenger upon the vehicle's arrival.

Miscellaneous Policies

- CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles cannot enter areas where there are inadequate roadways, insufficient clearance or similar circumstances which may result in damage to the vehicle or personal injury.
- CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers are not permitted to enter a rider's home at any time.
- CARTA CARE-A-VAN drivers cannot accept cash gifts or tips from riders.
- Customers are asked to maintain control of their service animal or otherwise confine them on the premises while being served by CARTA CARE-A-VAN. CARTA CARE-A-VAN reserves the right to refuse service to customers who choose not to abide by this policy.

Lost Articles

Articles found on CARTA CARE-A-VAN vehicles will be reported immediately and turned into the front office at 1617 Wilcox Blvd., Chattanooga, TN 37406, after the driver's shift. Persons claiming lost items should identify the item to the CARTA CARE-A-VAN driver or call the CARTA business office with the description of the item. All lost and found items will be disposed of after thirty (30) days.

Discrimination and Harassment

CARTA CARE-A-VAN customers shall not engage in conduct that discriminates against someone or harasses someone because of that person's race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran's status or any other status protected by state or federal law. Customers should be respectful of the rights of other customers and of the driver.

Sexual discrimination/harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a CARTA CARE-A-VAN customer. This includes telling "dirty jokes" and other conversations which might be considered offensive to the CARTA CARE-A-VAN driver and other riders who are in hearing range. Racial discrimination is

defined as any derogatory acts, remarks or references to ethnic background or behavior toward other riders or the CARTA CARE-A-VAN driver which might have a discriminatory impact. Discriminatory conduct is also defined as the use of racial slurs and jokes because of someone's protected status. If you have any questions about these prohibitions, please contact the CARTA CARE-A-VAN specialized services manager.

You are a Valued Customer

Service is foremost in the minds of our drivers, schedulers, dispatchers and customer service team. CARTA CARE-A-VAN employees will always treat you with courtesy and respect. Our goal is to provide you with dependable service. We ask that you assist us by abiding by the rules and regulations contained in this document.

Violation of CARTA CARE-A-VAN policies may result in suspension of service.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. You may write to CARTA CARE-A-VAN at 1617 Wilcox Blvd., Chattanooga, TN 37406 or call us at (423) 698-9038, any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Updated information may be found on our website at www.GoCARTA.org.