



# Michigan City Transit

## Para – Transit Policy

Michigan City's Complimentary ADA Service

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Michigan City Transit is a team of transportation professionals committed to providing high-quality public transportation and paratransit services to the citizens of Michigan City in a safe, dependable and courteous manner.

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

Safety First and Always

Accountability

Mutual Respect

Integrity

Respect for the Community We Serve

## **OUR GOAL**

Meet or Exceed your Expectations Every Time, Every Ride.

## **ADA Paratransit**

ADA Paratransit is a service provided only to individuals with disabilities who are unable to ride accessible fixed-route public bus service because of their disability. ADA Paratransit service is designed to ensure that the Civil Rights of these individuals are guaranteed as protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). ADA Paratransit is comparable to the fixed route bus service in Michigan City in terms of service area, days and hours of service, fares and response time as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and subsequent rulings of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

## **Eligibility**

Persons with disabilities, who are unable to ride accessible fixed-route bus service because their disability prevents it, are eligible for ADA Paratransit certification. Eligible individuals will fall under one of these below listed three major categories.

1. Individuals who are unable to “navigate” to the fixed-route system. For example, someone who is blind and has not learned to ride fixed-route transit, or someone with severe cognitive disabilities who cannot learn to ride fixed-route transit.
2. Individuals who are unable to get to the bus stop, wait for a bus, or use the accessible buses. For example, someone who has extreme fatigue and can’t walk the distance to the bus stop.
3. Individuals who use wheelchairs would not automatically qualify for ADA Paratransit, since the fixed-route buses are accessible. Exceptions can occur on the days when the wheelchair lift is not functioning, or if the path between the individual’s home and the nearest bus stop has environmental barriers that prevent them from getting to the stop, such as sidewalks without curbs cuts, or sidewalks under construction, or winter weather conditions.

Both temporary and permanent conditions may qualify an individual for ADA Paratransit services.

Passengers must be certified as ADA Paratransit-eligible before ADA Paratransit service can be scheduled, with the exception of visitors who have been certified as ADA Paratransit-eligible with other fixed-route transit systems and can provide proof of certification. These individuals are eligible for temporary visitor status and do not need to be recertified by the Michigan City Transit Department provided they do not intend to use the service for more than 30 days in a calendar year.

## **How to Apply for ADA Paratransit Certification**

To register for ADA Paratransit, an application must be completed and approved by the Transit Department Director. Applications are available at the Michigan City Transit Department, 1801 Kentucky Street Michigan City, Indiana 46360, by calling 219.873.1502 and one will be mailed, or by going to [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com) and clicking onto the Transit Department link. Application requests information about the nature, extent, functional effect, and duration of the disability. Professional certification is also required. The physician, caseworker or other professional familiar with the disability and functional abilities must complete this part of the application.

Once the completed application is submitted, the Department Director will evaluate the application, make a determination. Written confirmation of the decision will be sent within 21 calendar days.

For those applications not processed within 21 days of receipt. The applicant has presumptive eligibility to schedule and use paratransit service beginning on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day until such time that a written determination is issued.

If application is granted the passenger will be issued an ADA Paratransit Eligibility Card and will be able to immediately schedule service.

If your application is denied, given conditional or temporary eligibility, applicant has the right to appeal.

### **How to Appeal if the Application for ADA Paratransit is Denied**

Applicant who are denied eligibility are given a written notice with specific reasons for the decision and notice of their right to appeal.

Denied applicants have 60 days to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Michigan City Central Services, 1801 Kentucky Street Michigan City, IN 46360.

The Superintendent of Central Services will have 30 days to review the case and make a determination. All decisions made by the Superintendent of Central Services are final.

If a decision is not made within 30 days of completing the appeal process, transportation is provided until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

The hours of operation for ADA Paratransit are Monday-Friday, 6:30 am-6:00 pm and Saturday 8:30 am-6:00 pm. Michigan City Transit fixed-route or ADA Paratransit does not operate on Sunday or the below listed holidays:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
Memorial Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Eve

For specific date of these holidays during the current year, please call the Michigan City Transit Office at 219.873.1502.

## **Emergency Trips**

Michigan City Transit understands that last minute issues arise that may necessitate an emergency trip. Should an ADA Paratransit need a trip scheduled outside the normal reservation parameters they should call the office and explain the need. If there is an available opening in the schedule the Transit Department Director can authorize the trip. No trips will be authorized with-in Two hours of the needed trip.

## **Late Policy**

In order to provide service to as many people as possible, it is essential that all passengers be ready at their appointment time. Passengers who are not ready for the scheduled pick-up time cause the driver to fall behind schedule and inconvenience other passengers. Therefore, there is a fifteen-minute limit to the amount of time the ADA Paratransit Operator will wait for a late passenger.

It is the passenger's responsibility to be ready and waiting at their door, or curb, if they are able, by their scheduled pick-up time. If the passenger is not ready and at the door within fifteen-minutes of the scheduled pick-up time, and has not called the Transit Office to reschedule or cancel the trip, the operator will notify the dispatcher and depart for the next pick-up, and the late passenger will be considered a "No-show." On occasion MC operator may arrive early for pick up due to logistic. The fifteen-minutes are applicable only from schedule pickup time.

## **"No-show" Policy**

From time to time, it may be necessary for a scheduled passenger to cancel a trip for unexpected circumstances beyond their control. Last minute cancellations or "No-shows" are detrimental to the efficient and effective operations of the demand-response transportation system. They waste resources that could be used to provide transportation to others. Michigan City Transit has instituted a "No-show" policy to prevent and remedy abuse.

## **What constitutes a "No-show?"**

If a passenger is unable to make his or her scheduled trip and does not call the Michigan City Transit Office to cancel the trip before 2 hours prior to the scheduled trip, the trip will be considered a "no-show." Passengers who are not ready by their scheduled pick-up time may also be considered a "no-show" if they are more than fifteen minutes late; the driver may leave

and contact the Dispatcher for documenting and tracking patterns of abuse. Only "no show" that are under the passengers control will be counted against the passenger. Family and

medical emergency, environmental barrier, and schedule error will not be counted against the passenger. Michigan City Transit will consider as a rule of measurement the frequency of the rider, in determining a pattern of abuse.

### **Consequences for “No-shows.”**

A “No-show” has the following consequences:

1. First Offense:           Written reminder of the “no-show” rules.
2. Second Offense:       Warning letter issued by Department Director
3. Third Offense:         Written letter illustrating a pattern of abuse and The Transit Department intent to suspend service if pattern continues.
  
4. Fourth Offense:       Suspension of service for 30 days.

An offense will be dropped if a subsequent offense does not occur within 30 days of the preceding offense.

### **Appeals Process for “No Shows”**

The passenger may appeal any of the above four actions if he or she feels a “no-show” occurred because of unexpected circumstances beyond his or her control. Written appeals should be addressed to the Michigan City Transit Director within ten (15) days of notification of the offense. Michigan City Transit Director and Central Service Superintendent will review and respond in writing within 5 days.

### **Definition of Trip Denial**

The Michigan City Transit Department has a negotiated pickup time with ADA eligible Passenger with a one hour plus+/minus- window. If the passenger cannot schedule a ride, that is no more than one hour before or after the desired departing time, that must be tracked as a trip denial. If only one leg of a round trip can be reserved, and the rider declines the trip it must be tracked as two denials. If a rider accepts a trip outside of the one hour perimeter it is documented as a trip denial. On return trips demand response service we must accommodate pickup within one hour. If unable to able to accommodate in the one hour window it is a trip denial. If the rider refuses an alternated time that is within the one hour window, it is not a trip denial for the purposes of ADA compliance.

## **Fare Policy**

The fare for an ADA Paratransit trip is \$2.00 each way.

A registered Personal Care Attendant may accompany their client at no additional charge. One other additional companion may accompany the individual with prior notice to the Michigan City Transit Office for \$2.00 each way.

## **Passenger Assistance Policy**

All Michigan City Transit Operators are trained in passenger assistance techniques and will provide passenger assistance, if requested, in boarding and disembarking the vehicle and to the first doorway of passenger's destination. Passenger assistance may include guiding the passenger to the vehicle, lending a steady arm for balance in boarding the vehicle, finding a seat or securing a wheelchair.

However, ADA Paratransit drivers will not provide assistance that involves bearing weight, including lifting and carrying passengers or their possessions. The driver may refuse service if the passenger cannot safely travel to and from the vehicle without the driver lifting or carrying the passenger. Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling should arrange for a Personal Care Attendant to accompany and assist them. ADA Paratransit does not provide Personal Care Attendants. When service is first provided to a new passenger a supervisor may be present to assess assistance needs of the new passenger.

ADA Paratransit operators will not enter passenger's homes. For the safety and protection of both drivers and passenger, it is against our policy to provide this type of assistance.

ADA Paratransit is not a delivery service. Passengers are responsible for carrying their own belongings. Packages must be held in lap or under the seat. You are only allowed to carry on-board what can be carried on with one trip onto the vehicle.

## **Personal Care Attendant Policy**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help an individual with a disability meet his or her personal needs in daily living activities. A PCA may accompany the ADA Passenger free of charge.

Individuals who need extensive assistance in traveling (beyond that which the ADA Paratransit driver can provide), including lifting, carrying, support during the ride, and behavior control, must arrange for a PCA to accompany and assist them. ADA Paratransit does not provide PCA's. It is strongly recommended that a person who requires the use of a PCA always travel with their PCA since operators cannot provide assistance beyond which is described in the previous section.

## **Policy of Portable Breathing Aids**

Portable oxygen supplies and respirators are permitted on board ADA Paratransit with proper notification. Oxygen tanks must be secured so they do not move during transport. Information about the use of this equipment must be provided to the scheduler when scheduling service.

## **Passenger Securement Policy**

### **Wheelchairs**

All standard wheelchairs will be accommodated. Michigan City Transit ability to accommodate the wheelchair will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All wheelchairs must be secured to the vehicle in the designated area. The driver will provide assistance in securing the wheelchair.

Wheelchairs that cannot be properly secured (i.e. three-wheeled scooter) will be accommodated so long as they meet the size and weight restrictions in the securement area.

An individual using a wheelchair may transfer to a regular seat on the vehicle so long as they are able to accomplish the transfer independently or with the assistance of a PCA. Operators will not lift passengers.

### **Seatbelts**

Michigan City Transit strongly recommends that all passengers wear seatbelts in vehicles equipped with them. Persons using wheelchairs should be secured to their chairs in addition to having their wheelchairs secured to the vehicle. The driver will provide assistance in fastening seatbelts upon request.

### **Child Safety Seats**

All children less than 6 years of age or 40 pounds in weight must be secured in a child safety seat. Michigan City Transit does not provide child safety seats.

## **Lift Use Policy**

Michigan City Transit recommends that persons who wish to use the lift to board do so when seated in a wheelchair. However, persons who do not use wheelchair that wish to use the lift may do upon request at boarding.

## **Service Animals and Pets**

Service animals are welcome aboard Michigan City Transit vehicles. A service animal is any guide dog, or other animal trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Service animals are not pets. They are working animals that are specially trained to provide assistance. To travel on a Michigan City Transit vehicle, a service animal must:

- Be under its person's control and behave appropriately
- Remain at its person's feet or on their lap, but may not sit on a vehicle seat
- Not show aggressive tendencies towards people or other animals

Under control and well behaved are the defining characteristics. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. In addition, customers traveling with animals are subject to the same general rules that apply to all passengers; i.e., any damage or soiling caused by the animal is the responsibility of the customer. If an animal is not under control or if its behavior is disruptive or menacing, Michigan City Transit can refuse service or ask the person and animal to exit the vehicle. Service animals must be kept under physical restraint by the owner at all times. Service animals that are disruptive, threatening or intimidating will be handled in a case-by-case discipline process.

Because of the small size of the mini-buses, other pets are not allowed on ADA Paratransit vehicles.

## **Visitor Policy**

Out-of-Town visitors will be eligible for ADA Paratransit if they are eligible to use the ADA Paratransit provided by their home system. Visitors must provide proof of residence outside of Michigan City, Indiana, and ADA Paratransit certification from their home system. Visitor may begin utilizing paratransit services immediately upon verification of claim. If a visitor's home system does not provide ADA Paratransit certification, other documentation is required to justify the individual's claim to eligibility (such as a doctor's letter). Visitors will be provided only 30 days of ADA Paratransit service per calendar year. Individuals intending to use the service for more than 30 days a calendar year will be required to apply for certification.

## **How to Schedule a Trip**

Call the Michigan City Transit Department during normal office hours, M-F 7:00am-3:30pm, Sat. 8:30 am-5:30 pm, at 219.873.1502. The appointment must be for at least 1day prior to scheduled time of pick up appointment. Return trip do not have to be scheduled. Michigan City offers a return trip demand response service. When the passenger is ready for pick-up, call the office/dispatcher and request pick-up service. The response time is within 1 hour of request. The dispatcher will give an estimated time of arrival. Passenger is required to be ready at estimated time of arrival. The 15 minute "no show policy is applicable. Only passengers schedule on the daily manifest can utilize the return trip demand response service.

Hearing impaired customers can use Indiana TDD Relay System by dialing 711 to schedule a trip.

It is strongly recommended that customers call to schedule trips during office hours and not placing request on the department's voice mail. However, passenger wishing to travel on Mondays can leave a voice message on Sunday's by indicated the name, date, time and pick up location. We are closed on Sunday's; we will confirm your appointment on Monday morning at 6:30am.

## **What information the Scheduler will need**

1. The fact that an ADA Paratransit trip is being scheduled.
2. The Name
3. The daytime telephone number and a telephone number that can be reached at least 60 minutes prior to travel time.
4. The requested date of travel.
5. The requested time of travel.
6. Where is the pickup location
7. What is the destination and required arrival time, if required?
8. The time needed for a return trip, if required. This must be scheduled.
9. Special assistance needed or other considerations (for example use of a wheelchair, oxygen, PCA etc.)

The scheduler will schedule the trip. If the pick-up or drop-off locations or travel times do not fall within the ADA Paratransit service area or days and hours of service, the trip will not be scheduled.

## **How to Cancel a Trip**

The scheduled trip must be canceled no later than 2 hours prior to scheduled trip. To cancel a trip call 219.873.1502.

**How to Pay the Fare**

When boarding the vehicle each time the passenger must pay the fare in exact change or by tickets/pass. The fare is \$2.00 each way.

**How to file a Complaint**

Passenger suggestion, complaint and comment forms are located on every Transit Department vehicle, on-line at [emichigancity.com/transit](http://emichigancity.com/transit), or by calling 219.873.1502 during normal office hours.

**PASSENGER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES****The passenger has the right to:**

1. Safe comfortable and courteous service.
2. On-time service as scheduled by the Scheduler. Michigan City Transit has negotiated a 15 min. (-15/+15) window for scheduled pickup time. Example; if your appointment is 7am, your pick up may be from 6:45am – 7:15am.
3. Information presented in an appropriate format.
4. Appeal any actions that result in a denial of service.

**The Passenger had the responsibility to:**

1. Be ready for the operator at the scheduled time.
2. Inform the Scheduler of any special assistance needs.
3. Cancel by 2 hours prior to scheduled trip.
4. Inform Michigan City Transit of any service problems (exemplary service).

