

VITRAN PLUS
ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE RIDE GUIDE

St. Croix
St. Thomas
St. John



United States Virgin Islands
Department of Public Works
Division of Transportation
VITRAN Virgin Islands Transit Agency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?</u>	4
<u>WHAT IS VITRAN PLUS PARATRANSIT?</u>	4
Riding VITRAN Plus Paratransit	5
Origin-to-Destination (Curb-to-Curb Service)	5
Door-to-Door Service	5
Policies regarding door-to-door service.....	6
Types of Services.....	6
Hours of Operations.....	7
Certification Process.....	7
Eligibility Criteria	7
Who is Eligible for Paratransit Service?	7
Temporary Disabilities	8
How do I apply for VITRAN Plus Paratransit Service?.....	9
If I am denied ADA eligibility, can I appeal?.....	9
Recertification of Eligibility	10
Replacement of lost Cards	10
How should I schedule a trip?.....	10
Reservation Service Telephone Numbers.....	11
Can I change my trip on the day of the reservation?	12
Subscription Services.....	12
Destinations	12
Trip Cancellations.....	12
One (1) Hour Negotiation Rule	12
Thirty (30) Minute Window	12
Five (5) Minute Rule.....	13
No-Show and Late Cancellation Penalties.....	13
Purpose for Establishing a No-Show Policy.....	13
No-Show Notifications and Penalties	14
Appeal of Suspension	14
What if my ride is late?.....	15
Coupons	15
Updated Information.....	15
Personal Care Attendant	15
Companions	16
Children	16
Service Animals.....	17
Driver Assistance.....	17
Boarding Wheelchair and Other Mobility Devices	17
Visitors.....	18

Reasonable Accommodation 18
Public Health Threats..... 19
Discrimination Complaint..... 19
Carry-On Bag..... 20
Lost & Found 20
Rider Rules & Responsibilities..... 20
Driver Responsibilities 21
Commendations, Complaints, or Questions 22
Definitions and Terms 24

How to Use This Guide?

Welcome to VITRAN, this Ride Guide provides brief information about VITRAN Plus Paratransit service. It explains how to become eligible to use the Paratransit service, where Paratransit operates, the days and hours of service, how to request a ride, fares, and other important information. If you still have questions after reading this Ride Guide, you can call:

St. Croix at (340) 773-1290 Ext. 2238

St. Thomas at (340) 774-5678

St. John at (340) 774-0165

Relay Service 1800-809-8477 or 711

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities. To be protected by the ADA, an individual must have a disability or have a relationship or association with an individual with a disability. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered.

ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE INFORMATION

What is VITRAN Plus Paratransit?

VITRAN Plus Paratransit is a shared-ride, door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation service that is provided to people with disabilities who are unable, or have limited ability because of their disability, to use the fixed-route bus service.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies to provide ADA complementary paratransit service to eligible people with disabilities that is comparable to its fixed-route service. ADA paratransit service is designed to be “comparable to” (similar to) fixed route bus service, operating in the same areas and during the same days and hours.

ADA paratransit service is only required to transport riders to and from locations that are within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile of existing local fixed routes.

ADA paratransit service is comparable to fixed-route service in several ways. ADA service:

- Is a shared-ride public transportation service. The bus may pick up or drop off other customers while on route to your destination.
- Is offered at the same times and in the same location as the regular fixed-route service. If there is no fixed-route service, there is no comparable ADA service.

- Offers comparable travel times to fixed-route service, including the time it would take to transfer and get to/from bus stops.
- Cannot restrict trip purpose.
- May drop passengers off early so that they are on time for an appointment. As when using the bus, a passenger may need to arrive up to an hour early or risk being late.
- Provides the same level of driver oversight of passengers as fixed-route bus service. Drivers on either the bus or paratransit are required to drive safely and ensure that passengers are not disruptive or harmful to other passengers. Drivers are not required to provide custodial care or to wait with individuals once they arrive at their destination if a building isn't open or someone isn't there to meet them.

VITRAN Plus will accommodate customers with mobility devices as long as the lift or ramp can accommodate the size and weight of the customer and his/her mobility device, and the device and customer can fit onto the vehicle. VITRAN Plus will not be able to accommodate customers and their mobility devices if the combined size and/or weight exceed the capabilities of the vehicle equipment. All securement devices on vehicles in VITRAN Plus ADA service are installed for passengers to be facing forward.

RIDING VITRAN PLUS PARATRANSIT

Origin-to-Destination (Curb-to-Curb Service)

The Department of Transportation's ADA regulation provides that complementary paratransit service for ADA paratransit eligible persons shall be "origin-to-destination" service. Within the service area, you will be picked up at the nearest and safest point next to the curbside fronting the public street address you requested. You will be dropped off at the nearest and safest point next to the curbside of your destination address within the service area.

Door-to-Door Service

VITRAN provides door-to-door service comparable to the fixed route; VITRAN's customer assistance is restricted to door-to-door, which is defined from the main entrance of a building at the pick-up and drop-off locations on the ground level. Customers must be ready and waiting at their residence or pick-up location.

Drivers will assist with wheelchairs over one (1) curb, step or threshold and up sturdy, safe, and accessible wheelchair ramps. Drivers will not place the vehicle in any area that may damage the vehicle or create an unsafe passenger situation.

Policies regarding door-to-door service are:

- Drivers must be able to find a safe place to park; the parked vehicle must not block or impede traffic. Alley pick-ups and drop-offs are not allowed.
- Drivers must be able to maintain sight of vehicle. In other words, if the driver cannot see his or her vehicle from the door of the pick-up location, door-to-door service will not be provided.
- Under no circumstances will drivers enter residences or other pick-up or drop-off locations.
- Drivers will identify themselves by name and will verify the drop-off location with the customer.
- Drivers will provide no assistance up or down steps for persons in wheelchairs or push them up or down excessively steep ramps (as defined by ADA Guidelines).
- If a rider cannot be left unattended at the destination location (as a result of his or her disability or impairment), a companion or personal care attendant is required to receive the passenger upon the vehicle's arrival.
- If VITRAN Plus Paratransit cannot provide door-to-door service for operational reasons, 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.
- There must be a safe, accessible path of travel from the customer's door to the vehicle in order for door-to-door service to be provided.

Types of Services:

VITRAN Plus offers two types of services:

- **Demand Response Services** is a request for a trip. There are no restrictions on the purpose of the trip.
- **Subscription Service** is a request for rides to and from the same place at the same time more than once a week, or on a regular basis. If you are placed on subscription service, you only have to call when you **will not ride**, such as when you are ill or leaving on vacation. If the day, time, or place changes, please cancel your subscription rides and request a new subscription service.

Hours of Operation

VITRAN mirrors the hours of operation of the fixed route service.

What is Fixed Route Service? VITRAN's fixed route system consist of regular bus service that operates on established routes, days, and scheduled times on each island

HOURS OF OPERATION	
Monday through Friday	
St. Croix	5:30 AM to 8:45 PM
St. Thomas	5:00 AM to 8:45 PM
St. John	4:30 AM to 8:45 PM

Holiday Service

VITRAN Plus Paratransit provide service on:

- Transfer Day
- Holy Thursday
- Easter Monday
- Emancipation Day
- Labor day (St. John)
- Liberty Day
- Christmas Second day
- Election Day

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Eligibility Criteria

Who is Eligible for Paratransit Service?

The ADA regulations provide that a person may be eligible for Paratransit services under one of the following three categories:

1. Unconditional Eligibility- The first category of eligibility includes those persons who are unable to use fully accessible fixed route bus services. Included in this category is:

“Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.” [Section 37.123(e) (1) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who cannot independently negotiate the fixed route bus system (board, ride or disembark from a bus or trolley).

2. Conditional Eligibility– This second category of eligibility applies to persons who could use accessible fixed route transportation services if it were available. Included in this category is:

“Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance, to board, ride and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities if the individual wants to travel on a route on the system during the hours of operation of the system at a time, or within a reasonable period of such time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route.” [Code Section 37.123(e)(2)]

It is important to remember that eligibility for complementary paratransit service under Category 2 is ‘route based, not system based’ and in those instances where ‘the lift (or ramp) on a vehicle cannot be deployed at a particular bus stop, an individual is eligible for paratransit under this category with respect to the service to the inaccessible stop.’

3. Temporary Eligibility -The third category of eligibility includes:

“Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.” [Section 37.123(e) (3) of the ADA regulations]

This applies to an individual who, because of his/her disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed route bus and cannot access his/her final destination after disembarking from a fixed route bus. Two important qualifiers to this category are included in the regulations. First, environmental conditions and architectural barriers not under the control of the public entity do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. Second, inconvenience in using the fixed route bus system is not a basis for eligibility. Eligibility is determined on a trip-by-trip basis for conditionally eligible customers.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to customers who have a non-permanent disability that prevents them from using VITRAN’s Fixed bus system. Eligibility will be provided for the

expected duration of the disability, e.g., for the time expected to recover from a temporary impairment, or as a transitional period under specific circumstances. Customers must notify Paratransit if additional time is needed.

Eligibility is good for **three (3) years**, unless temporary eligibility is given. The eligibility date will be noted in the eligibility letter.

How Do I Apply for VITRAN Plus Paratransit Service?

You might request an application for ADA Paratransit service by calling the Paratransit ADA Office at (340) 773-1290 Ext. 2231 or 2254 and ask that the application be mailed, emailed, or faxed to you. You may also pick up an application in person from the Department of Public Works' at the Paratransit ADA Office on St. Croix. If you are on St. Thomas you can pick up an application at VITRAN Office locate in 3016 Estate Contant, on St. John at the Department of Public Works #6 Susannaberg. Please indicate if you need the application in an accessible format or in a foreign language.

As the applicant, complete Part A of the application, all questions must be answered completely, and the form must be signed by the applicant, representative or guardian. **If the form is missing information and/or is not signed it will be considered incomplete and it will be returned to the applicant.** Ask the licensed or certified professional most familiar with the limitations imposed by your disability to complete Part B of the application.

Once the application has been completed in its entirety, hold onto the application and call the Paratransit ADA Office at (340) 773-1290 Ext.2231 or 2254 to schedule an in-person application interview. If you need transportation to and from the interview, just ask when you make your appointment and transportation will be provided free of charge.

Also, if an in-person application interview has not been scheduled within three (3) months of the date of signage by the licensed/certified health care professional, the application will become invalid. The Paratransit ADA Office has 21 calendar days to approve or disapprove an application. If this process is not completed within 21 days, in compliance with ADA Sec 37.125 (c), the applicant is presumed eligible and may use paratransit service until a decision is made. The applicant will be notified of the final decision in writing.

Once the certification process is completed, eligibility determination letters will be sent to the applicant, which will document whether the applicant is ADA paratransit eligible. This documentation will include the name of the eligible individual, the name of the transit provider, the telephone number of the paratransit ADA Compliance Officer, and expiration date for eligibility (if applicable), and any conditions or limitations on the individual's eligibility, including the use of a personal attendant. The eligibility determination letter will also include information about the appeal process.

To download an application online go to vitranvi.com.

If I am denied ADA eligibility, can I appeal?

If you are denied eligibility, we will automatically provide you with an appeal request form. You will need to complete a form within 60 days of the denial and describe why you believe you are eligible. After we receive your appeal request form, we will notify you about the time and location of your hearing. You are strongly encouraged to attend the appeal hearing, but you are not required to participate. If you attend, you may bring a representative with you to assist in presenting your appeal. The appeal hearing is informal and not a legal proceeding.

You can either Mail or Email the Appeal form to:

ADA Office, Division of Transportation
6002 Estate Anna's Hope
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4422
constancia.hodge@dpw.vi.gov

Recertification of Eligibility

Each Paratransit customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. Recertification may also become necessary from time to time if the condition of the disability changes or if the terms governing the program change. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. A customer's Paratransit ID Card will indicate his/her paratransit eligibility expiration date. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for services prior to his or her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew paratransit eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the certification process.

NOTE: There is no cost for processing the application.

Additional Eligibility

Once you are certified as eligible to utilize VITRAN Plus Complementary Paratransit service, you are also eligible to receive ADA Complementary Paratransit service in other cities and states. ADA Complementary Paratransit eligible individuals are responsible for contacting the transit agency in the city in which he/she is planning to travel. VITRAN suggest that you contact that transit agency several weeks prior to the trip. That transit agency will give you information about arrangements, fares, operating times, and schedules. VITRAN is happy to provide documentation of current eligibility to another transit agency as support for services.

Replacement of Lost Cards

A replacement for a lost card may be obtained by calling the ADA Paratransit Office at (340) 773-1290 Ext. 2231; replacement cards cost \$5.00.

How should I schedule a trip?

Once you have obtained your ADA Paratransit Certification letter and ID card, you can begin using Paratransit service.

Reservations for VITRAN Plus Paratransit service are made between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Five (5) days a week. **Same day reservations are not available.**

Reservations should be made by calling:

St. Croix at (340) 773-1290 Ext. 2238

St. Thomas at (340) 774-5678

St. John at (340) 774-0165

Relay Service 1800-809-8477 or 711

Reservations may be made up to fourteen (14) days in advance, but no later than the previous day at 4:30 PM. If you are traveling to an appointment, be sure to tell the reservation staff what time you must arrive at your destination, so that a correct pick-up time can be determined.

Remember, VITRAN Plus Paratransit service is a **shared ride**; your total travel time can allow for others to board and ride in the same vehicle. Your paratransit ride can at times take approximately the same amount of time a similar trip on the fixed-route bus would take and may not follow a direct route between your pick-up and drop-off locations.

If you have **multiple trips on the same day**, they need to be scheduled at least **sixty minutes apart**. This will allow for travel time and the utilization of the 30-minute window. This policy is in place to prevent the return trip from arriving before the original trip has been completed. Occasionally, we may need to ask a customer to change the requested pick-up time in order to accommodate their request for a reservation. The ADA allows the VITRAN Plus to negotiate a revised pick-up with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pick-up time.

Example: If you request a pick-up time of 9:00am, the negotiated time would be one hour before or after that time. Negotiating pick-up times with customers gives a better estimated arrival time. When making your reservation have the following information ready:

- Your first and last name;
- Date when you want to travel;
- Pick-up/Drop-off address: number, street, suite number, be specific about pick-up directions. (Example: North Entrance, South Entrance, etc.). Please make sure the location requested is accessible to Paratransit vehicles to ensure that the Paratransit vehicle can enter and exit without backing. The house, apartment or mobile home number must be visible. If your pick-up time is in the early morning, it is helpful if the

porch light is turned on. Remember that it is not possible for our service vehicles to park for long periods of time at the entrance. Our vehicles cannot block any other vehicle or customer traffic. If you are waiting for a vehicle at an entrance, be sure you are ready and waiting at the beginning of your pick-up window, so you can see the vehicle arrive.

- Your requested pick-up or requested drop-off time;
- Your requested return time if you want a round trip;
- If you will be using a wheelchair or other mobility device;
- If you will be accompanied by a personal care assistance (PCA) and/or companion and if they use a mobility device.
- Any other information the Paratransit driver should know to help you travel.

Can I change my trip on the day of the reservation?

No. Routes are determined by the number of requests received for the day and scheduled by time. Changes may cause other passengers to be delayed for their rides/appointments.

Subscription Service

VITRAN permits the use of subscription service as a method of efficient reservations and scheduling of trips with a repeated pattern (same origin and destination, same pick-up and drop-off time, and same day(s)).

After you have set-up the subscription service, there is no need for you to make further arrangements, unless your travel needs change. Riders must call the dispatcher to cancel a specific trip that is part of a subscription service. Riders should take care to only cancel one specific trip and not cancel their subscription service entirely.

Destinations

Drivers are only permitted to stop at locations designated in the reservation. Travel arrangements with more than one destination are treated as separate trips and must be scheduled as such. Plan to schedule the appropriate number of reservations.

Trip Cancellations

Trip cancellations are required no later than two hours before a scheduled pick-up. Trip changes are considered cancellations. Failure to cancel trips at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up will result in a late cancel.

One (1) Hour Negotiation Rule

Occasionally, we may need to ask a customer to change the requested pick-up time in order to accommodate their request for a reservation. The ADA allows VITRAN Plus to negotiate a pick-up with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pick-up time. Customers can request their estimated pickup or drop off times at the time of reservation.

Thirty (30) Minute Window

VITRAN Plus Paratransit operates within a 30-minute window. The window begins fifteen (15) minutes prior to the schedule pick-up time and ends fifteen (15) minutes after.

“30 Minute Pick-Up Window” Example: If a customer has a 12:00 PM pick-up, the driver can arrive as early as 11:45 AM and as late as 12:15 PM and be considered on time. If the driver arrives at 11:45, they will wait until 11:50; if they arrive at 12:15, they will wait until 12:20pm. If the customer does not board the service vehicle within five (5) minutes, the driver will call in a no-show and proceed to the next destination. The driver would be on time and this would be considered a valid no-show.

Five (5) Minute Rule

Be Ready! Drivers are allowed to wait only five (5) minutes for the customer to board the service vehicle, so it is very important for the customer to be ready and waiting at the beginning of the pick-up window. It is your responsibility to be ready to take your trip. If you cannot be located or choose not to start boarding within five (5) minutes, the driver may leave and continue to the next pick-up. The 5 Minute Rule doesn't start until the beginning of your pick-up window.

In order for the driver to easily locate a customer, customers 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. Please tell the person taking your reservation exactly where you will be waiting for the vehicle when scheduling your transportation. We do not advocate unsafe practices such as backing up and our drivers have been directed to avoid these types of situations. Due to the weight of our vehicles, drivers are not allowed to pull into the private driveways of our customers.

No-Show/Late Cancellation Penalties

Purpose for Establishing a No-Show Policy is:

To encourage responsible trip scheduling and use of ADA complementary paratransit services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) permits public transit agencies to establish and enforce a No-Show policy. U.S. DOT regulations 49 CFR 37.125 (h) address the issue of No-Show policies in ADA complementary paratransit service programs, and states:

“The entity may establish an administrative process to suspend, for a reasonable period of time, the provision of complementary paratransit service to ADA paratransit eligible individuals who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips. (1) Trips missed by the individual for reasons beyond his or her control (including, but not limited to, trips which are missed due to operator error) shall not be a basis for determining that such a pattern or practice exists. (2) Missed trips due to VITRAN errors would not count as a No Show.”

No-Shows and late cancellations result in wasted trips; these trips could have been scheduled for use by other paratransit customers. Excessive No-Shows, late cancellations, and cancellations at the door adversely impact the effectiveness of service and add to the cost of providing ADA paratransit service.

No-Shows are recorded each time a paratransit customer makes a late cancellation, forgets to cancel, declines the trip at the door, or is not available for pick-up for the scheduled trip. A No-Show also occurs when the vehicle arrives at the pick-up location within the pick-up window, waits the required 5 minutes, and the customer does not take the ride. An attempt is made to contact the rider, but after waiting the appropriate time, the customer does not board the vehicle. If the vehicle arrives outside of the 30-minute window or at the incorrect location, the customer will not be considered a No-Show.

No-Show Notifications and Penalties

Customers will be notified in writing each time there is a No-Show. This notice could be a certified letter in the mail, or an e-mail if there is an e-mail address on record. The mail or e-mail message will list the date, time, and location of the missed or late cancelled ride. Excessive No-Shows and late cancellations may result in suspension of service, as shown below.

Consequences for an Established Pattern or Practice of No-Shows	
In a 30 day Period.	
1 st Violation	Letter of warning and /or phone contact
2 nd Violation	1 Week Suspension
3 rd Violation	2 Weeks Suspension
4 th Violation	3 Weeks Suspension and Loss of Subscription Service
5 th + Violation	4 Weeks Suspension and Loss of Subscription Service

A violation occurs when a customer exceeds the No-Show threshold in a 30-day period. Once a violation has occurred, a new 30-day period begins the next day. No-Shows will accumulate toward a new violation while a suspension is in process or in appeal.

Appeal of Suspension

Call the ADA Office immediately upon receipt of your letter. VITRAN will not take away or stop providing rides to you without advance notification of a service suspension. You will always be given the opportunity to appeal any decision that includes meeting with us before your suspension starts. Once you receive your letter, follow the instructions in the letter,

complete the suspension appeal form that was mailed to you along with the letter. Failing to follow these instructions will result in your “no-show” service suspension.

What if my ride is late?

You may call the reservation number to check on rides that are not on time or have not arrived by the end of the on-time window. Be sure to wait until the end of the window or the vehicle could arrive while you go inside to make the call; and you would be charged with a no-show. In the event the pick-up is 30 minutes or more outside the window, customers should call the ADA office and report the late pick-up. We will send you a coupon that can be redeemed for a free ride.

Coupons

The coupons will be mailed out to you and are good for one year from the date of issue. To use the coupon for a free ride, give it to the bus driver. Coupons will not be replaced if lost.

Updated Information

ADA Complementary Paratransit service customers must keep their address, telephone number(s), emergency contact information, and mobility aid information current with VITRAN.

Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone whose services or presence is required by the customer to meet his or her personal needs or to assist in traveling. The need for a PCA is documented during the eligibility certification process. It does not have to be the same person all the time. Paratransit customers are responsible for providing their own PCAs, who are not required to pay a fare on VITRAN Plus.

Customers are required to inform the reservationist when they are traveling with a PCA to ensure that an extra seat is reserved on the VITRAN Plus vehicle. PCAs must have the same pick-up and drop-off locations as the customer.

PCAs perform personal duties that drivers are not allowed to perform. Some of these duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assisting and directing a customer who is unable to travel independently
- Calming a customer who becomes upset in unexpected situations
- Preventing a customer from leaving her/his seat or opening a door when the vehicle is in motion
- Assisting a customer with managing her/his schedule and trip commitments

- Assisting a customer from the curb to the destination location and ensuring the customer's safety at the destination location VITRAN Plus cannot require a paratransit rider to have a personal care attendant (PCA).

“Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at 49 C.F.R. Section 37.5(e), a transit entity is prohibited from requiring that an individual with disabilities be accompanied by a personal care attendant (PCA). Transit entities are also not required to provide PCA services. This provision must be considered in light of the fact that under 49 C.F.R. 37.5(h), an entity may refuse service to someone who engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct. If an entity legitimately refuse service to someone, it may condition service to him on actions that would mitigate the problem. The entity could require a PCA as a condition of providing service it otherwise had the right to refuse. However, a transit entity cannot refuse to provide service solely because an individual's disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience the entity or other persons.”

Companions

“Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at 49 C.F.R. Section 37.123(f), transit entities are required to permit one (1) person to accompany the paratransit eligible individual.”

Based on seat availability, customers may have (1) companion accompany them. If you will be traveling with a companion, you must notify the dispatcher at the time you schedule your appointment to reserve space on the vehicle. Companions are charged the same fare as the traveling client (\$2.00) and must be picked-up and dropped-off at the same location as the rider.

Children

Children traveling as companions, who are under the age of five (5) years old and weigh less than 60 pounds are required by law to be secured in an approved child safety seat provided by the customer. **Bus operators are not permitted to secure child safety** systems on the bus or children in any safety restraint device(s). Children of any age traveling as companions must also pay the full fare.

ADA eligible children under six (6) years old must pay the full fare and must be accompanied by an adult.

Strollers must be collapsed to fit between the seat and the customer. Non-collapsible strollers are prohibited. For safety reasons, children capable of sitting on their own must sit in a seat and not on an adult's lap.

Service Animals

A service animal is defined by ADA as an animal that is individually trained to perform task for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are visually impaired, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special task. Service animals are working animals, not pets. Be prepared to indicate if the animal is required because of a disability and what task the animal has been trained to perform.

- Service animals are welcome and ride free-of-charge.
- A disruptive dog will be treated according to the **Service Animals Policy for VITRAN'S Fixed Route and Paratransit Vehicles**.
- Service dogs must sit on the floor or on the passenger's lap. They may not occupy a passenger seat.

Driver Assistance

Riders should request assistance when making a reservation. Drivers will assist customers with boarding and exiting the vehicle, and to/from the ground-level exterior door of the building. Drivers will provide assistance **up/down two steps to/from a building if it is safe to do so**. Drivers are required to make sure that all wheelchairs and scooters are properly secured per VITRAN's requirements. Drivers are not allowed to lift or carry customers.

Customers are responsible for ensuring that the path of travel between their exterior door and the vehicle pick-up/drop-off areas are clear of any obstacles.

Drivers are not allowed to accept tips from passengers.

Boarding Wheelchairs and Other Mobility Devices

ADA Complementary Paratransit service will accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility devices along with occupants, as long as the lift/ramp and vehicle can physically accommodate them; doing so would not cause a valid safety concern, and it does not block an aisle or interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.

If you use an oversized mobility device, reasonable efforts are made to accommodate you; however, transportation cannot always be guaranteed. Larger wheelchairs and other mobility devices cannot be transported if they exceed the design capacity of lifts or ramps. Wheelchairs and other mobility devices must also fit in the securement area on vehicles.

You are encouraged to inform the VITRAN should you need accommodations for a wheelchair or other mobility device.

Visitors

According to ADA regulations, VITRAN Plus ADA Paratransit service is available to visitors with disabilities who do not reside in the United States Virgin Island and can present documentation that they are ADA paratransit eligible in the State or jurisdiction in which they reside.

“Each public entity shall treat as eligible for its complementary paratransit service all visitors who present documentation that they are ADA paratransit eligible, under the criteria of § 37.125 of [Part 37], in the jurisdiction in which they reside” (§ 37.127(c)).

If the visitors with disabilities do not present such documentation (of ADA paratransit eligibility), then VITRAN Plus will request at minimum, the documentation of the visitor’s place of residence. If the individual's disability is not apparent, proof of his/her disability will be required. This might include, for example, a letter from a doctor.

Reasonable Accommodation

Requests for modifications of VITRAN policies, practices, or procedures to accommodate an individual with a disability may be made either in advance or at the time of scheduling the transportation service. VITRAN is best able to address and accommodate a request when customers make their requests for modifications in advance. The process for making a request is as follows:

- When making a request, please thoroughly describe what is needed in order for you to use the service, and why this assistance is necessary.
- Whenever feasible, a request for modification to VITRAN service should be made in advance before VITRAN is expected to provide the service. VITRAN will review your request and will make every effort to communicate in advance whether or not the requested modification can be made.
- If the modification is not made, VITRAN will provide the reason for the denial of the request. Requests may be denied on one or more of the following grounds:
 - Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of VITRAN’s service, programs, or activities;
 - Granting the request could create a direct threat to the health or safety of the requestor or others;
 - Granting the request would create an undue financial or administrative burden for the Agency; or

- Without such modification, the individual with a disability is otherwise able to fully use VITRAN Transit’s services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose.

Requests may be made through the following means:

St. Croix at (340) 773-1290 Ext. 2238

St. Thomas at (340) 774-5678

St. John at (340) 774-0165

You may also submit a written request in person or by mail:

ADA Office

6002 Anna’s Hope

St. Croix VI 00820

Public Health Threats

Service will be refused to any rider who poses a potential public health threat. Examples of public health threats include, but are not limited to the following:

- The existence of excrement on clothes or on hands
- The existence of other body fluids, such as blood or vomit.

When a driver is faced with a health threat situation, they will contact their Supervisor or VITRAN Management and report the situation immediately.

Discrimination Complaints

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against regarding his/her disability, has a right to file a formal complaint with the Civil Rights Officer at the Department of Public Works.

Complaints shall be made in writing either by letter or email to the Department of Public Works Civil Rights Officer, or by completing and returning the Title VI Discrimination Complaint Form at

Department of Public Works Civil Rights Office

6002 Anna’s Hope

St. Croix VI 00820

Individuals may also file complaints directly with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and/or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) within the 180-day timeframe.

Carry-on Bag

Customers are limited to bringing on-board no more than two regular shopping bags. Customers should be able to carry items safely onto and off the vehicle as well as safely control these items during vehicle operations. Packages may not obstruct the aisle, interfere with the operations of the passenger lift, or prevent seats from being used by other passengers.

Personal bags or pocket books that are attached to mobility aids will not be counted towards the limit on carry-on items, as long as they do not impede the securement of that mobility aid and do not require special assistance from the operator. Further, carry-on items must not jeopardize the safety, or disturb the reasonable comfort, of the passengers or transit operator.

No other large carry-on items (with the exception of wheelchairs, strollers, car seats, walkers and small luggage that can be safely stored under the seat, or otherwise controlled by the passenger without obstructing the aisle), will be allowed on the vehicle. **In the event the VITRAN Plus Paratransit vehicle arrives and the passenger exceeds the allowed number or size of carry-on items, the operator will notify the dispatcher and the dispatcher will advise.**

Operators will assist with packages if during the reservation process the customer made a requested for Reasonable Accommodation to receive help putting their bags on the vehicle.

Lost & Found

Riders are responsible, and VITRAN accepts no responsibility, for personal items left on vehicles. Riders may call VITRAN on their respective island to inquire about personal items left on the vehicle. If the rider is unable to get to the office to retrieve the item VITRAN will attempt to return the item on the next scheduled trip. VITRAN will hold items for 30 days prior to disposal. Wallets, credit/debit cards and IDs will be turned over to the Police Department after 30 days.

Rider Rules & Responsibilities

All passengers are expected to exercise proper conduct on vehicles. VITRAN reserves the right to revoke riding privileges of riders who threaten the health or safety of drivers or other passengers. The following is a list of general rules passengers are required to adhere to while utilizing this service:

1. Rider should be ready for pick-up throughout the pick-up window of the scheduled trip.
2. Treat drivers and other riders with courtesy and respect.
3. Keep personal assistance devices in good working condition and be able to operate without driver intervention.
4. Make sure personal sidewalks and walkways are properly maintained and clear of snow and ice.

5. Wear vehicle seatbelts/restraints during transport.
6. Consumption of food and beverages is prohibited. Food and beverages may be brought onto the vehicle.
7. The use of audio or video devices require the use of headphones.
8. Standing in “front” of the white line is prohibited.
9. Littering is prohibited.
10. Obscene, profane, vulgar, foul, or abusing language is prohibited.
11. Shirt and shoes are required.
12. Disorderly or inappropriate behavior is prohibited.
13. Keep head, arms, and body parts inside the vehicle at all times.
14. Do not throw objects in or from the vehicle.
15. Alcohol and the use of illegal drugs are prohibited.
16. Obey reasonable requests from the driver or other authorized representative.
17. Flammable or explosive material is prohibited on the vehicle, per Federal regulations.
18. Individuals with a communicable disease and have an order of restriction by the Department of Health may not board the vehicle.
19. Conversations with the driver which distract him/her from safely operating the vehicle are prohibited.
20. Keep aisles clear of obstacles (packages, luggage, etc.)
21. Vandalism or willful destruction of vehicle is prohibited.
22. Fighting or threatening to fight is prohibited.
23. Do not be a nuisance on the vehicle.
24. Offensive body and other offensive odors are prohibited.
25. Loud noises are prohibited.
26. Obscene attire is prohibited.
27. Smoking is prohibited.

Driver Responsibilities

1. Be courteous at all times.
2. Let the rider know they have arrived.
3. Adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of riders.
4. Carry only those riders assigned to them, along with personal care attendants and/or companions who have reservations.
5. Go only to the destinations as notified by the dispatcher.
6. For safety reasons, maintain “line-of-sight” of vehicle at all times when other passengers are on board.
7. Maintain the assigned service schedule, for the convenience of all riders.

8. Provide reasonable assistance to riders entering or exiting the vehicle.
9. Assist riders using manually-powered wheelchairs, up and down, no more than one (1) step or curb, if safe to do so, and while maintaining a line-of-sight of the vehicle.
10. Assist ambulatory passengers to and from their origin and destination, if requested, and if safe to do so while maintaining a line-of-sight of the vehicle.
11. Refrain from using electronic devices other than the vehicle's two-way radio.
12. Operate the vehicle and lift in a safe manner and safely secure wheelchairs on the vehicle.

Drivers are Not Permitted to:

1. Lift or carry passengers.
2. Enter the rider's residence.
3. Perform any personal care assistance for any rider, such as assisting with dressing.
4. Assist riders on non-ADA compliant or steeply inclined mobility ramps or steps.
5. Assist an ambulatory rider beyond the bottom-most exterior step of the pick-up or drop-off location.
6. Assist a rider using a manually-powered wheelchair up or down more than one step or curb.
7. Wait for a passenger to make an unscheduled stop to conduct business, such as at an ATM/cash machine, pharmacy, or video rental vending machine.
8. Accept tips/gratuities (including cash or gift cards).
9. Perform errands for riders, such as picking up prescriptions or groceries.
10. Take information from rider about cancellations or changes in reservations.
11. Secure child safety systems in the vehicle or children into such systems.
12. Assist a rider with a power-driven wheelchair, in its operation; the rider is expected to maneuver it safely on and off the vehicle.

Commendations, Complaints, or Questions

If any staff member associated with providing VITRAN services has been particularly helpful or gone out of his/her way to provide assistance, you may contact VITRAN so a note of commendation may be issued to the employee.

Riders may file a complaint anytime the service is unsatisfactory, unsafe, or for any other reasons.

To assist with the complaint investigation process, please file the complaint as soon as possible.

When filing a complaint please provide the following information:

Δ First and Last name.

Δ Date and time of trip.

Δ Address or name of destination.

Δ Complete description of the incident.

VITRAN will make reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities, non-English speakers, and others unable to file a written complaint.

VITRAN is committed to operating high-quality service in compliance with ADA Complementary Paratransit service requirement

Definitions and Terms:

ADA Complementary Paratransit - Paratransit service that is required as part of the ADA to complement, or serve in addition to, already available fixed-route transit service. ADA complementary paratransit services are only required in communities that offer fixed-route service and must meet a series of standards to ensure they are indeed comparable to fixed-route services.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) Signed into law on July 26, 1990, the ADA is a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability.

ADA-Eligible Paratransit Customer – A person who VITRAN has qualified under the eligibility provisions of the ADA.

ADA-Eligible Visitor - A person who has been qualified for ADA paratransit service by a transit agency other than VITRAN.

Cancellation: When a ride is cancelled at least 2 hours in advance.

Cancel at the Door: A customer who cancels at the door or “waves” away the driver who has arrived at the scheduled pick-up time and location. This counts as a no-show.

Caregiver / Service provider / Guardian – A person who provides direct care for a client and who may have legal authority to make decisions for and/or may be responsible for the safety and care of the client.

Common public entrance – The appointed waiting area in a public facility. Examples of the common public entrance include a lobby, lounge, entry way, atrium, reception desk, information desk, and/or a suite door within approximately 15 feet of the entry door.

Companion – A person who travels with an ADA-eligible customer and pays the same fare as the customer.

Disability – A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Door-to-Door – Origin to destination Paratransit service from the door at the customer’s pick-up location to the door at the customer’s destination.

Door/Designated Door – The common public entrance to a building, residence, or area,

including going through double doors or triple doors into the common public entrance of public facilities.

Excessively long trips- For ADA Paratransit Services, there shall not be a pattern of trip duration that takes longer than the same trip made on transit at the same time, included travel time to/from bus stops, wait time at those stops, and transfer times

Fixed route service: Transit services in which vehicles run on regular, scheduled routes with fixed stops and no deviation. Typically, fixed-route service is characterized by printed schedules or timetables, designated bus stops where passengers board and alight and the use of larger transit vehicle

Late Cancel/No show: When a ride is cancelled less than 2 hours in advance or the rider is not at the pick-up location or refuses the ride at the door or is unavailable.

Missed Trip - A missed trip is when a vehicle arrives outside the pickup window and the Rider does not take the trip. This also includes trips never served due to transit agency miscommunications or reservations/scheduling errors.

Mobility device – a mechanism such as a wheelchair, a walker or a scooter, designed to aid individuals with mobility impairments. They can be either manually operated or powered.

On time Performance – Is a trip typically consider on-time if the vehicle arrives within the pick-up window and the trip is completed by the customer.

Paratransit: Specialized transportation services such as an accessible “door-to-door” transportation service for the disabled.

Pattern or Practice of No-show - is determined by the number of trips scheduled compared to the number of trips travelled.

Personal Care Attendant / PCA – A person who travels from the same origin to the same destination with the ADA-eligible customer and provides a service to the customer. A PCA does not pay a fare when accompanying the ADA customer.

Pickup Window: The 30 minutes that includes 15 minutes **BEFORE** and 15 minutes **AFTER** your scheduled pickup time. Your van may arrive **ANYTIME** during this window, and you must be ready.

Service Animal- An animal that has been trained to perform specific tasks for an individual with a disability.

Trip- One-way travel of a person or vehicle between origin and destination.

Trip Denials:

Capacity denial — Recorded if a trip request cannot be accommodated at all or cannot be accommodated within one hour of the requested pick-up time.

Adversarial denial — Recorded if a trip is offered within an hour of the requested time but is refused by the caller.

VITRAN – Virgin Islands Transit Agency