

# Welcome!

## Thank you for registering with Access Transit.

This is your Access Transit Riders Guide. In this guide you will find useful information related to the Access Transit system and how to utilize it. Read this guide thoroughly and retain for future reference.

You can also find this guide and more information on transit options on the Brandon Transit website at:

**[www.brandontransit.ca](http://www.brandontransit.ca)**

### Contact Information

Access Transit Dispatch Office – 204-729-2437

Administration – 204-729-2279

Transit Information – 204-729-2300

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## Description of Service

⇒ Access Transit is a specialized public transportation service for persons with a disability who are unable use the regular public transit service.

⇒ Access Transit is not a substitute for Emergency or Ambulance services.  
**Medical emergency trips will not be transported on Access Transit.**

⇒ Access Transit is a shared ride, door-to-door service that operates within the City of Brandon limits. Passengers must be a registered client with Access Transit Services before booking any trips.

⇒ Access Transit bookings must be made in advance and requested trip times are subject to system availability

⇒ Drivers assist passengers from the exterior door of pick up location to the exterior door of the destination location.

⇒ Eligibility is granted based on a reflection of the client's needs, which takes into account the client's ability or inability to use the regular fixed route transit system. Client files are reviewed on an ongoing basis and eligibility for Access services can be re-assessed at any time. Any change to a client file must be reported immediately (see client information section for details).

### Hours of Operation

⇒ Service Hours:

Monday to Saturday

6:00am to 12:00am

Sunday & Holidays

8:00am to 8:00pm

⇒ Dispatch Office Hours:

Monday to Friday

6:30am to 4:30pm

## **After Hours Contact Information**

If you require immediate assistance and must speak to someone outside the regular dispatch office hours, you may call the:

After Hours line at **204-761-3934**.

Please note that this line is not for making regular bookings or for medical emergencies. An example of when to use this line is if the bus is late for a pick up (outside of dispatch office hours) and you need to call to find out where it is.

## **Fare information**

A fare is required for each one way trip provided on Access Transit. One way fare is \$1.75 per client AND companion. Fare must be paid for at the time of delivery. Fare is not required if riding as an attendant. See Attendant or Companion section for the distinction between the two.

Fare options include Cash, SMART Card or Provincial Voucher. SMART Cards can be purchased at a variety of Transit outlets (Safeway, Sobeys Extra South, Sobeys West End, Brandon Transit's Information Centre, City Hall, and Civic Services). With advance notice, SMART Cards can also be delivered to you if riding on a city vehicle. You are required to make these arrangements in advance with the Access Dispatcher.

## **Types of Bookings**

There are two types of bookings that can be made:

1. DEMAND TRIPS - One time trips or occasional trips for any purpose, to a specified destination at any time.
2. SUBSCRIPTION TRIPS - Repeat trip to the same destination at the same time at least **once weekly**. Once subscription has been set up, trips are automatically generated by the system so daily calls are no longer needed.

### Subscription Guidelines

1. Requires at least one regular trip per week;
2. Trips must be to the same destination at the same time;
3. Trips may be for medical, employment, educational or recreational purposes;
4. Must be established for at least a 4 month period;
5. Once set up, the client must use bookings unchanged at least 75% of the time;
6. All subscription trips are automatically cancelled on holidays. If a trip is required, a demand booking must be set up for desired day.

### Booking a trip

⇒ Trips can be booked up to 30 days before the day you wish to travel. As our vehicles are scheduled at least a week in advance, the more notice you can provide, the more likely you are to receive your requested time. We accept medical bookings up to one month in advance.

⇒ The negotiated time for each trip is that time agreed upon by the passenger and Access Dispatcher for pick up, subject to the pick up window. You may not necessarily receive your initial requested time, depending on bookings that are already in the system.

⇒ A minimum of 24 hours is required for all bookings, although due to changes and cancellations a last minute trip may be accommodated if you are flexible on the pick up time(s).

⇒ Booking hours are the busiest from 8:00am to 10:00am and 1:00pm and 3:00pm and the chance of receiving the automated answering machine is greater during these periods. If you receive the automated machine, please leave 1 message and the Dispatcher will return your call within 2 hours.

**Please do not hang up & repeatedly call back as this jams the phone line and does not allow us to help you any sooner!** If you request a trip booking on the machine, our Dispatcher will call you back to confirm your requested time and the trip details.

**Please note: Actual pick up times may be adjusted based on Access transit needs. Access Transit services is committed to honor passengers schedule needs, while operating our system in a cost efficient manner.**

Follow these steps to book your trip:

1. Call the Dispatch Office during regular booking hours or leave a message on automated machine at any time;
2. Have the following information ready:

<b>1. Your Name</b>
<b>2. The day, date and time you need to travel</b>
<b>3. Identify if you will be travelling with an attendant or companion or a service dog</b>
<b>4. Your pick up address</b>
<b>5. Your drop off address - street name &amp; number</b>
<b>6. Your appointment time</b>
<b>7. Trip purpose</b>
<b>8. Your return trip pick up time (excluding medical call backs)</b>

⇒ A Call Back trip is one that is booked from your destination location to your original pick up destination but does not have a time assigned to it. Trips that do not have assigned times are extremely difficult to schedule and therefore are booked for medical reasons only. Call backs are scheduled around our regular daily trips, making for an unpredictable return trip. If you are able to provide us with a return trip time by estimating how long your appointments, therapy, etc. last for, this will reduce the number of call backs making for a smoother service. Every effort is made to have your call back trip arrive in 30 minutes or less, although between 2:00pm and 4:30pm the trip volume is higher and your wait may be longer. To avoid the additional wait, please book your appointments between 10:00am and 2:00pm whenever possible. If you plan on shopping after a medical appointment please book a return time instead of a medical call back at the time of the original booking.

⇒ Stopovers - drivers are not permitted to make unscheduled stops. When the customer wishes to stop during their trip, this must be booked as two separate trips.

***A priority booking system may be implemented when the demand for service exceeds our vehicle availability. What this means is that at certain times of the day, we have more bookings than our service can accommodate. Should this occur, you may be asked to adjust your pick up time to one that is less in***

*demand. There are times when our demand still exceeds service ability, in these cases medical, employment and education trips will receive priority.*

## **Booking changes or cancellations**

### **Definitions**

**Cancellation** - A trip cancellation occurs when a passenger books a trip, and cancels such request no later than the required time of 3:00pm of the day preceding the trip. Cancellations are recorded on a one way trip basis.

**Late Cancellation** - A late cancellation occurs when a passenger books a trip, and fails to cancel this trip request by the required time of 3:00pm of the day preceding the trip.

**No Show** - A no show occurs when a passenger books a trip, does not cancel ahead of time, and is not available at the time when the vehicle arrives within the pick up window. This also includes any occurrence of trips that are cancelled at the door (passenger refuses trip at the door when vehicle arrives within the pick up window).

A no show shall be recorded by the driver only after a period of five (5) minutes has elapsed from arrival within the pick up window.

## **How to change or cancel a trip**

⇒ If changes are required after a trip booking has been established, you may request a change through our Dispatch office during regular office hours. If the time or destination change is significant and the runs have been scheduled for that day, we may not be able to accommodate your request. Please provide at least 24 hours notice for all booking changes.

⇒ Cancellations can be made at any time by calling the Dispatch office. To avoid a late cancellation, be sure and cancel by 3:00pm the previous business day before your trip booking. During regular business hours, the Dispatcher will process your trip cancellation.

**No changes or bookings can be made through this centre.** You may also leave a message on the automated answering machine at any time.

## Catching your Ride

⇒ When you book a trip, the Dispatcher will confirm your negotiated pick up time and will give you a **30 minute pick up window**. The pick up window is that period of time 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the negotiated time during which you can expect the vehicle to arrive.

⇒ You must be ready at your pick up location at the beginning of your pick up window.

⇒ For example: If your negotiated pick up time is 9:15am, your 30 minute pick up window is 9:00am to 9:30am. You should be ready at the pick up location beginning at 9:00am.

⇒ You are not required to be at your pick up location before the start of your pick up window. The Access vehicle will either wait or return during the pick up window.

⇒ Drivers must be able to visualize the bus at all times and cannot leave it unattended. Upon arrival, the driver will make a reasonable attempt to locate customers (ring doorbell or buzzer if provided), but if no activity is seen within 5 minutes, drivers must continue their schedule to maintain service for other customers.



The logo for Brandon Access Transit features a stylized 'A' composed of a green triangle and a blue triangle, followed by the text 'Brandon Access Transit' in a blue, sans-serif font.

## Attendants vs. Companions

⇒ One attendant is allowed, and may travel at no charge, only if this person is required to assist or attend to the customer during their transport. Please see Attendant responsibilities outlined below. Where space permits, one friend or family member, not required as an attendant, may ride with the registered user and must pay the regular fare. Space for an attendant, friend or family member must be reserved at time of booking.

⇒ Attendants will assist with:

- Loading & unloading of the person with a disability;
- Behavior of the person with a disability;
- Medical and hygienic issues of the person with a disability;

⇒ Attendants are required if:

- A client is prone to seizures or other uncontrollable medical conditions;
- Behavior is a problem;
- Passenger has limited personal accessibility (i.e. cannot open doors on their own);
- Passenger is not able to negotiate their own way from their front door to their destination;
- Passenger cannot be left alone and no one is available when vehicle arrives.

*For safety purposes, Attendants should not be registered Access Transit client.*

*An Access Transit client wishing to utilize another registered client to provide Attendant responsibilities may submit a formal request for a policy exemption. This request will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the Attendant's ability to provide the duties required by the Client.*

**Clients may be assigned Mandatory Attendant status if:**

- 1. Registrants display unacceptable behavior that affects other passengers and/or the driver;**
- 2. If the registrant cannot be left alone and no one is available when the vehicle arrives to receive the registrant.**

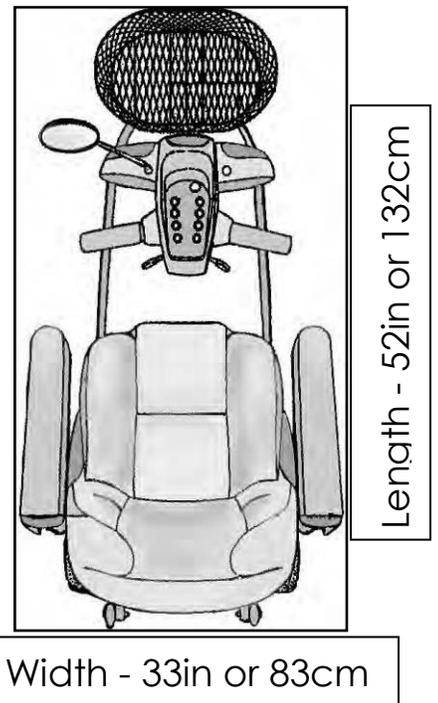
**Mandatory Attendant designation is for clients who require supervision while ON the vehicle, not at their destination or to help with parcels, etc.**

## Equipment Specifications

⇒ Our Access buses are equipped with hydraulic lifts to transport customers in mobility devices. There are size and weight restrictions for mobility devices that must be adhered to in order to ride with Access transit services.

**Maximum width of mobility device - 33 inches or 83 centimeters**  
**Maximum length of mobility device - 50 inches or 126 centimeters**  
**Maximum combined weight of passenger & mobility device cannot exceed 750 pounds**

⇒ For the safety of both the customers and the driver, it is the customer's responsibility to ensure that their mobility device is in a safe condition (air in tires, brakes, etc.) for transport, or service will not be provided. The driver will notify Dispatch if they feel the device is unsafe and the customer will be responsible to bring the device to a safe standard before trips can be provided.



⇒ Using the lift - all customers using wheelchairs or scooters use the lift to get on and off the Access buses. Customers using walking aids such as canes, walkers, etc. are able to use the lift by hanging on to the yellow handles while lift is in operation. Customers are not permitted to sit on walker seats while moving on lift or when travelling on Access bus.

⇒ Passengers in powered mobility devices will be positioned facing away from the bus while travelling up/down the lift device.

## Pick up Locations

⇒ **One step policy** - Service is provided from “accessible exterior door to accessible exterior door”. For the safety of both the customer and the driver, drivers will not take mobility devices up or down more than one step. It is the customer’s responsibility to provide a ramp where there is more than one step.

⇒ **Ramps** - It is the customer’s responsibility to ensure that all ramps are safe and in good repair. This includes ensuring:

- Ramps are clear of debris, ice and snow;
- Surfaces are non-slip;
- Ramp angles allow for safe motion.

## Mobility Device Securement

⇒ Correct use of a securement safety system (mobility device) and seat belt assemblies (passenger) is mandatory and a condition of use when travelling on Access Transit vehicles. All passengers are required to wear a seatbelt/shoulder strap, unless they have a medical exemption stating otherwise. This exemption must be kept on file with Access Transit Services.



**4 Point Securement**  
**45° Angle attached to frame.**

## **Responsibilities**

The provision of a shared-ride service is a joint responsibility between Access Transit Services and its service providers, our customers, and their families. By following these guidelines, you will help us provide safe, efficient and responsive service.

### **Responsibilities of Access Transit Services**

- To provide safe, courteous, and efficient service;
- To provide service from the first exterior door of your point of origin to the first exterior door of your destination;
- To call if a change has been made to your pick-up window;
- To assist customers with boarding and exiting the vehicle;
- To secure all mobility devices with four point tie-downs;
- To assist with the placement and securing of seatbelts as required;
- To provide assistance to customers using devices such as walkers, crutches, etc. up or down curbs or steps;

Please note: Drivers are not required to wait more than 5 minutes past the start of your pick-up window, so please be ready.

### **Customer Responsibilities**

- To be ready at the start of your confirmed pick-up time window so as not to delay other customer's trips;
- To cancel any trips you no longer require by 3:00pm the business day before travel;
- To call if you still need a booking on a general holiday;
- To place a hold on your subscription trip requests if you are on vacation or otherwise away;
- To ensure your residence, and where possible, your destination, is accessible;
- To have a manageable number of parcels for you, your companions or your attendant;
- To ensure the entrance outside your private residence (including sidewalks, stairs and/or ramps) are cleared of snow and ice;
- To wear your personal seatbelt and the vehicle's seatbelt during transport unless you have a medical exemption with Access Transit on file;

## Customer Responsibilities continued . . .

- To wait for assistance when entering or exiting the vehicle;
- To update any changes to your personal information to Access Transit Services immediately;
- To ensure passengers travelling with you are properly secured;
- To provide your own Attendant if required to do so;
- To read and follow the rules of conduct listed below.

## Rules of Conduct

- Smoking, Food and/or Drink are not permitted in all Access vehicles;
- Use of abusive, threatening or obscene language or actions toward other customers or your driver will not be tolerated;
- No operating or tampering with any equipment while on board.

**Note: Customers displaying actions that are deemed offensive or dangerous will be reported and may be suspended from service.**

## Customer Tips

⇒ Please book early.
⇒ You may use the service for any trip purpose.
⇒ If you must cancel, do so as early as possible (by 3pm the business day before travel) to allow others to use the service.
⇒ An attendant is necessary if you require more than external door to door service.
⇒ If you are more than 5 minutes late, the bus will proceed to the next scheduled ride and you will be marked a "No Show".
⇒ Be early; this helps us to help you.
⇒ Expect to share your ride with others.
⇒ Inform medical personnel that you are using Access Services, so they may assist by keeping you on time.
⇒ Please considerate of the Driver. He or she has many people to assist and a schedule to maintain.
⇒ From time to time, demand may exceed capacity, so we may not be able to accommodate you every time you request a ride. We'll do the very best we can, but please do your part too. Please provide as much notice as possible with flexibility in pick up times to assist us!
⇒ Please have a clear accessible path to your door (especially in the winter).
⇒ Please have your fare ready for the driver upon boarding.

## **Changes in client information**

⇒ When you registered for Access Transit Services, you and your medical professional filled out detailed forms that provided us with pertinent information related to your transportation needs. This included your pick up address, space type requirement (walking aids, use of a mobility device, phone number(s), and emergency contact information.

⇒ Any time there is a change in any information relevant to your transportation needs, it is essential that you advise us immediately so we can update your client file. For example, if you were ambulatory when you first registered for Access Services but are now in a mobility device, a different type of vehicle needs to be assigned for your trip.

## **Cancellation Policies**

Unexpected occurrences such as illness, family emergencies, etc. happen to everyone occasionally and disrupt our daily routine. We understand these circumstances may arise; however, ride cancellations should be made as early as possible, as soon as you are aware that you no longer require the trip. This will free up service set aside for your booking and allow the time to be offered to another passenger.

If you fail to cancel a scheduled trip by the cancellation deadline, you will be considered a late cancellation or no-show (see policies on page 15). Please be considerate to other passengers and cancel your trip as early as possible if you no longer require service. Passengers who repeatedly fail to cancel trips, cancel trips at the last minute, or a no-show for their trip, may be subject to a service restriction or suspension.

## **Late Cancellation Policy**

This policy requires passengers to cancel their scheduled trip by 3:00pm the business day before travel. Should the passenger not cancel a booking by this deadline, the trip is recorded as a Late Cancellation on the client's file. A maximum of three "Late Cancellations" in one calendar month will result in a letter being sent to the passenger as a reminder to call and cancel the trip by 3:00pm the business day before. A second letter will be sent after the fourth "Late Cancellation" within the same calendar month, which may result in a service restriction or suspension.

## **No show policy**

This policy applies to passengers who are more than 5 minutes past their scheduled pick up time (within the 30 minute pick up window). Should the passenger not be available at time of pick up, the trip is recorded as a "No Show" on the client's file. Access Transit will automatically cancel the remainder of your trips for that day unless we hear from you within one hour from the initial scheduled booking.

A maximum of three "No Shows" in one calendar month will result in a letter being sent to the passenger as a reminder to call and cancel the trip by 3:00pm the business day before. A second letter will be sent after the fourth "No Show" within the same calendar month, which may result in a service restriction or suspension.

**Note: A letter will result after any combination of three "No Shows" or "Late Cancellations", not after three of each.**

## Common destinations

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Pick up door</b>
Assiniboine Centre	Main doors (facing west)
Brandon RHA	Main doors (facing east)
Brandon Clinic	Side doors - McTavish Avenue E.
Brandon Clinic West	Main doors
Brandon Shopper's Mall	South Entrance by Dollarama
CO-OP Marketplace	Main doors in designated spot
Keystone/WCG Place	Brandon Curling Club entrance
Montana's Restaurant	North of main doors
Safeway-Corral Centre	Main doors in designated spot
Canadian Tire	Main doors in designated spot
Sobeys - west & south	Main doors in designated spot
Superstore	Main doors in designated spot
The Town Centre	Main doors at Rosser Avenue loop
Walmart	Main doors in designated spot
Winners	Main doors in designated spot
Target – Shoppers Mall	North Entrance
Capitol Theatre	Main doors in designated spot

These are just some destinations we commonly go to, however it is a door to door service and we are not limited to any set destinations.

## **Passenger comment and complaint procedures**

Access Transit Services has a commitment to respond to passenger perceptions and complaints.

Contact information for passenger commendations or complaints is:

Phone: (204) 729-2279

Fax: (204) 729-2485

On line web comment at **[www.brandontransit.ca](http://www.brandontransit.ca)**

Mailing Address:

900 Richmond Avenue East, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 7M1

Attention: Access Transit Services

We encourage both positive comments and complaints.

Please phone if comments are minimal.

Major complaints should be in writing with the date of incident, your name and phone number, as well as the particulars of the incident. Once a complaint is received, it will be kept strictly confidential. An investigation will be undertaken immediately and all necessary steps taken to resolve the problem. Access Transit Services will attempt to respond to comments or complaints within 5 working days.

## **Access Advisory Committee**

The Access Advisory Committee was created in 2000 by a group of concerned citizens to explore the components of Access Transit Services in Brandon. The committee meets to discuss and resolve pertinent issues related to the provision of affordable, safe and accessible transportation. The committee works collaboratively with the City of Brandon to ensure Brandon continues to have an effective, cost-efficient and sustainable Access Transit system.

Members of the committee include registered clients who utilize the system, representatives from the City of Brandon Access Transit Services and related agencies within Brandon.

The committee meets monthly and all meeting minutes can be found on line at [brandontransit.ca](http://brandontransit.ca) and are distributed to all committee members. Please contact Access Transit Administration at 204-729-2279 if you would like more information on the committee.

## **Correspondence**

Information related to Access Transit Services is shared with clients and the general public through a variety of methods. Visit [www.brandontransit.ca](http://www.brandontransit.ca) at anytime and find policy, procedure and general information related to the Access system in Brandon.

In addition, information sheets are produced and distributed as required to educate users on specific topics related to the system.

Twice yearly, the Access Advisory Committee distributes a newsletter that contains relevant information.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **HOW ARE AN ATTENDANT AND A COMPANION DIFFERENT?**

An **attendant** is a person who travels with you and who is responsible for your care and assistance during the entire trip. Customers requiring an attendant must notify Access Transit at the time of booking. Attendants are not required to pay a fare. An attendant cannot be a registered Access Transit customer.

A **companion** is a person who travels with you as a friend and is not required for your assistance. A companion is required to pay a fare.

## **CAN I BRING MY PET ON ACCESS TRANSIT?**

Pets are not allowed on Access Transit as the vehicles are small and there is a high incidence of allergies among our customers.

Access clients who are sight-impaired are welcome to bring their certified service animal on the bus.

## **CAN I BRING PARCELS AND BAGS ON ACCESS TRANSIT?**

You may bring parcels with you but these must be held on your lap. You may bring whatever parcels and bags you are able to carry. Please note that the driver is not responsible for carrying bags.

## **CAN I RIDE ONLY IN A CAB?**

Unfortunately the answer is no. All of our Access transit trips are scheduled by the Access Dispatch office and allocated to vehicles. In order to maintain system efficiency, our buses try to handle as many trips as possible. Our buses are scheduled fully before any trips are passed on to the Taxi Contractor.

## **HOW DO I MAKE A COMMENDATION OR COMPLAINT ABOUT ACCESS TRANSIT?**

We appreciate your feedback on our service. The staff value commendations as we want to provide outstanding customer service. We also need to be advised of any problems you may have with our service. This is one of the ways we can improve service to our customers. For complaints or commendations, contact the Transportation Supervisor at 204-729-2279 or email [transit@brandon.ca](mailto:transit@brandon.ca).

## **WHAT IS A PICK UP WINDOW?**

The pick up window is that period of time 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the negotiated time (between customer and dispatcher). The bus may arrive anytime during your pick up window and it is essential that you be ready at the pick up location. The driver will only wait 5 minutes once arriving, when inside the 30 minute pick up window.

## **WHY DO I GET THE ANSWERING MACHINE?**

There are times when our dispatcher is unable to answer the phone as they are providing support to other clients or our drivers. You will get the answering machine when they are unable to take the call. Please leave your name, number and trip request details and the dispatcher will return the messages in order of rotation. It is our goal to return all phone messages within 30 minutes.

## **WHAT IS PEAK TIME AND WHEN IS IT?**

Peak time is when our buses are the busiest and often are fully booked already with subscription trips. This generally occurs during the week between 8am and 10am & 2:30pm and 4:30pm. When booking your appointments we ask that you keep this in mind and book accordingly as there are times when demand exceeds vehicle availability and we may be unable to accommodate your request.