ADA Paratransit ​Scheduling​

Learning Objective:​Describe the scheduling process for ADA Paratransit​

Negotiating Ride Times​

The ADA allows a transit agency to negotiate pickup times, but the transit agency cannot require the rider to accept a trip more than one hour before or after the needed departure time. ​

This is called the scheduling or negotiation window.

Comparable Service

The goal of ADA Paratransit is to provide accessible service that is comparable to the fixed-route, public bus system. ​

Negotiating a 4 p.m. pickup knowing that a rider works until 5 p.m. would not be comparable service. ​

Offering a 9 a.m. pickup for a rider who has an appointment at 8 a.m. would not be comparable service.​

Scheduling Window​

When there is a latest arrival time (for example, arrival to work), the scheduling window should be used on the early side to ensure that the rider arrives on time.​

When there is an earliest departure time on a return trip (for example, a doctor’s appointment), the scheduling window should be from that time to one hour after.​

Scheduling Window: James​

James gets off work at 5 p.m., changes out of his uniform, and often chats with co-workers after his shift ends. ​

James requests pickup at 5:15 p.m. to ensure that he is ready. ​

James is given a pickup window of 5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. ​

Schedule Changes​

If a transit agency wants to change the originally negotiated time (for example, to maximize driver schedules), riders should be called for a new time to be negotiated. ​

If a rider cannot be reached to re-negotiate the pickup time, the original time should not be changed. ​

Per the ADA scheduling window, any changes may not be more than one hour from the rider's requested time.​

Driver’s Manifest​

The agreed-upon time should appear on the driver's manifest.

Travel Time​

To determine if ADA paratransit travel time is excessive, the FTA looks to the travel time of the corresponding fixed-route system. ​

ADA Paratransit is to be comparable to the fixed-route public transportation system. ​

Travel Time​

ADA Paratransit is the accessible counterpart to the public bus system. ​

ADA Paratransit can not operate under the same time and convenience factors as private transportation.​

Travel Time​

Private transportation options - such as owning a vehicle, taking a taxi, or using services like Uber or Lyft – are more convenient for the user. ​

However, they are also more costly. ​

Travel Time Parameters

The FTA recommends that paratransit agencies implement a graduated travel time parameter. ​

For example: ​

30 minutes for trips under 3 miles​

45 minutes for trips that are 3 to 5 miles​

60 minutes for trips that are 5 to 7 miles​

75 minutes for trips that are 7 to 10 miles​

Pickup Window​

Riders should be given a pick-up window of 30 minutes during which they should be ready to depart. ​

Pickup Window: James​

James gets off work at 5 p.m., changes out of his uniform, and often chats with co-workers after his shift ends. ​

James requests pickup at 5:15 p.m. ​

James is given a 30-minute pickup window of 5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. ​

He is ready to depart within that window.

Compliance Check

The pickup must occur during the window, not earlier or later, to be considered on time. ​

The FTA has found instances when drivers arrive well before the announced pickup window and passengers who are not ready are given a no-show. ​

This practice is not consistent with the ADA.

Scheduling Window: Amal​

Amal calls to schedule ADA paratransit for a 10 a.m. job interview. ​

The reservationist looks at the distance and tells Amal “We can pick you up between 9 and 9:30 a.m.”​

On the day of his interview, Amal is ready to leave at 9 a.m. ​

The driver knows that Amal has an interview at 10 a.m. ​​​

Will-Call Pickups​

Will-call pickups are not required by the ADA. ​

If a transit agency provides will-call pickups, it is a good practice to establish a window for the anticipated pickup. ​

Riders must understand the implications if they ask for will-call return trips rather than scheduled return rides.

Role of the Rider​

Call to cancel if you won’t be taking a trip, as soon as you can.​

Be aware of your 30-minute pickup window and be ready. ​

Understand that ADA paratransit service is an extension of the city’s fixed-route bus system and is a shared-ride, public transportation experience.​​