

Spec-Tran

Customer Guide



(517) 394-CATA (2282)

This guide is available in alternate formats by calling our main office at (517) 394-1100.

What is Spec-Tran?

Spec-Tran is CATA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service for people unable to use CATA's fixed-route system. It is an advance reservation, curb-to-curb service that uses small lift-equipped buses and vans to transport customers.

Who can use Spec-Tran?

Customers certified in accordance with ADA are eligible to use Spec-Tran.

Certification is obtained by completing a short application, indicating the reason a person cannot use CATA's fixed-route service. The application is submitted to an independent party for review. Currently, the Capital Area Center for Independent Living reviews applications and determines eligibility. To request an application, please call the Capital Area Center for Independent Living at (517) 241-0393.

Visitors to the greater Lansing area who have already been certified for ADA complementary paratransit service elsewhere may use Spec-Tran for 21 days. Call (517) 394-CATA (2282) for additional information.

Where does Spec-Tran go?

Spec-Tran service is available in the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, the Townships of Delhi, Lansing, and Meridian, and up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile beyond any of CATA's fixed routes.

When does Spec-Tran operate?

Spec-Tran operates seven days a week during the same hours as CATA's fixed-route service. For specific hours, please call us at (517) 394-CATA (2282).

CATA services, including Spec-Tran, do not operate on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Easter
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

What does it cost to ride Spec-Tran?

The Spec-Tran fare is \$2.50 for each one-way ride.

How can fares be paid?

Fares may be paid in cash, with Spec-Tran prepaid passes, or with blue Spec-Tran tokens. Passes and tokens are available for purchase at CATA offices and various locations

throughout the community. Passes can also be purchased online at cata.org. CATA fixed-route tokens and personal checks may not be used to pay for Spec-Tran trips.

Customers must pay the exact fare upon boarding the vehicle. Fares cannot be paid at a later time.

Drivers are not allowed to make change. If a customer does not have the exact cash fare and pays with a higher amount, no change will be given.

Drivers do not have time to stop along the way for customers to get change.

For information on how to purchase passes and tokens by mail, please call us at (517) 394-1000 between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM Monday through Friday or between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekends.

How are Spec-Tran rides reserved?

Rides may be scheduled by calling (517) 394-CATA (2282) between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM seven days a week to schedule rides up to 14 days in advance. The Spec-Tran reservation office is open year-round, including holidays.

Customers are encouraged not to schedule trips if they are not sure the trip will be

needed. Rides that are scheduled and later cancelled cause Spec-Tran service to be less efficient and often cause inconvenience to other customers.

Spec-Tran service is not available on a same-day basis.

The Spec-Tran office receives hundreds of telephone calls each day. Customers can help us process telephone calls and ride requests efficiently and accurately by having the following information ready when their calls are answered:

- The name of the customer
- The dates and times of the rides
- The names of the locations and addresses of where the customer will be picked up and dropped off
- The telephone numbers of the pick-up and drop-off locations
- If the customer will be traveling with an assistant or guest
- If the customer or the personal assistant or guest will be taking any mobility aids such as wheelchairs, canes, or walkers

Customers should be ready to make notes about the dates and times they call us, whom they spoke to, and the information about their pick-up times.

Are ride times confirmed?

Spec-Tran must provide rides for everyone who requests a ride at least one day before the ride. In order to meet that demand, we must be able to change pick-up times. ADA regulations state that ride times can be changed up to one hour before or after the requested time. Customers are not asked to depart early from work or medical appointments, but could arrive at their destination earlier than the appointment time and may be picked up from work or appointments later than the requested time.

The Spec-Tran scheduler gives customers a tentative “ready time” window. The ready time window means the driver will arrive up to five minutes before or ten minutes after your scheduled time. If the ready time changes, someone from our office will call the customer with the new pick-up time.

Drivers will not wait any longer than five minutes for customers to board the vehicle. Customers must be ready to depart at any time during the 15 minutes ready time window. If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within five minutes after the driver arrives, the driver will be instructed to leave and a No-Show will be assessed to the customer. If the trip is the customer’s first trip of the day, another trip will not be scheduled to go back for the customer unless

the problem was the result of an error made by CATA's scheduling staff or driver.

How much time should customers allow for trips?

Spec-Tran is public transportation. Ride times take longer than traveling by private automobiles.

Can customers choose the type of vehicle they ride in?

Spec-Tran uses small lift-equipped buses and low floor vans. Rides for customers who need to use the lift are scheduled on buses. Other rides are scheduled on buses or vans that will be in the customer's area at the time of the ride.

Are there limitations on the types and sizes of wheelchairs?

CATA vehicles can accommodate all "common" wheelchairs. ADA regulations define a "common" wheelchair as being a three or four-wheeled device that is usable indoors. It can be up to 30 inches wide by 48 inches long when measured two inches from the ground. Wheelchairs should weigh no more than 600 pounds when occupied.

How are rides cancelled?

To cancel a ride, call (517) 394-CATA (2282) as soon as possible so that drivers' schedules

can be adjusted. The cancellation line uses a recorded answering device and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Cancellations must be made at least 90 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Rides cancelled less than 90 minutes in advance are considered No-Shows.

What is a No-Show?

A No-Show is defined as:

- Failure to board the vehicle within five minutes of driver's arrival during the ready time window.
- Canceling a ride less than 90 minutes before the pick-up time.

Examples of how a No-Show can occur:

- The ready time window is 9:45–10:00 AM. The customer calls the Spec-Tran office at 9:00 AM to cancel the ride which is less than 90 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. This would be a No-Show.
- The scheduled pick-up time is 5:00 PM and the ready time window is 4:55–5:10 PM. The driver arrives at 4:55 PM. If the customer does not show up by 5:00 PM, the driver may be instructed to leave, and the ride will be counted as a No-Show.

- The scheduled pick-up time is 11:30 AM. The driver arrives at 11:30 AM, and the customer tells the driver to leave because the ride is not needed. This would be a No-Show. The trip's fare cannot be paid to cancel the No-Show.

No-Shows that are beyond the customer's control, may be excused. The paratransit manager may request proof of the reason for the No-Show before excusing it.

Are there penalties for No-Shows?

Under the ADA regulations, penalties may be applied when a pattern of No-Shows is established. Penalties can include fines and suspension of service. Spec-Tran customers are notified by letter of each No-Show and of the appeal process. The Spec-Tran No-Show policy complies with ADA regulations.

How much assistance does the driver provide?

Spec-Tran picks customers up and lets them off at the curb anywhere in CATA's service area. Drivers will assist customers on and off the vehicle, but cannot always leave the vehicles to look for customers or escort them to the door.

- Drivers are not required to load and unload shopping bags and other personal items.

- Drivers are not allowed to enter private residences.

What type of items may customers bring on the vehicle?

Customers may bring mobility devices such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc. As a courtesy to others in the vehicle, customers are asked to limit other items to the size of four paper or eight plastic shopping bags.

Can customers bring someone to help them?

Customers may bring a personal assistant with them at no charge.

Can customers bring others who are not personal assistants?

Spec-Tran customers may bring one guest. The guest must pay the same fare as the customer.

Personal assistants and guests must ride from the beginning of the trip to the end of the trip. They cannot be picked up or dropped off along the way.

It is important to let the Spec-Tran office know if personal assistants, guests or

children will be accompanying the customer so that we can allow sufficient seating space in the vehicle.

What if I bring a young child?

Children may accompany their parents as guests. Due to the nature of our service, any child who rides in a CATA Spec-Tran van will be required to adhere to Michigan Law concerning safety restraints while in the van. Children under the age of eight must be in approved safety seats, wherever they are seated. For children less than 20 pounds, the child or infant seat must face the rear of the vehicle, according to the standard in the Code Federal Regulations. Children 8 years or younger or less than 4'9" tall must have a booster seat. CATA customers must provide the appropriate safety restraints. Failure to provide proper safety equipment at the time of the trip will result in the ride being cancelled and a No-Show being assessed. These safety devices are not required on small buses.

Are service animals allowed?

ADA regulations define a service animal as any animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals are welcome on all CATA vehicles.

- Service animals must be clean and well groomed.

- Service animals must be leashed and under the owner's control. Customers should not ask the driver to take the animal's leash or harness or to assist in the care of the animal.
- The customer is responsible for knowing the best way for the animal to board the vehicle.
- Service animals are expected to sit on the floor of the vehicle.
- Animals that display disruptive or threatening behavior will not be allowed on any CATA service or property.

What happens if customers are not ready when the driver arrives?

Customers should be ready at least ten minutes before their scheduled pick-up time. If the driver arrives at least five-minutes early, they are not required to wait for customers beyond the scheduled time. The driver may leave without the customer.

What should customers do if the driver is late?

Because drivers are faced with numerous unpredictable conditions that cause delays, we do not consider a driver to be late until ten minutes after the pick-up time. If the ride

is more than ten minutes late, please call the Spec-Tran office.

What should customers do if they are not finished with their appointment when the driver arrives?

CATA understands that our customers are sometimes delayed for reasons they can't control. We encourage customers to:

- Allow extra time at appointments.
- Let the receptionist or nurse know the time of their pick-up.
- Ask someone to call the Spec-Tran office as soon as the customer knows that he or she will not be ready at the scheduled time.

The Spec-Tran staff will do their best to schedule a later pick-up. However, there could be a long delay.

What if a customer's appointment ends early?

Customers who are finished with an appointment more than 30 minutes early should call the Spec-Tran office. If possible, an earlier pick-up will be arranged.

Can customers change a ride while en route?

Customers may call the Spec-Tran office up to 30 minutes before the scheduled trip to ask

for a destination change if the new location is a shorter distance and along the planned route of the original trip. If a destination is changed, customers are responsible for canceling later rides and making other arrangements for their return rides. Drivers cannot be responsible for canceling or changing customer rides.

How do customers express concerns or complaints?

Customers are encouraged to contact the Spec-Tran office to discuss any concerns or complaints regarding service. The Spec-Tran staff is responsible for resolving problems with service in a prompt and effective manner.

CATA is advised on issues important to persons with disabilities by a Local Advisory Council. Meetings are held bi-monthly. The public is welcome to attend. For meeting times and dates, please call our main office at (517) 394-1100.

Spec-Tran customers have a right to:

- Rides that are on time.
- Drivers who are trained to meet passenger needs.
- Safe and properly maintained vehicles.
- Properly fastened seat belts and wheelchair tie-downs.

- Vehicles that match the needs of the customer.
- Efficiently routed trips.
- Professional, courteous and respectful treatment.

Spec-Tran customers have the responsibility to:

- Call no later than 5:00 PM on the day before the trip is needed.
- Have all pertinent ride information ready at the time of the call.
- Cancel rides as soon as possible.
- Be ready at least ten minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Have the correct fare for each ride.
- Use wheelchair securements and seatbelts that are provided in the vehicle.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke in CATA vehicles.
- Keep mobility aids in clean and good condition.
- Follow guidelines regarding service animals.
- Keep driveways, sidewalks and steps clear of snow and ice.
- Provide a personal assistant if needed.
- Limit packages to no more than four paper bags or eight plastic shopping bags.
- Treat drivers with courtesy and respect.