

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE



# Rider's Guide



Door-to-door transportation  
for people with disabilities  
who are unable to use  
Metrobus, Metrorail or  
Metromover independently

[www.miamidade.gov/transit](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit)





# Contents

Welcome to STS,.....	1
What is STS?.....	1
Who is Eligible for STS?.....	2
Keeping Eligibility and Information Up-to-Date .....	3
STS Identification Card.....	4
Recertification of Eligibility .....	4
Does a Rider’s Certification Expire.....	5
Where can STS Transport a Rider .....	5
Riders have a right to: .....	6
Riders have a responsibility to.....	7
Drivers are responsible for:.....	9
Drivers are not responsible for: .....	10
Companions.....	10
Children as Companions.....	11
Personal Care Attendant (PCA).....	11
Children as Certified Passengers .....	12
Service Animal Policy.....	13
Mobility Devices.....	14
Miscellaneous Medical Equipment .....	16
Reservation, Telephone Numbers & Hours .....	16
Information a Rider Should Provide	
When Making a Reservation .....	17
1) Reserving Trips for Service.....	18
2) Same-Day Emergency Reservations....	18
Subscription Reservations.....	19
Cancellations .....	20
No-Shows .....	20
How a Rider Can avoid Cancellations; and No-Shows?.....	23
If a Rider is Running Late.....	24

How long does a STS trip take? .....	25
Pick-ups .....	26
The Driver will: .....	27
Pick-Up Locations Procedure .....	28
Free-Fare Program .....	29
Fare Structure .....	30
Fare Pre-Payment Options .....	30
Service Hours .....	27
Late Vehicle Assistance.....	32
Passenger Assistance Policy .....	32
Unattended Passenger Policy.....	33
Lost and Found Policy .....	33
Customer Satisfaction Survey.....	34
Service Infractions, and Suspension of Service .....	30
Miami-Dade Transit Reserves the Right to: .....	35
Steps of the Suspension Process .....	39
Appealing a Service Suspension .....	40
Miami-Dade Transit is Responsible for:.....	40
Riders Should Call Miami-Dade Transit if: .....	41
Resolving a Service Problem.....	41
Important Reminders .....	44
Summary of ADA Grievance Procedure .....	45
STS Group Meetings.....	46
Hurricane Evacuation Planning.....	48
Evacuate Early! Don't Wait!.....	49
County Telephone Numbers .....	52
Websites.....	52
Transit Information 311 .....	53
Contractor Telephone Numbers.....	54

## Welcome to STS

The information contained in this Special Transportation Service (STS) Rider's Guide has been developed to help new riders become acquainted with the STS program and to provide the guidelines required to use the service effectively.

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this guide or would like to request a copy of this guide in an alternate format, please contact Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000**; or email us at **paratransit@miamidade.gov**; or visit us at our webpage at; **<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation.asp>**

## What is STS?

STS is a shared-ride public transportation service of Miami-Dade County in compliance with the complementary paratransit service provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. STS operates throughout most of urbanized Miami-Dade County, some parts of southern Broward County, and up to mile marker 50 in northern Monroe County. STS is not restricted to doctor's ap-

pointments but can be used for work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc.

STS provides door-to-door transportation service for people with disabilities who are unable to use Metrobus, Metrorail, or Metromover. Transportation is provided from the main entrance of the place of origin to the main entrance of the destination.

Miami-Dade County has contracted with private transportation carriers to provide STS. The carriers use vans, minivans, sedans, and lift equipped vans to transport riders.

## **Who is Eligible for STS?**

- People whose physical or mental disabilities prevent their independent use of accessible public transportation
- People with temporary disabilities that may be eligible for STS during the period of their disability
- People with disabilities visiting from out-of-town that may be presumed eligible if they have been certified in another Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) jurisdiction or can prove their disabilities

- To register with STS, contact Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office at (786) 469-5000 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding holidays.

## **Keeping Eligibility and Information up to Date**

A rider must call Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000**, if there is a change in the following:

- The rider’s address or telephone number
- The emergency contact’s name or telephone number
- The type of mobility device used
- The physical or mental condition
- The need for a Personal Care Attendant (PCA)
- The rider is identified as an inactive customer
- There is no longer a need for the service
- To make changes in their subscriptions (786) 469-5049

When a person is registered as eligible for ADA paratransit service and does not use the service for 12 consecutive months, the rider is considered an “inactive” customer and the file is “archived.” If a reservationist informs

a rider that they are an inactive customer, the rider will need to contact the Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office. They may reactivate the rider's records and provide them with service, provided their eligibility has not expired.

## **STS Identification Card**

A STS EASY Card to use the service is issued to the rider upon certification. If a rider loses their card, there is a \$10.00 replacement fee payable by check or money order to: Miami-Dade County Transit.

The STS EASY Card enables the rider to use similar services in other cities, for (21) days. The rider should call the Transit Authority in the city they plan on visiting to make arrangements and must follow the local service rules, scheduling procedures, and pay the fares.

**The STS EASY Card must be carried by the STS customer at all times while traveling in an STS Vehicle.**

## **Recertification of Eligibility**

STS users may be required to recertified for STS Service upon being notified by Miami-Dade Transit. It



may also be necessary to re-evaluate an individual's eligibility from time to time or if the condition of the disability changes.

## **Does a Rider's Certification Expire?**

The eligibility period will depend on the STS participant's specific disability and, if temporary, its duration.

## **Where Can STS Transport a Rider?**

The program service areas match the MDT public transportation system (bus and rail) and includes most urbanized Miami-Dade County, but excludes certain locations such as: the Trail Glades Range, Miccosukee Indian Reservation Bingo Hall and the Tribal Center, Fisher Island, and areas south of mile marker 50 (Florida Keys).

The Miami-Dade County service area is based on regulations set forth before the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners (BCC). This area currently includes Miami-Dade, portions of Broward and Monroe counties as paralleled by MDT's Fixed Route system and may be changed by the County from time to time.

## **STS Rider's Rights & Responsibilities**

### **Riders have a right to:**

- Travel in air-conditioned vehicles
- Drivers trained to meet riders' special transportation needs
- Safe, clean, properly equipped, smoke-free vehicles
- Safe, clean, properly equipped smoke-free vehicles
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs
- Pick-ups within 30 minutes after the negotiated reservation time. Riders are not required to be ready to travel before the negotiated pick up time, but can do so if desired
- Professional and courteous treatment by staff and other passengers
- Refuse unsafe service and file complaints without fear of reprisal
- Prompt investigation and effective resolution of complaints.
- Current and complete program information
- Assistance getting in and out of the vehicle and to the main entrance of destination. Drivers are not permitted to physically lift riders and to enter buildings or residences
- Service animals are permitted
- Travel with Service Animals

**For additional information call  
STS Customer Service at  
(786) 469-5000.**

**Riders have a responsibility to:**

- Be informed about program benefits and limitations
- Schedule trip requests from 1 to 7 days in advance. If a rider waits until the last minute to make a reservation, we may not be able to meet the rider's exact requested time. In accordance with the ADA, riders may be asked to negotiate a different time of pick-up, up to 1 hour before and 1 hour after the requested time. Once the time has been negotiated, the service provider is not permitted to change the time without the rider's consent. Riders are recommended to call between the hours of 8:30 am and 11:30 am to make reservations.
- Be ready and waiting at the main entrance of pick-up location. Drivers will announce their presence at the main entrance door but they will not enter buildings or residences, or call to search for riders
- Remain at the pick-up location for 30 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time
- Call in trip cancellations as soon as possible, but no later than 1 hour

before the scheduled pick-up time (Calls received after one hour may be considered a “No Show”)

- Have times, addresses, zip codes, contact telephone number and other needed information ready when making a reservation
- Present the correct fare. Drivers do not provide change.
- Carry their STS EASY Card at all times while riding in an STS vehicle
- Wear seat belts
- Not smoke, eat, or drink while in the vehicle
- Be courteous to others and avoid distracting the driver
- Keep wheelchairs or other mobility aids in good working condition, including having an operable wheelchair brake
- Maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene
- Refrain from abusive, threatening, or obscene language or other inappropriate actions
- Refrain physical abuse to another rider or the driver
- Refrain from petting guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner
- Refrain from operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment

- Refrain from littering
- Wear shirts and shoes or other footwear
- Control children traveling with you
- Refrain from carrying dangerous weapons on any STS vehicles
- Expect share-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. Travel time should be comparable to service provided by the public transportation system including walk time and transfers
- Request pick-up time taking into consideration the 30-minute window time, distance, and rush hour periods
- Allow sufficient time, at least 1½ hours (90 minutes), between scheduled drop-off and return time
- Advise reservation agents of appointment times. If a rider must arrive at a certain time, the agent can provide the rider with a pick-up time that takes into consideration travel and the rider's appointment times.

**Drivers are responsible for:**

- Providing safe, courteous and reliable service
- Providing door to door service
- Reporting all accidents and incidents immediately

- Providing a minimum amount of assistance for riders capable of transferring from a mobility aid. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the customer moves in and out of the device.

**Drivers are not responsible for:**

- Carrying riders or wheelchairs up/down flights of stairs
- Providing wheelchairs or Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)
- Entering buildings or residences to search for riders
- Waiting with a rider at a drop-off location (See Unattended Passenger Policy)
- Calling riders on cellular phones or building intercoms

## **Companions**

Companions may ride with a certified passenger, provided both are picked-up and dropped-off at the same address. Certified riders may travel together, but must always pay the fare. Certified riders are not eligible to travel free of charge as a Personal Care Attendant for another certified passenger.

Companions, including children regardless of age, pay the same fare

as the certified passenger. Additional companions may ride with advance notification, provided there is room in the vehicle. Riders traveling with children five years or younger shall provide a child restraint (car seat) as required by law.

Riders should ensure that they advise the reservationist at time of reservation if they are traveling with companions and/or a child.

## **Children as Companions**

Certified passengers may bring one child as a companion and additional children if space is available. The rider should call on the day of service to find out if there is room. The certified passenger must be able to manage the child by him or herself or with the help of a PCA.

Companions may ride with a certified passenger, provided both are picked up and dropped-off at the same address.

## **Personal Care Attendant**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet the rider's needs and without whom the trip is not possible. Riders

may travel with a PCA and additional companions as space permits.

It is recommended, but not mandated, that persons with cognitive disabilities (Alzheimer's, dementia, organic brain syndrome, etc.) and children 12 years of age or younger travel with a PCA.

Remember that the STS driver is similar to a bus driver and cannot function as a caregiver. Both the PCA and the certified rider must be picked-up and dropped-off at the same address. Riders must advise reservationists, at the time of reservation if they are traveling with a PCA. No fare is charged to the PCA, but the certified rider must pay the standard fare.

## **Children as Certified Passengers**

Children whose disability (as opposed to their age) would prevent them from using regular buses and trains may be certified for STS. However, children under the age of 12 who are eligible must travel with a parent or a PCA. Older certified children may be required to travel with a PCA if they are seriously disruptive or present a safety hazard to themselves or others.



## Service Animal Policy

Service animals are permitted by law on any Miami-Dade Transit or STS vehicle.

A service animal is any animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with the disability cannot perform for themselves. No additional fee or deposit may be charged to transport service animals.

Emotional support animals are not trained to perform specific tasks for passengers with disabilities and are not considered service animals as defined in the ADA.

STS is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. A service animal that displays aggressive behavior towards other passengers or otherwise proves a direct threat to the health and safety of others will be excluded from riding the vehicle.

- A disruptive service animal will be treated according to the Illegal and Disruptive Behavior Policy
- Service animals must sit on the floor. They may not occupy a passenger seat.

- If a service animal’s size is such that it takes the floor space of another seat, the service animal shall be treated as a PCA; this does not change the abovementioned policy of animals sitting on the floor.

## **Mobility Devices**

Riders may use wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and other mobility devices on STS vehicles.

A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or more wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

Transit providers must carry a wheelchair and occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements:

- “Legitimate safety requirements” include such circumstances as a wheelchair of such size that would block an aisle or would be too large to fully enter a railcar, would block a vestibule or would interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in case of an emergency.

- This does not apply to securement; a transit provider cannot impose a limitation on the transportation of wheelchairs and other mobility aids based on the inability of the securement system to secure the device to the satisfaction of the transportation provider. It would be inconsistent with this rule to allow transportation providers to deny service to people who use wheelchairs just because particular devices may be problematic from a securement point of view.
- “Legitimate safety requirements” must be based on actual risks, not on mere speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about individuals with disabilities or about the devices they use for mobility purposes.

Riders who are capable of transferring are able to move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle and back. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the rider moves in and out of the device. Drivers are prohibited from physically lifting or carrying riders.

Service Providers cannot transport mobility devices that are broken, without working brakes, or damaged to the extent they pose an immedi-

ate safety threat. Riders must ensure that their wheelchairs or other mobility devices are clean, safe, and in good working condition according to manufacturer's specifications before traveling aboard STS.

Drivers cannot assist riders who use mobility devices up or down steps or other obstructions over five eighths (5/8) of an inch in height. A ramp must be available or the rider must have someone available at the pick-up and drop-off location to provide assistance negotiating barriers.

**For additional information call STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000**

## **Miscellaneous Medical Equipment**

Riders may travel with portable oxygen tanks, and/or respirators when using STS. Equipment must be portable and self-administered.

## **Reservations, Telephone Numbers and Hours**

To reserve a trip, call the reservation line at **(305) 871-1111**, press 1 for English (2 for Spanish) and then 1 again to reach an agent. For Video Relay Number 711 / TDD service for the hearing impaired, call (305) 265-9435. Hours

of operation are Monday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Problems making reservations should be reported to STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000.**

## **Information a Rider Should Provide When Making a Reservation**

- Name, STS ID number, and telephone number
- Exact street addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers of the pick-up and/or drop-off locations including the name of the complex, if applicable
- Special pick-up directions, such as landmarks, specific entrance, exit, store, or building etc., at shopping centers, college campuses, large medical complexes, or other confusing locations. Riders must be very specific as there are multiple pick-up locations and drivers need to know exactly where the rider will be waiting
- The time the rider would like to arrive at their destination or the desired pick-up time
- Requested return time
- Whether or not the rider will be traveling alone
- Number of companions, PCA's and/or children traveling with the rider

## **1) Reserving trips for service**

Reservations for STS can be made from 1 to 7 days in advance of the expected travel date. **However, next day trip reservations must be made by 5:00 p.m. the day before a rider wishes to travel.**

**Riders are encouraged to call for reservation on weekends or on weekdays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. when the phone lines are less busy.**

During peak travel periods, it may be necessary for the agent to negotiate an earlier or later pick-up and/or return time based on vehicle capacity and/or availability. The agent will inform the rider of this at time of reservation.

**The agent cannot insist on a pick-up time (at either end of the trip) that varies by more than one hour from the rider's desired travel time. Riders should remember to allow ample travel time when placing a reservation as there may be other riders with different pick-up and drop-off points sharing the vehicle.**

## **2) Same-day Emergency Reservations**

Same-day service is not available.

**For life-threatening emergencies the riders need to call 911.**

## **Subscription Reservations**

Subscriptions by definition are for trips that do not change. Frequent changes, cancellations, and no shows, will result in the cancellation of the subscription.

Riders may request subscription service if they make the same trip at least three times per week to work, school, religious service, medical appointments, etc. Once scheduled, subscription service is automatic and the rider does not need to place daily phone calls to schedule these trips, except to cancel or make minor changes for a specific date of the subscription service.

To be approved for subscription service, the subscription must remain in effect for a minimum period of one month. The rider will need to cancel the subscription trip(s) for the day(s) or month(s) they will not be using it. To do so, the rider needs to make it clear to the reservationist that they are cancelling for a specific day(s) and not cancelling the subscription trip(s) permanently.

To request new subscription service, update an existing subscription (due to change in pick-up or drop-off address, time, and phone number) or temporarily put the subscription service on hold, the rider must call **(786) 469-5049** or **(786) 469-5000** between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If a rider needs service on any of these holidays, they must call reservations at **(305) 871-1111** at least one day in advance before 5:00 P.M. to schedule service.

## **Cancellation**

For a same-day cancellation of a reservation, call **(305) 871-1111**. Cancellations should be made as early as possible but at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. The rider



must be sure to indicate if they are cancelling the initial pick-up and/or the return trip.

Cancelling will result in cancellation of the rider's return trip unless the rider specifies that they will need the return trip. Cancellations are very costly to the STS program. Before placing a reservation, riders should be certain that they really plan to travel. Excessive cancellations are an abuse of the STS program and may result in the suspension of service.

## **No-Shows**

It is the goal of STS to always connect with passengers and provide their scheduled ride. When riders do not cancel at least one hour in advance, it is considered a "No-Show."

**If a rider reserves service and decides not to travel, they must call (305) 871-1111 to cancel the trip at least one hour before the requested travel time or the rider's record will be marked "No-Show."**

Customers will not be marked as a No Show if the vehicle arrived more than 30 minutes late, early (before the pick-up time) or is not at the designated pick-up location.

**Customers should call (786) 469-5000 to report invalid No Shows.**

No Shows will be excused when they are the result of circumstances beyond the customer's control. Examples include: Family emergencies, illness that precludes the rider from calling and appointments that ran long and did not provide the customer an opportunity to cancel in a timely manner.

STS reserves the right to suspend service, if a consistent pattern of No-Shows and Cancellations is identified. (This is considered an abuse of service.)

**Note: Customers will be provided 15 days to appeal prior to any service suspension. Customers should call STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000 or the Miami-Dade Transit Office of Civil Rights at (786) 469-5225 for additional appeal information.**

The policy stated below will apply for abuses related to Late Cancellations, Cancellations at the door, and No-Shows.

First incident of three No-Shows in any rolling 30-day period.

**Verbal Warning**

Second incident of three No-Shows in a rolling 30-day period

*Verbal Warning & Written Warning*

Third incident of three No-Shows in a rolling 30-day period

*Final Verbal Warning & Written Warning*

Next single instance of No-Show

*1 Week Suspension*

Each instance of No-Show thereafter,

*2 Week Suspension each*

**Note: Rolling 30 day period starts from first incident to the next.**

## **How Can Riders help Avoid Cancellations & No-Shows**

STS is a vital community resource and there is limited public funding to support it. Cancellations are a major contributor to service costs and system inefficiency.

Rides that are cancelled too late to schedule another trip in their place result in wasted expense and capacity that goes unused. STS riders can help by making sure they only schedule rides they plan to take.

Riders can prevent no-show situations when they:

- Review date, times and addresses with the reservationist to be sure information is correct
- **Call (305) 871-1111 and cancel rides as soon as the ride is no longer needed.**
- **Cancel at least one hour in advance of the scheduled pick-up time.**
- **If possible, please cancel unwanted trips 24 hours in advance.**

### **If a Rider is Running Late:**

Everyone has occasional circumstances outside of their control that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If a rider's appointment is running later than expected and there is a chance they will not be ready for his/her scheduled return trip (or if the rider has missed their ride), the rider needs to call **(305) 871-1111** as soon as possible. The rider's request will be coordinated with the Dispatch office that stays in radio contact with drivers. **Customers can call (786) 469-5000 for additional assistance.**

Every effort will be made to adjust a rider's return trip pick-up time and assign another vehicle to pick the rider

up at a later time. Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of an hour or up to two hours before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.

***Remember:** Allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle and your wait time.*

**Note: If a vehicle is sent and arrives within the 30 minute service window and the rider is not ready, the contractor will attempt to contact the rider using telephone number provided at time of reservation. If the rider cannot be located, they may be assessed a no-show.**

**Invalid No Shows should be reported to STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000**

## **How Long Should an STS Trip Take?**

As a shared ride system, travel time can vary depending on the number of rides being accommodated. Rides will be scheduled so the customer's time on board is no more than the length of time that a comparable trip would take if made on a regular fixed route bus. Sometimes extenuating circum-

stances occur, over which STS has no control (e.g. traffic conditions, road construction, weather). Occasionally when this happens, some trips may exceed this standard. **Riders are encouraged to discuss their travel times with STS Customer Service by calling, (786) 469-5000.**

## **Pick-Ups**

The STS vehicles will pick-up the rider within 30 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time. The rider must be prepared to leave when the vehicle arrives.

Riders must have their STS EASY Card with them at all times when traveling with STS.

Drivers can only wait five minutes for a rider to board. If a rider does not board the vehicle within the allotted five minutes the driver will depart without the rider and go to the next pick-up as they have a schedule to follow. STS is a shared-ride service. Other STS riders may ride in the same vehicle or the vehicle may be scheduled to pick-up another passenger right after the rider reaches his/her destination. Riders' punctuality is required as a courtesy to other STS riders.

If the vehicle arrives before a rider's "negotiated pick-up time," the rider may choose to board early or can board within five minutes of the "negotiated pick-up time." A rider is not required to board the vehicle before the negotiated pick-up time.

**The driver will:**

- Collect the exact fare when a rider is picked up. Drivers do not provide change.

**Note: If a rider prefers not to carry cash, they can call the service provider at (305) 871-1111 to purchase Pre-Paid Tickets. Pre-Paid Tickets can be used in lieu of the cash fare.**

- Assist the rider from the main entrance door at the pick-up location to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance door at the scheduled destination.
- Ask the rider for their STS EASY Card or valid photo identification.
- Ask the rider to sign the manifest, which indicates the actual time the rider was picked-up, and the dollar amount paid as fare.

***IMPORTANT:*** *A rider should review the trip information carefully and be sure it is correct before signing. Report any discrepancies to STS*

*Customer Service at (786) 469-5000. County staff will investigate all discrepancies and complaints.*

## **Pick-Up Locations Procedures**

To provide safe, on-time service for all riders, STS has developed the following pick-up procedures:

**NOTE: Drivers will be in uniform and identify themselves at the main entrance door of the pickup location, but will not go inside. They will not use the horn to notify the rider of their arrival.**

### **Apartments**

Riders in apartment complexes that are inaccessible to STS vehicles must be ready at the main entrance to the complex. If the facility has a guarded gate or limited access, the rider should inform the security staff of the scheduled pick-up and return times. If a rider is visiting someone inside a guarded gate or limited access complex, it is the rider's responsibility to advise the person he/she will be visiting ahead of time for access.

### **Office Complexes**

Riders traveling from a large office complex, medical facility, or other similar area must be ready at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance.



## **Nursing Homes**

Riders traveling from a nursing home should be ready at the main lobby.

## **Adult Day Care And Dialysis Centers**

Riders should be waiting in a designated area when the vehicle arrives to pick them up at the centers. Drivers will assist riders in boarding the vehicle. It is highly recommended that the center contact dispatch if there is a problem with the scheduled pick-up time. STS does not provide emergency trips to the hospital.

## **Malls**

Riders must specify the exact entrance at time of booking.

## **Places of Worship:**

Riders will be picked-up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building.

## **Other Large Areas Not Specified**

Riders will be picked-up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building.

## **Free-Fare Program**

Certified STS riders can use Metrobus and Metrorail free of charge. Elevators are available at every Me-

trorail station. **Call (786) 469-5000 for additional information**

**Riders' decision to use public transportation whenever possible is encouraged by Miami-Dade Transit and will not jeopardize their STS privileges. To plan your public transit trip, riders should call 3-1-1.**

## **STS Fare Structure**

The STS fare for ADA-eligible riders is \$3.50 per one-way trip. Companions pay the same \$3.50 per one-way trip fare as the certified rider. The PCA travels free, but must be pre-certified by the STS Certification Office as part of the rider's permanent certification records.

The \$3.50 fare falls under the guidelines of the ADA of 1990 which stipulates that fares charged for shared-ride complementary Paratransit services be no more than twice the regular public transportation fare. The current Miami-Dade Transit fare is \$2.25 each way.

## **Fare Pre-Payment Options**

STS fare must be paid. Fare evasion is against the law (**Florida Statute 812.015**). Fare evasion can be

reported by calling (786) 469-5000 or (305) 375-2700.

Riders may purchase STS vouchers in advance and use them to pay for trips. Make all payments payable directly to:

**Transportation America**  
**2766 NW 62nd Street**  
**Miami, Florida 33147**  
**(305) 871-1111**

{Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding holidays}

**Cash**

**Credit Card**

{Card information will not be stored}

**Check**

{Vouchers will be mailed to the rider as soon as the check is cleared}

**Customers are required to pay for postage**

**E/check**

{Available upon request}

## **Service Days & Hours**

STS operates during the same days and hours as the regular fixed route service.

## Late-Vehicle Assistance

Riders can call for an ETA 20 minutes after their negotiated time. If the ride has not arrived 30 minutes after the negotiated pickup time, call the Late Vehicle Assistance line at **(305) 871-1111**. **If the problem is not resolved, call the County's Customer Service at (786) 469-5000, during regular business hours.**

The Contractor will dispatch a backup vehicle. However, neither the County nor the contractor will reimburse taxi fares should a rider call a taxi or other private service on their own.

## Passenger Assistance Policies

STS drivers will assist a rider to and from the vehicle. This includes a steadying arm when walking and assistance in getting a wheelchair to and from the main door of the building entrance. If a rider needs assistance in getting to and from their wheelchair or walker into a vehicle, or from the vehicle to the wheelchair or walker, the driver will hold the chair or walker steady for the rider, but cannot lift the rider. Drivers may help carry up to two bags, but no driver may go beyond the threshold of a rider's home or be-

yond the main entrance of any public building.

**Call (786) 460-5000 for additional information**

## **Unattended Passenger Policy**

Riders who cannot be left unattended must have a responsible party at the pick-up and drop-off point. The driver will only wait five minutes for the arrival of a responsible party to meet the STS vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the dispatcher who will contact the service provider and receive approval to continue on their route. The service provider will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person.

**If the rider's emergency contact cannot be reached by the end of the route, the police and protective services will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party.**

## **Lost and Found Policy**

Any article left in a STS vehicle will be turned in to the Contractor by the driver. The Contractor will contact the rider and arrange for the article to be returned during the next service date

or within seven days of contacting the rider.

In the Contractor cannot locate the rider within 30 days, the article shall become property of the Contractor.

If a rider leaves an article behind, please call Transportation America at (305) 871-1111, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Miami-Dade County is not responsible for any items left in the vehicle. Before leaving the STS vehicle, riders should check their packages and personal belongings.

Riders are responsible for retrieving all lost items directly from the MDT – Lost and Found Division.

## **Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Periodically, in-house telephone and field surveys as well as independent surveys may be conducted to gauge customer satisfaction. The survey questions are asked of a random sample of riders. Please help us by participating in the survey, if a rider is contacted.

**Note: You should not provide personal information to any caller. Only provide your STS identification number and name.**

## **Service Infractions and Suspension of Service**

Misuse of the system can result in the suspension of a rider's service. ADA regulations allow STS Service to be denied to riders who engage in violent, illegal, or seriously disruptive behavior. The following acts are considered misuse of the STS program, which could lead to suspension of service:

### **1. Obtaining or using STS services under false pretenses**

The ADA reserves the STS program for individuals certified as eligible for the service.

A rider's service will be cancelled and/or suspended if:

- The rider has made false or misleading statements on their STS application, or
- The rider allows other non-eligible individuals such as friends or family members to ride STS or fixed route using their name or STS Easy Card.

### **2. Excessive No-Shows and/or Late Cancellations.**

No-shows and/or Late Cancellations delay, detour vehicles, and use up space that other riders could

use. (See the Late Cancellation/No-Show Policy.)

### **3. Service Suspension for Abusive or Disruptive Behavior**

For the safety and comfort of all STS riders and drivers, STS has established a policy that addresses when a rider's conduct may adversely affect others involved with the STS program. Disruptive and abusive behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Hazardous Conduct: Any act which creates the potential for physical harm to the driver, other riders, or the general public
- Abusive Conduct: Any offensive act which invades the privacy rights of others, or touching another person in a rude, insolent or angry manner. This includes, but is not limited to verbal abuse of drivers, STS staff or other riders
- Unlawful Harassment: Including unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations
- Disability Related Conduct: Any act that would qualify as misconduct, but is the direct and immediate consequence of the rider's disability may result in the rider being



required to travel with a PCA. Such a determination will depend on the severity of the conduct

- Voluntarily and repeatedly violating riding rules, including:
  - Smoking in vehicles
  - Refusing to remain seated and keeping seat belt on
  - Eating or drinking in the vehicles
  - Fare evasion
  - Operating or tampering with any equipment while on board the vehicle. This rule includes operating a hydraulic lift and attempting to remove wheelchair “tie-downs”
  - Defacing equipment
  - Having no one to receive a rider at home (if necessary), causing unnecessary delays for the driver and other passengers
  - Refusing to comply with other requirements specified in other policies stated in this guide

Depending on the severity of the violation, the following penalties will be enforced for riders who violate any of the Rules of Conduct:

Depending on the severity of the violation, the following penalties will be enforced for riders who violate any of the Rules of Conduct:

- One violation will result in a verbal warning
- Two violations will result in a written warning
- Three or more violations will result in suspension of service for a minimum of 1 week per incident.

Additional suspension time up to and including a permanent loss of the service will apply for repeated offences.

A case-by-case evaluation for continued eligibility will be conducted for riders engaging in repeat hazardous, abusive, or disability related conduct that impacts the safety of a passenger or driver or the safe and reliable delivery of service. In some cases, STS may require the use of a PCA on a temporary or permanent basis.

#### **4. Violent Behavior or Illegal Activities**

Riders, their PCA or companions traveling with riders, who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or driver, or who engage in other illegal activities, will be subject to immediate and permanent suspension from STS. They may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

## **Miami-Dade Transit reserves the right to:**

- Suspend or cancel service for any individual who:
  - No longer meets the eligibility criteria; has moved outside the STS area or is unwilling to cooperate with agency procedures for the STS program
  - Lives in an area that is inaccessible (i.e. unpaved roads)
  - • Behaves in a manner that is disruptive, abusive, threatening, or endangers the safety of staff and other passengers
  - Abuses the program or has excessive No-Shows and Cancellations

## **Steps of the Suspension Process**

If a rider is reported or observed to be abusing the service in any way, including but not limited to the types of abuse mentioned above, MDT will investigate.

If the rider's behavior or use of the service is determined to be inappropriate, they will receive a written notice of service suspension, which explains the reasons for the suspension. The rider will also receive written instructions for appealing the service suspension.

## Appealing your Service Suspension

A rider may appeal their service suspension within 30 days of the date on the written notice of suspension.

All appeals for service suspension should be addressed to:

**Miami-Dade Transit**

*Office of Civil Rights*

701 NW First Court, Suite 1700

Miami, Florida 33136-3923

The rider may use the service until a decision is made EXCEPT if the rider is appealing a suspension due to seriously disruptive or violent behavior. The rider may not use the service unless and until the MDT ADA Officer overturns the suspension.

**Note: Riders who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or driver may also be subject to criminal prosecution.**

**Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for:**

- Resolving riders' concerns
- Monitoring the performance of the contracted service
- Certifying and registering eligible applicants
- Communicating program changes to riders

To assist the County in continuing to deliver quality service and keeping program costs within approved budget limitations, riders' assistance is required.

By adhering to STS Program Policies contained in this guide riders will help us continue to provide the disabled community with this important transportation service.

**A Rider Should Call STS Customer Service at (786) 469-5000, if:**

- The rider has a recurring problem with late vehicles
- The ride is unsafe
- The rider is treated rudely
- The STS vehicle is in poor or unsafe condition. This includes wheelchair restraints, seatbelts, lifts or ramps, and cleanliness
- The rider is in a wheelchair transported sideways. The ADA requires forward and/or backward securement using 4-point tie-downs, shoulder and lap belts
- The rider is injured or involved in an accident while using this service.

**Resolving Service Concerns**

Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for resolving service concerns

quickly and efficiently. If a rider has a complaint or compliment about the service, a driver, or a provider, please e-mail comments to **Paratransit@miamidade.gov** or visit our website at MDT Office of Civil Rights at (786) 469-5225

**<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/sts-comments-concerns.asp>**

You can also call the County's STS Customer Service Office at **(786) 469-5000**, or you can write to:

**Miami-Dade Transit**

*Paratransit Operations*

701 NW First Court, Suite 1200

Miami, Florida 33136-3923

Complaints should be reported to the County's Customer Service on the date the incident occurs or on the very next business day after the incident. Every complaint will be investigated.

When a complaint is filed, the County will:

- Document and research the complaint
- Require the contracted service provider to respond to the County within 7 business days from the provider's receipt of the complaint
- Work with the provider to solve the concern

- Notify the rider of complaint resolution

To assist us in researching a complaint, it is important that the rider report the complaint as soon as possible, while the details are still clear. The following information is helpful:

- Date and time of incident
- Name of rider
- Rider's identification number
- Phone number
- Address
- Trip destination
- Description of vehicle and/or vehicle number
- Driver's name
- Scheduled pick-up time
- Actual pick-up time
- Details of the incident

**Recurring concerns are referred to the MDT Paratransit Administration at (786) 469-5000**

If a provider fails to comply with the agreed upon resolution to the concern, the STS Program manager will then recommend appropriate sanctions against the service contractor.

If a rider is not satisfied with the resolution of their service problem,

the rider may contact any one of the following:

- MDT Office of Civil Rights at **(786) 469-5225**
- State’s Transportation Disadvantaged Helpline at **1 (800) 983-2435**

### **Important Reminders**

- Book trips at least one day in advance, preferably between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. when the phones are less busy
- Have your identification number, accurate information and directions ready to give to the reservationist when making your reservation request
- Give specifics to help the driver find you at the pickup location. This is particularly important at large medical facilities, colleges, and shopping centers
- Write down the reservation or cancellation confirmation number given to you by the reservationist. This information will help us assist you if you experience a problem
- Call the STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000** to notify of any changes such as address, telephone



- number, disability status etc; so that way we can keep your transportation record current
- Tipping the driver is not permitted
  - Service animals specially trained to assist riders with disabilities are permitted by federal law in the vehicle
  - Service animals travel inside the vehicle with their owner and will be considered a rider when determining vehicle capacity. Service animals are not permitted to sit on the seats and must sit on the floor during transit
  - Whenever possible, try to travel between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when traffic conditions are generally less congested

## **Summary of ADA Grievance Procedure**

Any Miami-Dade Transit customer who believes that service on the Metrobus, Metrorail, Metromover, or STS does not comply with the ADA may file a grievance by contacting:

### **Miami-Dade Transit**

*Office of Civil Rights*

701 NW First Court, Suite 1700

Miami, Florida 33136-3923

**(786) 469-5225**

Your grievance should include sufficient detail to permit proper research and response to your concern. Be sure to include your name, address, day time phone number, date of incident, time of day, location and description of the problem. If you require a response in an accessible format – large print, Braille, or audio tape – please specify the preferred format. Assistance submitting a written grievance is available upon request.

A preliminary determination of whether or not an ADA violation exists and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to correct the problem, will be sent to the customer within 30 calendar days of receipt. MDT customers are protected under the ADA and are free to file a grievance without fear of reprisal. For a copy of the ADA grievance procedure, please call **(786) 469-5225**.

## **STS Group Meetings**

The County holds a monthly STS Rider's Meeting to provide riders with the latest STS program news and policy information. The meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings alternate from 2:00 p.m.

to 3:00 p.m. and from 6:00p.m. to 7:00 p.m. every other month. If you are interested in attending, call **(786) 469-5000** to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting. To join the meeting via teleconference, please call **1-800-501-8979** access code **2174951**.

### **Reasonable modification of services:**

On March 13, 2015, the US Department of Transportation amended Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 37, and requires entities to provide reasonable modification of services upon request by riders, provided that the request does not: 1) alter the nature of the services and programs provided by the entity; 2) create a direct threat to the health and safety of others; 3) the individual would be able to use the service without the requested modification. Miami-Dade Transit will take into consideration requests for modification of services on a case-by-case basis and render a decision using the abovementioned criteria. Miami-Dade Transit can also provide, to the maximum extent possible, an alternate modification if a request for modification is unfeasible under the abovementioned criteria. Any requests

for reasonable modification should be addressed to:

**Miami-Dade Transit**

**Paratransit Operations**

701 NW 1st Ct, Suite 1300

Miami, FL 33136

Phone: 786-469-5000

Email: [paratransit@miamidade.gov](mailto:paratransit@miamidade.gov)

If a request for reasonable modification is denied by Paratransit Operations, riders may request a review by the Miami-Dade Transit's ADA Officer at the following address:

**Miami-Dade Transit Office of Civil Rights-ADA Compliance**

701 NW 1st Ct, Suite 1700

Miami, FL 33136

Phone: 786-469-5225

Email: [mo7225@miamidade.gov](mailto:mo7225@miamidade.gov)

## **Hurricane Evacuation Planning**

When the County issues an evacuation order, STS will provide certified riders with a one-way trip.

MDT STS will not provide shopping trips during an emergency. Riders should stock medications and supplies well in advance of hurricane season.

STS will stop operating when winds reach 40 miles per hour.

**The Hurricane Answer Center is activated during emergencies to**

**answer questions and provide information about public shelter openings and other emergency procedures.**

**Call (305) 468-5900** or (Video Relay Number **711** or **311**).

## **Evacuate Early! Don't Wait!**

If you are requested to evacuate, plan to seek shelter with family or friends who live inland. Remember that public evacuation centers are uncomfortable, crowded and are intended as a last resort for people who have no other place to go during a storm.

If you plan to go to a public evacuation center and need assistance with daily living because of a medical condition or disability, contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management to register for a Special Needs Center.

The Special Needs Program also offers transportation assistance for STS and non-STS certified persons. To register, **call 311** or contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Evacuation Assistance Registry. The Video Relay Number **711** / TTD number is **(305) 468-5402**.

# County Phone Numbers

STS Certification Enrollment Office  
and Customer Service

(Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Exclud-  
ing holidays) 786-469-5000

STS Administration:

To leave a message (24 hours)  
(786)-469-5049

Toll-Free number 1-888-543-4822

Video Relay Number 711 / TDD

(Hearing impaired) 305-263-5475

## Websites

**MDT - Paratransit**

[http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/  
special-transportation.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation.asp)

**STS Application**

[http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/  
special-transportationapplication.  
asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportationapplication.asp)

**STS Complaints and Comments**

[http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/  
sts-comments-concerns.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/sts-comments-concerns.asp)

**Subscription Adjustments**

[http://www.stssubscription@mi-  
amidade.gov](http://www.stssubscription@miamidade.gov)

**STS Rider's Guide**

[http://www.miamidade.gov/pdfs/  
misc/sts-riders-guide.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/pdfs/misc/sts-riders-guide.pdf)

Copies are also available in Braille, large print, and audio cassette for the visually or hearing impaired.

**Miami-Dade Transit**

*Paratransit Operations Division*

701 NW 1st Court, Suite 1200

Miami, Fl 33136-3923

**(786) 469-5000**

**Transit Information 311**

Bus, Rail and Mover (Mon – Fri: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Sat - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

**Transit Information for residents**

South of SW 216 St. **305-891-3131**

Transportation Disadvantage

Help Line **1-800-983-2435**

# Contractor Phone Numbers

Reservations (Daily: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Subscriptions (M–F: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Cancellations (24 hours)

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)

Contractor Administration & Pre-Paid

Ticket Purchase (M–F: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

**305-871-1111**

Video Relay Number 711/TDD

(24 hours)

**305-265-9435**

If calling from outside

Miami-Dade County (24hours)

**1-888-543-4822**

## Websites

**MDT - Paratransit**

**<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation.asp>**

**STS Application**

**<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation-application.asp>**

**STS Complaints**

**<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/sts-comments-concerns.asp>**



# Notes

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## **Miami-Dade County**

**Carlos A. Gimenez** Mayor

### **Board of County Commissioners**

**Jean Monestime** Chairman

**Esteban Bovo, Jr.** Vice Chairman

**Barbara J. Jordan** District 1

**Jean Monestime** District 2

**Audrey M. Edmonson** District 3

**Sally A. Heyman** District 4

**Bruno A. Barreiro** District 5

**Rebeca Sosa** District 6

**Xavier L. Suarez** District 7

**Daniella Levine Cava** District 8

**Dennis C. Moss** District 9

**Sen. Javier D. Souto** District 10

**Juan C. Zapata** District 11

**Jose "Pepe" Diaz** District 12

**Esteban Bovo, Jr.** District 13

**Harvey Ruvin** Clerk of Courts

**Pedro J. Garcia** Property Appraiser

**Robert A. Cuevas, Jr.** County Attorney

Miami-Dade County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its programs or services. Auxiliary aids and services for communication are available with five days' advance notice. For material in alternate format (audiotape, Braille or computer disk), a sign-language interpreter or other accommodations, please contact: Miami-Dade Transit, Office of Civil Rights and Labor Relations, 701 NW 1st Court, Suite 1700, Miami, FL 33136. Attention: Marcos Ortega. Telephone: 786-469-5225, Fax: 786-469-5589. E-mail: mo7225@miamidade.gov.