

What is SweetHART ADA Complementary Paratransit Service?

SweetHART ADA Complementary Paratransit Service is a door-to-door bus service provided for persons of any age with mobility impairments that make it impossible to access the public Citybus services. ADA Paratransit provides trips to these people with reservations in advance. All vehicles are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

ADA Paratransit is available in Danbury, Bethel, Brookfield, and New Milford within ¾ mile of a citybus route, when the public buses are running. For most trips this is between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Saturday and between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday.

Registration

Applicants should fill out the Statewide ADA Paratransit Application available at HARTransit.com from the HARTransit office.

Applicants are asked to include the name and contact information for a professional familiar with their condition in case there are any questions related to eligibility. After you submit your application, you will be contacted by staff to arrange a face-to-face interview at the HARTransit office. Transportation will be provided to the inter-

view if you require it. An environmental survey and/or medical verification may be necessary.

If you were previously certified to use ADA Paratransit by another transit agency, you need only submit a copy of your proof of eligibility to use HARTransit's service, but must be recertified within 3 years.

Application Determination Process

Applicants will receive a written notice with a determination of eligibility within 21 days following the interview process. If you have not received a determination of eligibility, you shall be treated as eligible and provided service on the 22nd day until and unless HARTransit denies your application. If you are denied eligibility, or given either conditional or temporary eligibility, you will receive a written notice with specific reasons for the decision and a notice of your right to appeal.

ADA Paratransit Eligibility Appeal Policy

The SweetHART Eligibility Appeal Policy can be found online at: www.hartransit.com/sweethart/paratransit.

Cost (exact change required)

\$3.00 – One-Way

\$4.00 – Same day trips
Discount 10-Ride pass can be purchased online at HARTransit.com or at the HARTransit office for \$27, (62 Federal Road in Danbury), 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Thursday and 8:30am-1:00pm on Fridays.

Booking Trips in Advance

To request a trip, call (203) 744-4070 and press option 3, between 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You may make advance reservations for any purpose as early as 2 calendar weeks before your trip, or as late as 4:30 p.m. the day before your trip.

You may leave a message to book trips weekends or holidays for the following day by calling 203-744-4070 x232 or following the prompts from the telephone system.

When you call, the scheduler will give you a 30 minute window of time within which your bus will arrive for your pick up.

Peak Calling Period

HARTransit offers early callers an opportunity to make their requests quickly with less time on the phone. HARTransit identifies a peak calling period of Monday morning from 7 to 11 a.m. for trips the following week.

All ADA-eligible trips called in either two weeks in advance or during the peak calling period are considered equally regarding the time of the call. This means that there is no advantage to calling at 7 a.m. as opposed to any other time up to 11 a.m., and there is no need to rush to be the first to call.

Further, HARTransit processes these trip requests exactly as callers ask for them without holding them on the phone while schedulers search buses for available times.

If there is a conflict between trip requests made before or during the peak calling period, priority for the preferred time is given to the passenger with the more reliable riding history over the last 60 days. However, any adjusted ADA-eligible trip will always still be honored within one hour of the initial request and scheduled to meet any appointment time. HARTransit will inform passengers of adjustments to their negotiated or preferred time at least one day in advance, and sooner if possible.

Please note that the peak calling period will be moved to Tuesday if the scheduling office is closed Monday in observance of a holiday.

Standing Booking Requests

If you have a regular trip, you can set up a standing booking request, which elimi-

nates the need for recurring phone calls to schedule. Standing booking requests are appropriate for customers who usually cancel less than 20% of scheduled trips within a two month period.

Trip Scheduling Priority

In general, passengers eligible for ADA Complementary Paratransit Service have scheduling priority over passengers without such eligibility, as long as the trip origin and destination are both within the ADA service area. However, coordination of trips may require some trip requests to be adjusted up to one hour from the time requested as long as the alternate time allows the passenger to meet appointments, such as a doctor's visit or work shift. Generally, the probability of getting the exact preferred time range for pick-up improves the earlier the trip is requested.

Same Day Trips

Same day trips may be made on a limited basis depending on openings in the schedule. There is a limit of 2 same day trips per month per rider, and same day trips have a higher fare of \$4.

Will-Calls (Medical Trips Only)

If you have a medical appointment and the time of your return trip is uncertain, you may leave your return trip unsched-

uled and call when ready. The number to call when ready is (203) 744-4070, then press option 2.

The next available bus will pick you up after you call. Please be aware that will-call trips are dependent on the availability of buses at the time of the call and therefore may require waiting time of over 30 minutes.

Will-calls are not available on Sundays, evenings or for trips from or to New Milford.

Canceling Your Trip

To cancel your ride, call (203) 744-4070, and press option 2. Please cancel with at least two hours' notice. Last minute cancellations leave open space on buses that could have been used by non-ADA passengers denied reservations.

No-Shows & Late Cancellation Policy

The policies below address passengers that frequently fail to show for scheduled trips or cancel with insufficient notice. Excessive trip no-shows and late cancellations are an inconvenience to other passengers and reduce the efficiency of the bus service.

A **no-show** occurs when a passenger fails to show for a scheduled trip. A passenger cancelling at the door after a scheduled bus has arrived is also consid-

ered a no-show for the purpose of this policy.

A late cancellation is defined as a cancellation in which HARTransit fails to receive 1) Two hours advance notice for trips with both an origin and destination within the ADA service area, or 2) Twelve hours advance notice for trips outside the ADA service area.

No-shows or late cancellations that are beyond the control of the passenger do not violate the policy. Passengers must explain the reasons for no-shows or late cancellations to receive such consideration. HARTransit will also telephone passengers who no-showed to inquire about the reason. Likewise, callers may be questioned about the reason for the cancellation when calling with less than two hours of advance notice.

Should passengers claim that patterns of no-shows or late cancellations are beyond their control, HARTransit reserves the right to request documented verification, including professional verification of matters related to the passenger's health or disability that may contribute to the pattern.

Passenger no-shows and late cancellations violate HARTransit policy when:

- There are 6 or more no-shows and late cancellations combined OR 3 or more no-shows alone during the prior 60-calendar-day

period.

- The violations amount to 15% or more of all trips scheduled for the period.

Passengers that meet the threshold will be notified according to the following schedule:

- First occasion: Written warning
- Second occasion: Second written warning
- Third occasion: One-week suspension
- Four or more occasions: Two-week suspension

Penalties will progress if repeated within 12 months of the last violation. If more than 12 months pass since the last action, the progression restarts at the first level.

In addition, after each step, violation tallies restart from zero over the next 60 days.

Letters notifying passengers of a suspension offer the passenger an opportunity to request a hearing with the Director of Service Development to appeal the suspension before it is enforced. The hearing provides the passenger or his or her representative an opportunity to explain any mitigating circumstances that may prompt a reconsideration of the suspension. Request for a hearing may be made either verbally or in writing, and the suspension is delayed until the Operations Manager

makes a final decision in writing explaining the reason for the decision. Verbal requests for appeals should be made to the Director of Service Development by calling (203) 744-4070. Written requests for appeals should be made to:

HARTransit, 62 Federal Road,
Danbury, CT 06810.

Riding the Bus

Please watch for your bus. Drivers will wait 5 minutes for you after their arrival, and then move on.

HARTransit drivers will escort a passenger from the common public entrance or door to the vehicle, and from the vehicle to the destination door. Assistance to the door is not provided to PCA's or guests. Drivers cannot enter any building, garage, common area or vestibule or assist with any of your items until you have reached the outside access door. Driver assistance does not include lifting/pulling/carrying a passenger from their seat or home, holding them upright, or carrying a customer up or down stairs.

In order to escort you to/from the door, the driver will need a clear, safe path of travel. Generally, the driver may not assist you through narrow

walkways, across boards or temporary walkways, over grass, mud, dirt, packed ice or snow, or through low lying branches, etc. It is your responsibility to ensure that your driveway and walkways are cleared sufficiently to allow the driver to safely access your pick-up location. Drivers will not jeopardize their safety or yours to access your home.

For those using wheelchairs, drivers will assist you to the door provided there is a ramp that meets the standards for ramp design established by the ADA. Metal and wood surfaces must have non-slip material applied.

- Drivers are not allowed to lift or carry wheelchairs up or down any steps.
- Drivers may not tip or in any way lift a wheelchair. This is for your safety and the safety of the driver.
- Drivers may not operate or push a motorized device.
- Drivers must keep the vehicle in plain sight at all times.
- Drivers cannot push customers sitting on a rollator walker. The rollator walker is a walking aid only cannot be used as a transportation device.

If there is a concern about a path of

travel or a particular ramp, a supervisor will visit the location and assess the safety concerns. You will be notified in writing if any concerns are found that will limit service. We will still be able to transport you on the vehicle, but we will not be able to assist you to the door until the issue(s) outlined in the letter are addressed or a reasonable alternative solution is agreed upon.

Baggage & Groceries

Grocery bags and parcels are permitted on HARTransit vehicles, but passengers must maintain control over these items and carry them on the bus themselves in one trip. Drivers will assist with groceries and parcels provided this can be done safely and quickly. HARTransit will make reasonable accommodations to passengers with disabilities that need more assistance. Items with wheels, such as carts or strollers, must be collapsed during travel.

The following are not permitted:

- Large items that restrict movement within the bus
- Items which are dangerous or offensive to other passengers
- Baggage that requires excessive time to load or unload
- Items that could not be controlled if the bus braked suddenly

Service Animals & Pets

Service animals are welcome on HAR-Transit vehicles. If you travel with a service animal, please let the schedulers know when you book your trip. Pets up to 20 pounds may be transported in carriers designed for that purpose. Drivers cannot help passengers carry pets.

Mobility Aids

HARTransit buses accommodate all wheelchairs, scooters or other mobility devices up to the maximum physical dimensions and constraints of the bus. HARTransit vehicles have lifts and ramps with an 800 pound capacity. Drivers are trained to safely operate wheelchair lifts and secure mobility devices on the bus.

Other mobility devices such as walkers and canes are accommodated. Passengers that have trouble with steps may ride the lift. Respirators and portable oxygen are also permitted.

SweetHART buses do not carry stretchers.

Personal Care Attendants & Companions

Please let the scheduler know if you are traveling with a PCA or companion.

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) rides free of charge with any passenger with a disability. PCAs provide assistance to

disabled riders beyond that which can be provided by the driver. Any passenger may ride with at least one companion that is not SweetHART eligible. More than one companion can be accommodated if space is available. Companions must have the same origin and destination and pay the same fare as the registered passenger.

Extreme Weather Policy

HARTransit may curtail SweetHART operations if travel conditions are unsafe. HARTransit will call any passengers affected by a cancellation of service, and offer early return trips for riders transported prior to the onset of unsafe conditions. Please listen to WLAD (800AM) or WDAQ (98.3 FM) for service cancellation information or call the HARTransit office. For the latest information follow HARTransit on Twitter.

Reasonable Modifications

HARTransit will consider reasonable modifications to its services in order to assist riders with disabilities and to ensure that an individual’s disability does not preclude him/her from having access to all HARTransit’s services.

Reasonable modification requests may be emailed to info@hartransit.com, mailed to HARTransit at 62 Federal

Road, Danbury, CT 06810 or by calling 203.744.4070.

ADA Visitor Information

Visiting passengers may use HARTransit ADA Paratransit Service up to 21 days each 12 months. ADA visitor information can be found at www.hartransit.com/sweethart/paratransit

Customer Comments

If you have a complaint about the accessibility of our transit system or service, or believe you have been discriminated against because of your disability, you can file a complaint. Please provide all facts and circumstances surrounding your issue or complaint so we can fully investigate the incident.

You may file complaints by phone, email or in writing.

HARTransit has written complaint forms for those that feel their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act as a disabled person have been violated or if they feel they are being discriminated against under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 based on National origin, race or color. To file a complaint or for more information, go to <http://www.hartransit.com/ada-accessibility>, or contact the HARTransit administrative office at 203-744-4070 ext. 200 during business hours.

**2023
SweetHART
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

Standing Booking Requests will not be processed for the holidays below.

- Sunday, January 1st:**
New Years Day - Sunday schedule
- Monday, January 2nd:**
Holiday observed - Sunday schedule
- Monday, January 16th:**
Martin Luther King Birthday - Sunday schedule
- Sunday, April 9th:**
Easter - No service available
- Monday, May 29th:**
Memorial Day - Sunday schedule
- Tuesday, July 4th:**
Independence Day - Sunday schedule
- Monday, September 4th:**
Labor Day - Sunday schedule
- Thursday, November 23rd:**
Thanksgiving - No service available
- Friday, November 24th:**
Black Friday - Sunday schedule
- Sunday, December 24th:**
Christmas Eve - Sunday schedule
- Monday, December 25th:**
Christmas Day - No service available
- Sunday, December 31st:**
New Years Eve - Sunday schedule

2024

- Monday, January 1st:**
New Years Day - Sunday schedule

**What is SweetHART
ADA Paratransit
Service** 2023



Contact Information

Phone # (203) 744 - 4070
Fax # (203) 744 - 0764

Will-Call (Medical Trips Only)	
Cancellations & Confirmations	Press 2
SweetHART Reservations	Press 3
Lost & Found	Press 6
Pass Sales & Schedule Information	Press 7
Certification Questions Customer Comments	Press 8
Weekends & Holidays ADA Next Day Reservations	Ext. 232



62 Federal Rd. Danbury, CT 06810
www.HARTransit.com