

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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Rockland County Department of Public Transportation ADA Policy
Transport of Rockland Bus Service

It is the policy of the Rockland County Department of Public Transportation to provide accessible public transit bus services to all passengers of the County's Transport of Rockland (TOR) bus system by complying with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, including all laws, rules and regulations of the Federal, State and County governments.

In order to facilitate the provision of accessible bus transit services, the following policies are adopted as of March 29, 2015:

Courtesy and Priority Seating

The first seats at the front of each bus behind the bus driver and front door are designated as "Courtesy Seats." These seats are reserved for use by ambulatory passengers with disabilities and senior citizens. The Courtesy Seating area is labeled to inform all passengers. When an ambulatory passenger with a disability or senior citizen requests to use a Courtesy Seat and the Courtesy Seats are occupied by an ambulatory passenger, the driver will request that the ambulatory passenger move to another seat.

"Priority Seats" are those that are utilized to secure a mobility device for a passenger with a disability. These seats are usually hinged and need to be folded in order to secure a wheeled mobility device. The Priority Seating area is labeled to inform all passengers seated in these locations that they should comply with requests by bus operator personnel to vacate their seats to make room for an individual with a disability. When a non-ambulatory passenger using a wheeled mobility aid wishes to board the bus and the Priority Seats are occupied by an ambulatory passenger, the driver will request that the ambulatory passenger move to another seat. Should the ambulatory passenger refuse to move, the driver will notify the dispatcher of the situation and request the assistance of a field supervisor to make alternate transportation arrangements for the attending non-ambulatory passenger, if necessary.

If there is no other seat for the ambulatory passenger to move to and/or he/she refuses to move, the driver must notify the non-ambulatory passenger waiting to board. The driver will inform the non-ambulatory customer that the bus is full and he/she must wait for the next bus if one is scheduled to serve that location within 30 minutes. If the location will not be served within 30 minutes, the bus company will dispatch another vehicle to the location to serve the waiting non-ambulatory customer.

An ambulatory passenger with a disability is not required to sit in the Courtesy or Priority Seating area. However, it is recommended that passengers using walkers utilize these seats to ensure the aisle remains clear.

Wheeled Mobility Devices

TOR buses will accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, and other specialized wheeled mobility devices that are usable both indoors and outdoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. TOR buses will carry a customer and their wheeled mobility device, as long as the lift/ramp can accommodate the size of the device and the combined weight of the device and its user. TOR bus ramps exceed ADA requirements of a design load (device/occupant combined weight) of at least 600 pounds. The design loads of the ramps on TOR LF Gillig buses are 950 and 1000 pounds. The design load of the ramps on TOR Gillig LF Hybrid buses is 950 pounds. The design load of the ramps on TOR LF 26' Arboc buses is 800 pounds.

Mobility Device Securement and Customer Restraint

Wheelchairs and other wheeled mobility devices are required to be secured to the vehicle while aboard the bus using the vehicle's securement system. The bus operator is responsible for securing the passenger's wheeled mobility device, or in the case of vehicles outfitted with the Q'STRAIT QUANTUM automatic securement station, responsible for confirming the wheeled mobility device is secured. The bus operator may decline to provide service to a rider who refuses to have his/her wheeled mobility device secured.

Upon request, the driver will assist any rider with securing the seatbelt/shoulder harness. The passenger may transfer to a seat but is not required to do so. If a passenger transfers from a wheeled mobility device to a seat on the vehicle, the wheeled mobility device must be properly secured.

While not required, it is strongly recommended that customers using wheeled mobility devices utilize the vehicle's seatbelt and shoulder harness system, if possible. It is also strongly recommended that customers using wheeled mobility devices have, use and properly secure a personal safety belt on their mobility device.

Customers using walkers must maintain control of the walker at all times while onboard the bus, and the walker must remain out of the aisle.

Passenger Assistance

Bus drivers will honor all requests to deploy the vehicle's kneeling feature (if applicable), wheelchair lift or ramp for ANY customer that indicates they would like to use such device, regardless of whether the customer uses a mobility aid or not. Drivers will deploy the kneeling feature, lift or ramp without inquiring about the individual's disability.

If the passenger making the request to use the lift or ramp uses a wheeled mobility device, the driver will first ensure that one of the wheelchair securement locations is available and that the seat is flipped up prior to deploying the lift or ramp.

If there is sufficient space on the bus when it pulls up to the stop (ie: the securement location is unoccupied and there is sufficient capacity onboard to relocate any passengers who may be sitting or standing in the securement area), and a customer using a wheeled mobility device is waiting to board, the driver will hold that securement location open for the customer with the wheeled mobility device. The lift or ramp will be deployed after all the ambulatory passengers have been boarded or discharged. The exception to this is in the event that a passenger who uses the lift or ramp is discharged at the same location as a passenger who uses the lift wants to board. In that case, all passengers would be discharged, including the passenger needing to use the lift or ramp, then the passenger requiring the lift or ramp would board the bus and be secured, followed by the boarding of ambulatory passengers.

Bus drivers will make every effort to board customers with wheeled mobility devices, including asking ambulatory passengers seated or standing in the priority seating and wheeled mobility device securement areas to move to another seat or standee location. If the bus is completely full to vehicle capacity as it approaches a stop, a customer with the wheeled mobility device must wait for the next bus.

When discharging a passenger, it is the driver's responsibility to remove and stow the securements. The passengers may assist the driver in removing the securements. Securements must be stowed immediately after use.

As per ADA requirements, drivers and other transit personnel must ensure that a passenger with a disability is able to take advantage of the accessibility and safety features on the vehicle. Therefore, drivers and other transit personnel must assist individuals with disabilities with the use of ramps, lifts and securement systems. Upon request, drivers will assist in pushing a manual wheelchair onto and off of the lift or ramp.

Reasonable Modifications/Accommodations

TOR is committed to operating safe, accessible and efficient public transportation to all people including people with disabilities. To prevent discrimination on the basis of disability and ensure access to the TOR service, and in accordance with the United States Department of Transportation's Final Rule to 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37, TOR is committed to making reasonable

accommodations/modifications to policies, practices and procedures. TOR already makes accessing the service easier by operating as a flag-down service. Customers may flag the TOR bus at any safe location along the route to request the bus to stop for them. Passengers may also use the stop request function onboard the buses to request that the bus stop anywhere along the route so they can disembark the bus, so long as the driver and/or road supervisor deems it is safe to do so. Other reasonable accommodations/modifications can include accessible materials; helping passengers insert fare cards/cash into fare boxes; allowing passengers to eat, drink or take medicine aboard the bus to avoid a medical problem; allow passengers to board a bus at a short, but safe distance from an inaccessible stop; and permitting passengers to board separately from their mobility devices when the passenger can control the movement of the device.

Whenever feasible, specific requests for accommodations/modifications should be made in advance of when the accommodation/modification is to be provided by TOR. The request should be as specific as possible and include information on why the accommodation/modification is needed in order to allow the individual to use TOR services. TOR will make every effort to communicate, verbally or in writing, determinations on requests for accommodations /modifications in advance of when the service will be needed.

Customers may request an accommodation/modification pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act at any time, but to make a request in advance, please contact the Rockland County Department of Public Transportation's ADA Officer by one of the methods listed below.

U.S. Mail or Email:

Attn: TOR ADA Officer
Rockland County Department of Public Transportation
Building T
Pomona, NY 10970
Email address: Transithelp@co.rockland.ny.us

Maintenance of Lifts, Ramps and other Accessible Features

Drivers are required to cycle lifts, ramps, kneeling features, audible announcements, back-up PA systems and other accessible features during pre-trip inspections to ensure they are in proper operating condition. Buses with lifts or ramps found to be defective will be set aside to repair. To the extent feasible, the lift or ramp will be immediately repaired.

A vehicle with a defective lift/ramp must be placed out of service before the beginning of the vehicle's next service day, and the lift/ramp must be repaired before the vehicle returns to service. However, if there is no spare vehicle available to take the place of a vehicle with an inoperable lift or ramp and taking the vehicle out of service will result in a loss of service, the vehicle with the inoperable lift/ramp may remain in service for no more than three days from the day the lift was discovered to be inoperable.

In the event a vehicle with an inoperable lift/ramp must remain in service, the bus operator will maintain and follow a contingency plan to ensure that a manager or supervisor is responsible for the provision of interim alternate service for riders using wheeled mobility devices.

Lift Failure and Alternate Service Arrangements

Passenger unable to board vehicle because of lift/ramp malfunction:

If the lift/ramp fails while a customer is attempting to board, the driver will attempt to manually deploy the equipment, if possible. If the equipment cannot be manually deployed, the driver will call the dispatcher for assistance. The dispatcher will notify a manager or field supervisor who will attempt to troubleshoot the problem with the driver. If this fails, a manager or field supervisor will provide direction to the driver, and every effort will be made to have a field supervisor report to the scene to manage the situation. Prior to departing the bus stop, the driver must tell the waiting passenger what will happen.

If the headway on the route where the bus with the non-operative lift/ramp is 30 minutes or less, the driver will tell the passenger that he/she must wait for the next bus. If the headway is more than 30 minutes, the driver will inform the affected customer that another accessible vehicle is being sent to provide him/her with alternate service. An approximate arrival time for the replacement bus must be provided to the customer by the operator and the alternate vehicle should arrive within 30 minutes.

The replacement bus will proceed to the bus stop where the passenger is waiting and then proceed with the route. Once the passenger has been alighted, the driver shall proceed as instructed by a dispatcher, manager or field supervisor.

Passenger unable to exit the vehicle because of lift/ramp malfunction:

In the event the lift/ramp fails when a passenger requiring use of the lift is onboard, the bus operator will attempt to manually deploy the equipment, if possible. If the equipment cannot be manually deployed, the driver will notify the dispatcher for assistance. The dispatcher will notify a manager or field supervisor who will attempt to troubleshoot the problem with the driver. If this fails, a manager or field supervisor will provide direction to the driver, and a field supervisor will report to the scene to manage the situation.

If applicable, the Driver will document the lift/ramp failures that occur in service in the Post-trip Inspection Report after completing their run.

Stop Announcements

As per ADA requirements, drivers and other transit personnel must ensure that a passenger with a disability is able to take advantage of the accessibility and safety features on the vehicle. Therefore, the bus company shall ensure that the automatic stop announcement system onboard

each bus is in working order. In the event that the system is temporarily non-functional, it is the responsibility of the bus driver to make clear and audible announcements at least at transfer points with other fixed routes, other major intersections and destination points and intervals along a route sufficient to permit individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities to be oriented to their location. Further, drivers will announce any stop or flag stop upon request of any individual.

If a bus is forced to leave a route for a detour, the driver will announce when he or she leaves the regular route and when the route is rejoined.

Service Animals

ADA defines a Service Animal as an animal “individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.” Service animals under the control and supervision of the owner at all times, and accompanying people with disabilities, are always allowed on TOR buses. This includes animals-in-training accompanied by a trainer or person with a disability.

Service animals for persons with disabilities ride for free and no permit is required. Service animals must remain on the floor without blocking the aisle or on their owner's lap. If this is not an option, the service animal may occupy a seat provided one is available.

If the service animal's behavior threatens the safety of the driver or other passengers the customer and their service animal may be asked to leave the bus.

Other Animals

Comfort animals that provide emotional support or comfort for a passenger are also allowed to ride, as are pet dogs, as long as they are leashed, well-controlled and do not pose a safety concern to the driver or other passengers. If the animal's behavior threatens the safety of the driver or other passengers, the customer and their animal may be asked to leave the bus. Non-Service dogs are not allowed to occupy seats; they must remain either on the floor or sit on their owners lap. Animals other than dogs are not allowed on the bus unless they are in a container or carrier.

Medical Equipment

Passengers that require the use of respirators, concentrators or portable oxygen may utilize such onboard the bus.

Fare Collection

Customers with disabilities with an appropriate Reduced Fare Photo ID or Medicare Card are eligible for Reduced Fares onboard TOR buses. Passengers with disabilities who are unable to place the fare in the electronic farebox may ask for driver assistance. Upon request, drivers will

provide assistance to passengers with disabilities who are unable to place their fare in the farebox.

Drivers will assist customers with visual, hearing or intellectual disabilities with reading the electronic farebox message screen or understanding the audible instructions emitted by the electronic farebox.

Effective Date

This version of the Rockland County Department of Public Transportation ADA Policy was amended on November 1, 2018 to remove reference to the Tappan Zee Express (TZx) bus service and no other changes were made to the content of the policy that was effective as of March 29, 2015. The policy was further amended on January 26, 2022 to add reference to the Arboc buses added to the TOR fleet and on February 14, 2025 to add reference to the Q'STRAIT QUANTUM automatic securement stations onboard some TOR vehicles. Information regarding reasonable modification requests and medical equipment was added to the policy on May 9, 2025.