

PARATRANSIT RIDER'S GUIDE



Services sponsored by
Marin County Transit District and Golden Gate Transit
and operated by Whistlestop Wheels

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Reservations: (415) 454-0964

24-hr Cancellation *Hot-Line*: (415) 457-4630

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INTRODUCTION

Whistlestop Wheels (WSW) is part of the private non-profit agency Marin Senior Coordinating Council and is available to operate publicly or privately funded specialized transportation services (“paratransit”) to persons with disabilities and the elderly who are unable to use the regular fixed route bus. WSW provides local public door-to-door paratransit service within Marin County (*Marin local service*) under contract with Marin County Transit District (MCTD). As part of this contract, WSW also provides public door-to-door paratransit service between the counties of Marin, Sonoma, San Francisco, and West Contra Costa (*intercounty service*) on behalf of Golden Gate Transit (GGT), an operating division of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD).

This Rider’s Guide has been prepared to assist passengers in understanding both of these public local and intercounty paratransit services, how they work, and how best to use them responsibly.

What Is ADA Paratransit Service?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into federal law in 1990. The ADA prohibits discrimination against persons

with disabilities in the areas of employment, public services such as transit, public accommodations, private services, and telecommunications. The ADA requires all public transit operators to provide a special service to eligible disabled and elderly individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using lift-equipped public transit. The special service, called “paratransit service,” is required by the ADA to complement fixed route public transit service. For this reason, it operates at similar times and in similar areas (defined by the ADA as a minimum of three-quarters of a mile on either side) of existing public fixed route transit, non-commute bus and van routes. The ADA also requires transit operators to establish specific eligibility criteria for users of paratransit service and requires there be no trip priorities (e.g. medical versus recreation) on ADA paratransit services.

Who Is Responsible for Providing ADA Paratransit?

MCTD is responsible for provision of Marin local public paratransit service to complement local fixed route bus and van service in Marin County. GGT is responsible for provision of public paratransit services (primarily intercounty

service that crosses county lines) to complement its regional fixed route bus service that operates between Marin, Sonoma, and San Francisco counties. GGT also provides intercounty paratransit service to western Contra Costa County, as a complement to regional Route 40/42 serving Richmond and El Cerrito.

Is Paratransit a Shared-Ride Service?

WSW paratransit service is considered a shared ride system. Other passengers may be on board during transit to a passenger's destination. Your scheduled pick-up times or route of travel may be altered so another passenger can be accommodated. The vehicle may stop and pick up other riders as it proceeds to your destination. Shared rides lower the cost of paratransit service by increasing system productivity. WSW schedulers may ask you to accept trip reservation times that are different from your original requested pick-up time. Your reservation time may be moved up to an hour earlier or later than you requested. We ask that you be flexible. By changing your time, more passengers can be served.

What Door-to-Door Paratransit Services Are Provided?

1. Loading and unloading of passengers to and from the vehicle.
2. Escorting passengers to and from the front door of the primary building upon arrival at both origin and destination with the following limitations:
 - A. Drivers cannot cross the threshold of homes or apartments to interior areas within living accommodations.
 - B. Drivers cannot leave the line of sight of a vehicle or leave a vehicle unsupervised with passengers aboard.
 - C. Drivers cannot assist passengers in wheelchairs or other mobility devices up more than one stair.
3. Assisting with carrying personal articles not exceeding four bags, with no bag over 20 pounds. Personal articles such as small suitcases may be transported but are limited to only those items weighing no more than 20 lbs that can be safely stored under passenger's seat. Packages and items exceeding these weight and size limits will not be transported.

4. Ensuring passenger has crossed the threshold of the front street door of his/her drop-off site. The WSW driver has completed his/her service responsibilities once assured the passenger has crossed the threshold of the drop-off site.

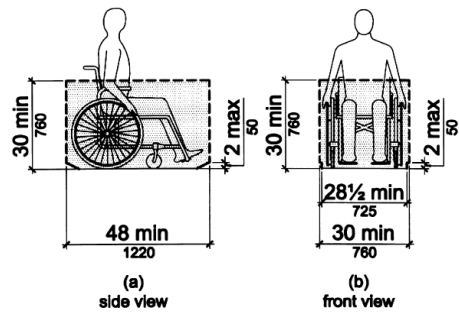
Passengers with special needs requiring greater assistance are encouraged to bring an attendant and/or discuss their needs with a WSW supervisor. There is no additional fare for an attendant or personal services assistant.

How Big Can My Wheelchair or Scooter Be?

When purchasing a new wheelchair or scooter, riders should consider if it will fit on WSW vehicles.

Maximum Size: 48 inches long
30 inches wide

Maximum Weight
(including occupant): 600 lbs



Any wheelchair larger than this is considered oversized. Under ADA guidelines, paratransit vehicles and equipment are designed to carry common wheelchairs that fit within these dimensions. A common wheelchair is defined as any three- or four-wheeled mobility device up to 48 inches long by 30 inches wide, weighing no more than 600 lbs (including occupant). WSW has older vehicles that can carry chairs exceeding this minimum size; however, WSW's new paratransit vehicles have added safety features that improve lift safety but also prevent drivers from loading oversized chairs. Therefore, oversized chairs may not fit on the

lift, and, under the ADA, if the chair is oversized and does not fit on an ADA lift, it is not required to be transported.

WSW recognizes that many paratransit users have chairs that exceed this dimension for a variety of reasons. If they will be using an oversized chair, passengers must notify the scheduler when reserving their ride. A ride request involving an oversized chair will be placed on standby until WSW can determine that the vehicle assigned to the trip can accommodate the chair. WSW will continue to try to accommodate oversized chairs and scooters whenever possible.

ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION

Who Is Eligible for Paratransit Service?

In order to receive service, all paratransit passengers must be ADA-certified by completing a Bay Area Regional Paratransit Eligibility application form and qualifying under one or more of the following ADA eligibility criteria:

1. You are unable to independently board, ride, or exit an accessible GGT bus, MCTD fixed route van, or similar transit vehicle because of your disability.
2. You are able to independently board, ride, and exit an accessible bus, but accessible bus or van equipment has not been assigned to your route, or a GGT bus or MCTD van lift cannot be deployed at your stop. (Please note: All GGT buses and MCTD vans are lift-equipped.)
3. You are unable to travel to or from a transit stop because of your disability.

Passengers may be considered fully or conditionally eligible under

Categories 1, 2, or 3 depending on their disability or the equipment assigned to their route.

Conditionally eligible passengers include passengers who are eligible for paratransit only when certain conditions exist (e.g., wet weather, cold temperatures, darkness), the passengers can use the bus for only a portion of their trip, or they have a temporary disability. Conditionally eligible passengers are required to use fixed route service whenever conditions permit. At some point, consumers capable of using the bus may be found eligible for a paratransit trip to and from a bus transfer point rather than for the entire trip. This long-term goal of cooperation between the fixed route and paratransit systems furthers the ability of the paratransit program to meet its responsibilities under the ADA.

ADA-eligible visitors from outside the Bay Area may also use paratransit service. Visitors will be eligible for any combination of 21 days of service during any 365-day period beginning with the visitor's first use of Bay Area paratransit service.

How Do I Become Certified for Paratransit Service?

To determine your eligibility for ADA paratransit services, contact the local provider in the area where you live. You will be provided with a regional ADA Paratransit Application Form to complete and return.

If your local public paratransit provider finds you ADA eligible, you will receive a letter informing you of this determination and outlining any conditions of eligibility. This information will be entered into the regional ADA paratransit database and you will then be certified eligible to use Marin local, GGT intercounty, and other public paratransit services throughout the Bay Area (subject to any conditions). Recertification of eligibility is currently required every three years (less with a temporary disability). If you are found ineligible or you object to the conditions of your eligibility, each local Bay Area paratransit provider has an appeals process. Please see Page 19 for more information on WSW's program.

Marin Residents

WSW provides ADA eligibility screening for Marin residents. Contact WSW at (415) 456-9062, ext. 160, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for more information.

Non-Marin Residents

Other local public paratransit providers operate in areas overlapping GGT's intercounty paratransit service area on behalf of the following Bay Area public transit systems: AC Transit, BART, Muni, Petaluma Transit, Santa Rosa City Bus, SamTrans, Sonoma County Transit, Vallejo Transit, and WestCAT. Please see Page 8 for information on how to contact the local paratransit provider in your area.

Transportation Options

Travel training is available for any passenger to become more familiar with using GGT fixed route bus service, and especially for individuals who have applied for ADA paratransit eligibility and have been denied because they can use the bus. Travel training is also available for individuals who have applied and have been determined to be conditionally eligible because they can use the bus for a portion of their trips. Please call (415) 257-4559 for more information about travel training services. Be sure to allow at least two days' advance notice in order to schedule a travel training appointment.

For Eligibility, How Do I Contact Other Local Public Paratransit Services?

San Francisco Public Paratransit Services

SF Paratransit: Operates within the City and County of San Francisco. For more information, visit www.sfparatransit.com or call daily 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (415) 285-6945 (TransMetro to schedule a ride) or (415) 351-7000 (for Taxi Program and Information) or TDD (415) 351-3942

East Bay Paratransit: Operates between San Francisco and the East Bay. For more information, call weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (510) 287-5000 or TDD (510) 287-5065

Redi-Wheels: Operates between San Francisco and San Mateo County. For more information, call daily 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (650) 871-8590 or TDD (650) 482-9366

Sonoma County Public Paratransit Services

MV Transportation: Operates in Santa Rosa. For more information call Monday – Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (707) 546-2092

Petaluma People Services: Operates in Petaluma. For more information, call weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (707) 765-8493

Sonoma County Transit: For cities *other than* Santa Rosa or Petaluma and unincorporated areas of Sonoma County, service is provided by Volunteer Wheels. For more information, call weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (707) 573-3377 or TDD (707) 573-3381

Contra Costa County Public Paratransit Services

East Bay Paratransit: Operates within West Contra Costa County on behalf of the East Bay Paratransit Consortium. For more info, call daily 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (510) 287-5000 or TTY (510) 287-5065

WestCAT Dial-A-Ride: Operates to Del Norte BART, Martinez, and in areas of West Contra Costa County. For more information, call Monday – Saturday 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. (510) 724-7433

Runabout Wheels: Operates between El Cerrito/Del Norte BART and Solano County. For more information, call Monday – Saturday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (707) 649-1999

SERVICE AREAS, FARES AND HOURS

In accordance with ADA, both Marin local and GGT intercounty paratransit services operate during the same hours, days, and comparable service areas as local and transbay basic GGT and MCTD fixed route non-commute bus and van services. A GGT route map and other information about GGT are available at www.goldengate.org or by calling “511.”

It is important to note that as bus routes and schedules change between days of the week and hours of the day, Marin local and intercounty paratransit services will also change. Service hours and areas will be explained as necessary to riders at the time paratransit trip requests are made.

What Are the Service Area Limits for Paratransit?

Marin: Local and intercounty ADA paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile on either side of GGT non-commute bus and MCTD non-commute van routes operating in Marin County.

These routes include: Local bus routes and shuttles. West Marin Stagecoach will deviate up to $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile off route to provide its own complementary paratransit service.

Except for Stagecoach, limited Marin “extended” service (beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on either side or beyond comparable service hours required by the ADA) is also available for an additional fare (see Page 11).

San Francisco: GGT intercounty paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile on either side of GGT non-commute bus Routes 10, 70, and 80.

Sonoma County: GGT intercounty paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile on either side of GGT non-commute bus Route 80. When local paratransit providers in Sonoma County are not operating, some limited evening and weekend local paratransit service complementing Route 80 is also available.

West Contra Costa County: GGT intercounty paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile on either side of Route 40/42 serving Point Richmond, Cutting Boulevard, McDonald Avenue, Richmond, and El Cerrito Del Norte BART.

What if My Intercountry Trip Begins or Ends Beyond GGT’s Paratransit Service Area?

WSW has made arrangements with public paratransit providers in San Francisco and Sonoma

County to allow GGT intercounty paratransit customers to continue certain trips on WSW beyond GGT's service area in order to avoid changing vehicles. Contact WSW for further information. Other trips beyond GGT's intercounty paratransit service area may require a vehicle transfer. All such trips may be made only within the service area and during the service hours of the adjoining paratransit operator. It is Whistlestops policy to drop our clients at the transfer point where they may have to wait for the other provider. If you cannot wait alone it is suggested that you bring someone to assist you while you wait. There is also an additional fare.

It is very important when scheduling a trip involving another provider that you advise WSW of your complete travel needs at least two days prior to trip date so they may best coordinate services and advise you of your total fare and transfer requirements. Trips with less than two days' notice will require that you coordinate the transfer trip with each service provider separately.

What Are Paratransit Fares?

Both Marin local and GGT intercounty fares are subject to annual review and potential change. WSW's scheduler will

advise you of the correct fare when scheduling a trip.

Marin Local Paratransit Fares

The one-way fare for a Marin local ADA paratransit trip (beginning and ending within the ADA service area in Marin) is an exact fare of \$2.00 (cash or ticket) payable at time of boarding. To avoid having to worry about exact change, books of 10 Marin local "Express" paratransit tickets may be purchased for your convenience by sending a check for \$20.00 to

Whistlestop Wheels
930 Tamalpais Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Drivers do not sell tickets or carry change. Drivers will accept round-trip payment and issue a coupon for the return trip. Coupons are good only on the day they are issued, and return trip coupons not used on the day issued will not be reimbursed. Checks are not accepted for Marin local trips.

The one-way fare for a Marin local "extended" trip is \$2.50. Marin extended trips are those trips where the pick-up location or destination is more than 3/4-mile from a GGT non-commute route or beyond the hours that GGT non-commute bus routes operate. Marin local extended trips also include "standing rides" (such as

trips booked by an agency like Senior Access to its daily program) and “will-call” trips (a local trip where the passenger is not ready for his/her scheduled pick-up and calls to have WSW send out a second vehicle.)

Intercounty Paratransit Fares

One-way intercounty paratransit fares are comparable to GGT bus fares in that they are cash fares and vary depending upon the length of the trip and the fare zone (Zones 1 – 6) in which they begin or end. Consistent with ADA regulations, GGT intercounty ADA paratransit fares are no more than twice the full adult cash fare for similar travel on a GGT bus. Drivers do not sell tickets and do not carry change. Drivers will accept round-trip payment and issue a coupon for the return trip. Coupons are good only on the day they are issued, and return trip coupons not used on day issued will not be reimbursed.

Checks are accepted for Intercounty Paratransit Fares. There is a \$25.00 charge for returned checks. Any client that bounces a check forfeits the right to pay by check for six (6) months. After two bounced checks, a client permanently forfeits the right to pay by check.

The fare surcharge for an intercounty trip that begins or ends

beyond GGT’s ADA service area and service hours is \$0.50 for a Marin extended trip. The fare for a San Francisco or Sonoma County extended trip will vary and is set by the adjoining operator. WSW does not provide extended service in the East Bay.

Fares for companions on both Marin local and GGT intercounty services are the same as for ADA passengers, except there is no charge for a personal services assistant or service animal.

What are the Service Hours for Paratransit?

In accordance with ADA, both Marin local and GGT intercounty paratransit services operate during the same hours and days of the week as comparable local and transbay basic GGT fixed route, non-commute bus services. Please remember that as bus schedules change between days of the week and hours of the day, Marin local and intercounty paratransit service will also differ. Service hours will be explained as necessary to riders at the time trip requests are made.

Who Can Accompany Eligible Passengers?

Under ADA, each paratransit eligible passenger can ride with:

1. One personal care attendant providing individual assistance to the qualified passenger. This personal care attendant will not be charged for the trip.
2. One companion. Additional companions may also travel on a space-available basis. Companions will be charged for the trip at the same rate as the WSW passenger.

Personal care attendants and companions must board and disembark at the same locations the passenger boards and disembarks. Children 5 and under shall be accompanied by an adult or responsible guardian. When scheduling a ride, customer must inform the scheduler whether anyone will be riding with the passenger on the trip to ensure that a seat on the bus is reserved.

All fares, service areas, and hours of service are subject to change.

Please consult WSW scheduling staff for most current information!

SCHEDULING PARATRANSIT RIDES

How Do I Schedule a Trip?

Once you have been certified eligible for ADA paratransit service, you should become familiar with how to arrange a trip. Advance reservations are required. To reserve a trip, call WSW daily between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. at (415) 454-0964, or TDD 711. When calling from San Francisco, Sonoma, or the East Bay, call 1 (800) 454-0964.

WSW will accept trip reservations not less than 1 day and no more than 7 days ahead. For ADA service, all trips will be scheduled within 1 hour of the requested time (before or after) as required by ADA.

Every effort will be made to schedule all trips requested. However, due to limited capacity, priority must be given to trips that are mandated by the ADA. If your trip is outside the service area or service times required by the ADA, your request will be served on a space-available basis (please see Marin Extended Trips, Page 14).

Phone lines are busiest early in the morning. If you have trouble getting through, please call back. Be sure to advise WSW of your total travel needs so that schedulers may best coordinate

services and advise you of your total fare and any transfer requirements. Let the scheduler know of any special transportation needs you have. The vehicle driver will do his or her best to accommodate you.

Schedulers are instructed to give their names at the time they answer a call. Should it not be given, be sure to ask for the scheduler's name when making a reservation, cancellation, changes with your scheduled pick-ups, or a request for expected arrival times of the van.

When scheduling a Marin local or GGT intercounty paratransit trip, please be prepared to give the scheduler the following information:

1. Your name.
2. The day and date you would like transportation.
3. The time you wish transportation.
4. Your pick-up address as well as the cross street, if you know it.
5. Your destination address and cross street (if known) and any scheduled appointment you might have at that location.
6. Your return time and return address.

7. Whether a personal service assistant or companion(s) will accompany you.
8. Whether you will be using a wheelchair (manual or motorized) or scooter (three- or four-wheeled mobility device) and if your wheelchair or scooter is “oversized” (larger than 48 inches long by 30 inches wide).
9. Whether you will be using a cane, walker, or other mobility device.
10. It is helpful (but not required) to provide the telephone number of the destination when it is available. By doing so, preventable delays can be avoided for both the passenger and others using the service.

ADA Trips

At the time you call, you will be given a range of time (called a pick-up window) by the scheduler during which you can expect the pick-up to occur. This “pick-up window” will be within one hour of the requested time. Occasionally, trip cancellations or additions will cause a passenger’s pick-up time to be adjusted while staying within this one-hour window. If this occurs, a WSW staff member will call you the afternoon of the day before you ride to advise you of your adjusted pick-up time. If you

do not have an answering machine or are unable to answer your phone during this period, you must call WSW [(415) 454-0964] after 4:00 p.m. to check the status of your ride.

Marin Extended Trips

For Marin extended trips, your trip request will be placed on stand-by at the time you call, and WSW will call you the day before you wish to ride to confirm the trip, pick-up window, and fare.

How Can I Help Avoid Cancellations?

Paratransit 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. Paratransit passengers can help by making sure they only schedule rides they plan to take. Failure to cancel with enough advance notice so that rides can be reassigned impacts the system and can lead to suspension of service (see Page 18).

How Do I Cancel a Scheduled Trip?

The 24-hour cancellation “hot-line” number is (415) 457-4630. Please cancel trip reservations at least one day in advance whenever possible. A cancellation made less than 2 hours prior to the scheduled pick-up will be recorded as a late cancellation. When canceling a trip, passengers are responsible for providing the following information:

1. Name of passenger.
2. Time and date of scheduled pick-up.
3. Exact destination address.
4. Whether or not another trip scheduled for that day is also being changed.

The earlier you cancel a trip reservation, the greater the chance another passenger will be able to use the time.

How Do I Change a Scheduled Trip?

When making a change to a scheduled pick-up, please call the reservation line at (415) 454-0964 to make the change at least one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up. WSW will make a good faith effort to accommodate requested changes but cannot guarantee that all changes can be accepted.

Passengers are responsible for providing the following information:

1. Time and date of scheduled pick-up.
2. New destination address, if applicable.
3. New telephone number, if applicable.
4. Status of any other scheduled trips for that day.
5. New time of scheduled pick-up, if applicable.

What if I Am Late for My Scheduled Ride?

If you find yourself running late, please call WSW as soon as possible. WSW will try to adjust their schedule to accommodate you. WSW drivers are only allotted five minutes to make their pick-ups. If you are not ready to leave when the vehicle arrives, the driver may have to leave without you after 5 minutes in order to be on time for his/her next passenger. If a second vehicle must be dispatched to pick you up, this becomes a “will call” trip and a fare surcharge will be charged (see Paratransit Fares, Page 10).

What if WSW is Late Picking Me Up?

Many factors affect the on-time performance of WSW vehicles. These include traffic and weather conditions. If WSW finds it will be unable to meet your scheduled pick-up time by 15 minutes or more, WSW schedulers will endeavor to call and notify you. For this reason, when scheduling your ride, it is important to provide a phone number if one is available where you can be reached at each of your pick-up locations.

What about Arrival Times?

Passengers may call any time after their scheduled pick-up to inquire about expected vehicle arrival time. The WSW dispatcher will provide an estimated time of arrival for the vehicle. Passengers are responsible for providing the following when requesting information on the arrival of a WSW van:

1. Passenger's name.
2. Scheduled pick-up time.
3. Address of pick-up location.
4. Telephone number where the passenger can be reached.

The passenger must meet the WSW driver at the door within 5 minutes of the time the vehicle arrives. However, if the driver

arrives before the scheduled pick-up time, passengers are not required to leave early. If the van arrives late (more than 30 minutes after scheduled time), passengers will not be considered a no-show (see Page 18). Passenger promptness is important to helping WSW maintain on-time performance. Passengers must be ready to meet the WSW driver at the time the van is scheduled to arrive.

How Long Does a Paratransit Trip Take?

As a shared-ride system, travel time can vary depending on the number of rides being accommodated. It is usually much less, but rides will be scheduled so your time on board is no more than twice the length of time that a comparable trip would take if made on a regular fixed route bus, including travel to and from the bus stop from your origin and destination, and as well as transfers needed to complete a similar trip.

Sometimes extenuating circumstances do occur, creating exceptions (e.g., traffic conditions, road construction, weather, vehicle breakdown) over which WSW has no control. Occasionally when this happens, some trips may exceed this standard. Passengers are advised to discuss their travel times with WSW if they have any concerns.

What Is a No-Show?

Paratransit is a vital community resource. A no-show happens when the van arrives within the agreed-upon pick-up window and the passenger is absent or declines to travel. A no-show for a local ride costs MCTD more than \$27 in expenses and even more for a GGT intercounty trip.

Therefore, no-shows result in an inefficient use of valuable public resources. No-shows make it difficult to schedule rides, delay pick-ups/drop-offs, and result in unscheduled double-ups.

Passengers are responsible for maintaining a low no-show rate, or they will be subject to suspension of service as outlined on Page 18.

What about Passenger Safety?

Passengers must wear seat belts (for ambulatory passengers) or safety lap belts secured to the floor of the van (for customers using wheelchairs) at all times. Each WSW vehicle is fitted with seat belts for every passenger seat and securements for each wheelchair position. If a seat or safety lap belt is not available, the passenger can decline the scheduled trip. WSW will dispatch a properly equipped vehicle as soon as possible.

If you use a three- or four-wheeled mobility device or scooter, the driver will ask you to transfer to a regular seat. This will be done for your protection since these devices are typically not constructed to withstand the rigors of being used as a seat in a passenger vehicle. If you are unable to comply with this request, you may decline, and the driver will secure you in your mobility device and continue with your ride. Passengers are required to follow other safety instructions given by the driver and/or as required by law enforcement or safety officers.

If you believe you have been injured on a WSW vehicle, please report your injury to WSW as soon as possible, within 24 hours.

SERVICE INFRACTIONS AND SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

Passengers are subject to suspension of service for any of the following:

Pattern of No-Shows and Late Cancellations

Passengers will be allowed a limited amount of preventable no-shows or late cancellations (less than 2 hours' notice to WSW) in a rolling 90-day period. Passengers who exceed this amount may be subject to suspension of service.

Each no-show is considered one "point" and each late cancellation is a half point. After passengers have accumulated two "points", WSW will send a reminder letter. Upon the third "point," a final warning will be sent to the consumer. After the fourth point in 90 days, a passenger is subject to suspension from service for a 30-day period. Passengers who feel they have been unjustly "charged" with a no-show or late cancellation may take advantage of the appeals process further described on Page 19.

Dangerous Behavior and Physical Abuse

Dangerous behavior is defined as any threat or action that could cause direct or indirect physical

harm to the driver, vehicle, other passengers or rider.

Physical abuse is defined as any action that may cause direct or indirect physical harm to a passenger, driver or WSW staff. The penalty for a proven incident of dangerous/unsafe behavior or physical abuse will be determined through consultation between WSW and MCTD. The penalty will range from a warning letter to *permanent* suspension from the WSW program.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is defined as any oral presentation that is offensive to a passenger, driver or WSW staff. The penalty for a proven incident of verbal abuse will be determined through consultation through WSW and MCTD. The penalty will range from a warning letter to *temporary* suspension from the WSW program.

Causes for Refusal of Service

Dangerous behavior or physical or verbal abuse towards drivers or other passengers on the vehicle by a passenger are grounds for immediate refusal of WSW service.

Furthermore, any behavior that adversely affects Whistlestop's ability to provide reliable service to other passengers could result in suspension from service.

APPEALS PROCESS ELIGIBILITY OR SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

All applicants determined to be conditionally eligible or ineligible for paratransit service or passengers with existing service who have been suspended for any of the reasons listed on Page 18 have access to an appeals process.

If an applicant has submitted an application for regional ADA paratransit eligibility, and a determination has been made that the applicant does not qualify for paratransit or is conditionally eligible for the service (such as eligible only during wet weather), a letter will be mailed explaining the reason(s) for the conditions or denial of service and advising of the procedure to follow if an appeal is desired.

Upon the accumulation of an existing WSW passenger's fourth point for a preventable no-show or late cancellation within a 90-day period, that passenger will receive a letter advising him/her that service has been suspended for 30 days, with the procedure to follow if an appeal is desired.

All requests for an appeal must be received in writing by WSW within 30 days of issuance of the notification of penalty or service

suspension or within 60 days of determination of conditional eligibility or denial of eligibility. Written appeals should be addressed to:

Whistlestop Wheels
Attn: Paratransit Eligibility
930 Tamalpais Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

What Is the Passenger Appeals Review Procedure?

The Appeals Review Panel is composed of at least three representatives, including one or more transit or paratransit users familiar with WSW services, one transit agency staff person, and one social service agency representative or medical professional familiar with the applicant's type of disability.

Panel representatives will be selected from a pool of candidates coordinated through the Marin Paratransit Coordinating Council and the GGBHTD Advisory Committee on Accessibility. (See Page 23 for additional information regarding these groups.)

When an appeal is received, the Panel will meet, review the appeal, hear evidence from both sides, and issue a decision in writing.

The appellant may have a representative with and/or in place of her/himself at the hearing. While the decision is under appeal, paratransit service will continue for the passenger if he/she is already receiving service. No penalties will be applied unless immediate action is required to address dangerous behavior or physical abuse. In all cases, the appeal process will be concluded as expeditiously as possible. If not concluded within 30 days, the passenger will be considered presumptively eligible for ADA paratransit service until the appeals process is concluded. The appeals decision will be by

majority rule and will be final upon mailing of the written determination.

Other ADA Matters

Both GGBHTD and MCTD have adopted policies that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Each agency has also adopted grievance procedures for use by individuals who feel they have been denied or excluded from participation in the programs, services or activities offered by the agency. For more information, please contact the appropriate agency as listed on the next page.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: HOW TO CONTACT US

Your feedback is appreciated. Comments or complaints may be made directly to WSW, MCTD, or GGT. For the passenger's convenience, all vans are equipped with an accessible courtesy card for this purpose. Passenger input is important in providing a safe and reliable WSW service. See last page for information on how to contact us.

It is requested that complaints be submitted in a written format whenever possible. If written submittal is a hardship due to your disability, phone numbers and email addresses may also be used. Complaints should be submitted within 3 days of occurrence to ensure an appropriate response. Serious problems should be communicated immediately.

When making commendations or complaints, passengers are requested to provide the following information:

- a. Passenger's name.
- b. Passenger's address and telephone number.
- c. Date and time of the occurrence/problem.
- d. Place of incident (when applicable).
- e. Scheduled pick-up time.
- f. Van number.
- g. Driver's or scheduler's name.
- h. Any other important details that describe the occurrence or problem.

You may request that your comments be handled confidentially. Comments or complaints may be made directly to WSW, MCTD or GGT:

WHISTLESTOP WHEELS

930 Tamalpais Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901
Telephone comment line:
(415) 457-5437, ext. 175
Complaints: (415) 454-0964
Email:
comments@thewhistlestop.org

MARIN COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

750 Lindero Street, Suite 200,
San Rafael, CA 94901
Telephone: (415) 226-0855
Email: info@marintransit.org

GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT – PARATRANSIT SERVICES

Planning Department
1011 Andersen Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94901
Telephone: (415) 257-4415
Email:
customerservice@goldengate.org

OTHER INFORMATION

Lost and Found

Passengers are responsible, and WSW accepts no responsibility, for personal items left on a vehicle. Passengers may call WSW to find out about any personal items they may have left on the vehicle. If recovered, WSW will hold personal items for 60 days prior to disposal.

Vehicles Used in Service

All new/used vehicles and new lifts purchased shall meet or exceed ADA Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles.

Driver Training Requirements

WSW provides training to all drivers. Training includes defensive driving, behind-the-wheel training, sensitivity training, CPR, and first aid.

Vehicle Condition

All WSW vehicles will be kept in a safe and well-maintained condition.

Driver Uniforms

WSW drivers wear uniforms bearing the name “Whistlestop” on the shirt, jacket and/or cap. Drivers will greet each passenger, give the driver’s name and the name of WSW, and then confirm the passenger’s name and destination.

Passengers are Required to Refrain from Eating, Drinking and Smoking

State law requires that passengers refrain from eating, drinking and smoking while on the vehicle.

Passengers are Requested to Refrain from Wearing Strongly Scented Products

Passengers are requested not to wear strongly scented personal care products while on board. This helps to ensure that vans are accessible for passengers with multiple chemical sensitivity or environmental illness.

Paratransit Coordinating Councils

Each county served by GGT intercounty ADA paratransit service has a Paratransit Coordinating Council, which represents senior and disabled consumers of paratransit services as well as paratransit providers and disability advocacy groups. For further information, call the appropriate Paratransit Coordinating Council staff listed below:

Marin County

Marin County Transit District (MCTD)
(415) 499-6099
TDD (415) 499-6172 or 711

San Francisco County

San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni)
(415) 923-6142
TDD (415) 923-6366 or 711

Sonoma County

Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA)
(707) 565-5373
TDD 711

Contra Costa County

Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)
(925) 407-0121
TDD 711

Advisory Committee on Accessibility

GGBHTD's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) was organized in 1979 to advise the District Board of Directors on transportation issues pertaining to seniors and persons with disabilities. ACA meets monthly and forwards its recommendations to the Board of Directors. The dedicated members of ACA also attend meetings of the District Board and its committees to testify on relevant issues. In recent years, the Committee has worked actively to assist the District with responding to the ADA, including establishment and ongoing review of the District's intercounty paratransit services.

For further information call GGBHTD Planning Department, (415) 257-4415
TDD 711.

Glossary of Terms

ACA: Advisory Committee on Accessibility

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

AC Transit: Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

BART: San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Basic Service: Daily lift-equipped GGT bus service between San Francisco, Marin, Contra Costa, and Sonoma Counties

Companion: One who accompanies an ADA-eligible passenger on a paratransit trip but is not a personal service assistant

CCTA: Contra Costa Transit Authority

Fare Zone: GGT's service area is divided into geographic fare zones that provide a means for determining fares based on distance traveled

Fixed Route: The pre-determined route a bus takes

GGBHTD: Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District

GGT: Golden Gate Transit

Intercounty Service: Service between two counties

Local Service: Service entirely within one city or county

MCTD: Marin County Transit District

Muni: San Francisco Municipal Railway

Non-commute: GGT's daily bus services that operate at regular intervals throughout the day and evening, as opposed to GGT's weekday express services, which operate only during morning and afternoon commute periods

Paratransit: Specialized transportation services such as an accessible "door-to-door" van or taxi service

Personal Services Assistant: Someone designated or employed to help an ADA paratransit-eligible individual meet his or her needs when that eligible person needs assistance on a regular basis

Rolling 90-Day Period: Measured from the first no-show or late cancellation

SCT: Sonoma County Transit

SCTA: Sonoma County Transportation Authority

TDD: Telecommunication Device for the Deaf

WSW: Whistlestop Wheels

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

WSW Reservation Office

To schedule a ride from within Marin County, please call 7 days a week between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

(415) 454-0964, or outside Marin **(800) 454-0964**.

WSW Paratransit Eligibility

For eligibility questions, please contact WSW's Eligibility Coordinator at

(415) 456-9062, ext. 160.

WSW Comment Line

To make comments or commendations, please call **(415) 457-5437**, extension **175**, or e-mail:

comments@thewhistlestop.org

WSW Complaints

Complaints are requested in writing (please see Customer Services section, Page 21) or call **(415) 454-0964**.

WSW Cancellation Line

To cancel a ride, check on a trip request, or to use TDD, please call **(415) 457-4630**.

WSW Front Desk

To purchase Express Tickets or to reach another Whistlestop or Marin Senior Coordinating Council Department, please call **(415) 456-9062**.

WSW General Information

For general information on Marin local or GGT intercounty public paratransit services, please call **(415) 457-4630**.

MCTD Transit Manager

(415) 499-6099.

GGT Paratransit Coordinator

(415) 257-4415.

GGT Bus/Ferry Information: 511

Copies of this guide are available in accessible formats upon request and online at

www.goldengatetransit.org/accessibility.

Information in this Paratransit Rider's Guide is subject to change. Please call for the most current information.