



Coles County Council on Aging ADA Transportation Policy

Purpose

It is the goal of the Coles County Council on Aging (CCCoA), through its public transit services (Dial-A-Ride), to design, implement, and maintain a safe, efficient, effective, and accessible transportation system for persons with disabilities. The CCCoA works to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation to enhance the social and economic quality of life for all people of the communities served.

Policy

It is the policy of the CCCoA to abide by all provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and US Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations found at 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38, as amended, in the delivery of transit services that are open to the public and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and sets specific requirements that transit agencies must follow.

Definitions

An **Assistive Device/Non-wheelchair Mobility Device** is defined as any piece of equipment that assists a passenger with a disability in coping with the effects of his or her disability. These devices are intended to assist passengers with a disability to hear, see, communicate, maneuver, or perform other functions of daily life. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to: crutches, canes, and walkers; braces/prosthetics; wheelchairs; hearing aids; or portable oxygen concentrators (POCs).

For the purposes of this policy a **Wheelchair** is defined as a three-or-more wheeled mobility aid device, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. With respect to the size and weight of wheelchairs, the CCCoA will transport a wheelchair and its user, as long as the lift can accommodate the size and weight of the passenger and the wheelchair, and there is space for the wheelchair on the vehicle. However, CCCoA is not required to carry a wheelchair if the lift or vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair and its user, consistent with legitimate safety requirements according to the lift manufactures.

A **Service Animal** is an animal that is individually trained to perform a task or tasks for persons with disabilities.

A **Reasonable Modification** is a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows disabled individuals to have equal access to programs, services, and activities.

Transportation of Persons with Disabilities

The CCCoA is committed to ensuring safe, efficient, effective and accessible transportation for persons with disabilities, as provided by the ADA and related DOT regulations (both as amended) and will abide by the following:

- Most Coles County Council on Aging vehicles are lift equipped and have securement systems for mobility devices.
- The Coles County Council on Aging does not require a mobility device user to transfer to another seat.
- The Coles County Council on Aging staff will provide assistance upon request or as necessary with lifts, ramps, and securement systems.
- Persons with disabilities who do not use a mobility device will be permitted to use the vehicle lifts or ramps upon request.
- The CCCoA will provide service to persons using respirators or portable oxygen. Vehicle operators will properly secure this equipment.
- The CCCoA will ensure adequate time for persons with disabilities to board and disembark a system vehicle.
- The Coles County Council on Aging vehicle operators and other personnel of the system will make use of required accessibility related equipment and features (example: tie-downs will be used to secure a mobility device on the vehicle).
- The CCCoA will provide training to vehicle operators and dispatchers about the safe operation of vehicles and accessibility equipment and customer service sensitivity of persons with disabilities.
- The CCCoA vehicle operators will check operation of lifts/ramps and inspect all securement equipment through pre-trip and post-trip inspection procedures on a daily basis. All ADA equipment failures will be reported immediately to the administration of the CCCoA.
- The CCCoA will make service information available in accessible formats as requested.
- The CCCoA will not refuse to permit a passenger who uses a lift to disembark from a vehicle at any designated stop, unless the lift cannot be deployed, the lift will be damaged if it is deployed, or temporary conditions preclude the safe use of the stop by all passengers.

Service Animals

The CCCoA will permit service animals, such as, but not limited to, service dogs, that have been individually trained to work or perform tasks to accompany persons with disabilities in vehicles and facilities. The service animal must remain under the control of the rider and not present an immediate danger to the driver or other riders. CCCoA staff will not ask for proof of the qualifications of the animal but may ask: 1) is the animal a service animal required because of a disability? 2) what work or task has the animal been trained to perform? Service Animals are required to sit on the floor of any CCCoA vehicle and are not permitted to sit on the seats.

Emotional Support animals or comfort animals are NOT determined to be service animals under ADA.

Personal Care Attendants

The CCCoA will allow personal care attendants (PCA) to ride the public transit services with any rider, free of charge. PCA's must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the rider they are assisting.

Priority Seating

Priority seating is reserved in all transit vehicles for passengers with disabilities who prefer to utilize that seating. In buses, the priority seating is located in the front of the vehicle. Priority seating areas are designated with appropriate signage.

Seat Belts

All passengers are required to use the transit vehicle restraint available in all seats on board CCCoA vehicles. Each passenger must have his/her restraint securely fastened before the vehicle will be placed in motion.

Passengers utilizing a mobility aid will be secured via an approved securement system. In addition, these passengers will also be secured with a four-point occupant restraint system. In the event a passenger states they have a medical reason for not being able to wear the occupant restraints, drivers must accommodate and notify dispatch.

Mobility Device Securement

The CCCoA requires mobility devices to be secured and will ensure that mobility device users and their mobility devices are secured. Service will not be denied due to the CCCoA's inability to secure a mobility device. Securement problems of mobility device shall be reported immediately to administration of the CCCoA. Staff must provide assistance upon request or as necessary with lifts, ramps and securement systems. The CCCoA will allow individuals with disabilities who do not use a mobility device to use the vehicle's lifts or ramp.

Reasonable Modification to Policies, Practices, and Procedures

The CCCoA is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. To ensure equality and fairness, the CCCoA is committed to making reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure programs and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The purpose of the Reasonable Modification Policy is to ensure that CCCoA offers equal and effective opportunities and access to public transportation services for persons with disabilities and full compliance with the provision of the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For more information on reasonable modification procedures of the CCCoA, including requesting a reasonable modification or the appeal process, please see the CCCoA's Reasonable Modification Policy.

Refusal of Service and Nondiscrimination

The CCCoA may refuse service and/or contact local law enforcement for instances when a passenger engages in violence, is seriously disruptive, poses a direct threat to the driver or other passengers or is engaged in illegal activities. The CCCoA, however, will not refuse to provide service to an individual with a disability solely because the individual's disability results in an appearance or behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience CCCoA employees or other persons.

ADA Service Requirements

The CCCoA is responsible for ensuring all maintenance of all accessible features on agency vehicles including lifts, ramps, securement devices, elevators, signage and systems to facilitate communication.

The lift maintenance service was modeled after recommendations from the manufacturer. To ensure timely ADA equipment maintenance, standardized procedures, and better tracking records, all ADA service equipment will be serviced every 6 months. Vehicle interlocks shall be inspected on daily pre-trip and post-trip inspections and during monthly inspections. Vehicles with malfunctioning interlocks shall be taken out of service immediately until repaired.

ADA Complaint Procedures

The CCCoA is committed to ensuring safe and efficient transportation for persons with disabilities, as provided by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Any ADA transportation service complaints received by the CCCoA will be immediately investigated and every effort made to seek an appropriate and prompt resolution. By promptly identifying deficiency areas, the CCCoA will work to make the necessary corrections and/or adjustments to alleviate the situation.

ADA transportation service complaints shall be submitted in writing on the agency's complaint form and returned to the:

ADA Officer
Executive Director, CCCoA
11021 East Co. Rd. 800 N
Charleston, IL 61920

If you would like a copy of this form, or require additional information, please visit the Dial-A-Ride website at www.dialaridetransit.org or call the CCCoA ADA Officer during regular administrative business hours (8:30 AM – 4:00 PM) at 217-639-5150.