

Paratransit Reasonable Modifications

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Reasonable Modification?

According to Federal Transit Administration 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37, Final Rule, a Reasonable Modification is a change in Valley Metro's service policies and practices in circumstances where established practices may prevent individuals with disabilities from accessing and participating fully in Valley Metro's programs, services and facilities. Reasonable Modification is NOT:

1. A fundamental alteration of service. This would include a change so significant that it alters the nature of service. Examples from Appendix E of 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37, Final Rule include:
 - a. Specific vehicle requests ("I like the new buses/taxis!")
 - b. Exclusive rides
 - c. PCA functions such as carrying packages or staying with unattended passengers
 - d. Operating outside service area or hours
2. A change to service that would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others
 - a. Exposing vehicles to hazards (reversing down a narrow alley, striking overhead objects, etc.)
 - b. Leaving a vehicle and/or customers in vehicle unattended for a prolonged period of time to attend to a specific passenger
3. Not needed by the requestor to use the service
 - a. Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use the entity's services, programs or activities for their intended purpose, such as requesting a specific driver
4. Undue financial/administrative burden
 - a. Asking that a ride not be taken with a certain passenger

What types of Reasonable Modifications might be appropriate to request for bus or light rail service?

Examples of Reasonable Modifications to bus or light rail service might include:

1. Have operator pull up to a reasonable distance from obstructed bus stop
2. Help rider with fare media
3. Allow passenger with medical condition to eat/drink to avoid adverse health consequences
4. Take injectable medicine on the bus/light rail
5. Allow strollers being used as mobility aids for young children to be secured in wheelchair securement area
6. Allowing mobility devices, other than a wheelchair or Segway, be secured in the mobility aid securement area

What types of Reasonable Modifications might be appropriate to request for paratransit/Dial-a-Ride service?

Examples of Reasonable Modifications to paratransit/Dial-a-Ride service might include:

1. Pick up at specific entrances
2. Assistance in extreme weather
3. A request for a driver to help him or her navigate an incline (e.g., a driveway or sidewalk) with the passenger's wheeled device
4. Pick ups/drop offs on private property/gated communities
5. Allowing a customer to board separately from their mobility aid

How long will it take for Valley Metro to respond to my request for a Reasonable Modification?

Valley Metro, (in consultation with those providers involved in a requested modification) will have five (5) business days to review and make a determination on each request. Valley Metro will have an additional (5) business days to provide a final response to the customer.

I have a very large wheelchair. Can I request a Reasonable Modification to have a paratransit/Dial-a-Ride vehicle sent that will accommodate my large heavy chair?

No, you do not need to request a Reasonable Modification for this purpose. Instead, contact the Valley Metro Mobility Center at 602.716.2100 so that we can assist you further. In accordance with ADA requirements, all accessible vans and minivans used by the Paratransit/Dial-a-Ride providers throughout the region will accommodate mobility devices with dimensions of 30 inches by 48 inches when measured two inches above the ground and which have a combined weight (mobility device plus passenger) of no more than 600 pounds. Some vehicles will accommodate larger and heavier mobility devices. In keeping with Federal Transit Administration guidance, we will accommodate larger mobility devices to the extent that we are able. In order to do this, we will need to update our records with the dimensions and combined weight of you and your mobility device.

Can I request a Reasonable Modification to be assigned a specific type of vehicle, such as a sedan or minivan when using paratransit/Dial-a-Ride?

No. Appendix E of the FTA Reasonable Modification Final Rule states, in part: "...a request for a specific type or appearance of vehicle (e.g., a sedan rather than a van, in order to provide more comfortable service) can be denied." Valley Metro does not consider this type of request a Reasonable Modification because it is not specifically required by the ADA and because it would fundamentally alter the nature of shared-ride ADA paratransit service. Furthermore, because each of the four

paratransit and Dial-a-Ride providers in the region operates different types of vehicles, it would be impossible to guarantee that a specific type of vehicle would be available for any trip a customer might need.

Can I request a Reasonable Modification for a trip that is at a time that is outside paratransit/Dial-a-Ride hours of operation?

No. According to Appendix E of the FTA Reasonable Modification Final Rule, a person's request for fixed route or paratransit service may be denied when honoring the request would require the transportation provider to travel outside of its service area or to operate outside of its operating hours. Valley Metro does not consider this type of request to be a Reasonable Modification because it would constitute a fundamental alteration of the agency's service.

My disability makes it difficult for me to ride for extended periods of time. Can I request a Reasonable Modification to get a direct trip to my destination without having to share my ride with other passengers?

No. Paratransit is, by nature, a shared-ride service. Valley Metro does not consider this type of request to be a Reasonable Modification, because a passenger's request for an exclusive ride is considered a fundamental alteration of the agency's services.

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