

REV. July 2023



ADA PARATRANSIT Rider's Guide



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Reserve



Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CAROLINA
José Carlos Aponte Dalmau, Mayor

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SITRAC-ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE

The Municipality of Carolina's (AMGC) Intermodal Transportation System (SITRAC), provides paratransit services in accordance with federal, state and local laws, regulations, and policies. The SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service is a shared ride transportation service for people who are unable to independently use public transit because of a disability or disabling health condition. As required by Americans with Disabilities Act-1990 (ADA), all public transit agencies operating a fixed route system required to provide paratransit service to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system.

The ADA Paratransit Service is provided throughout all municipal jurisdiction. The AMGC provides the SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service for its rural routes (include all rural area). In the urban areas ADA Paratransit Service is provided by Metropolitan Bus Authority (MBA), a subsidiary of the Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible to ride ADA Paratransit Service, a person must be unable to use the SITRAC fixed route due to a qualifying disability (physical, mental or visual). Any individual which considers that qualifies for ADA-Paratransit Service must fill an ADA-Paratransit Application Form and submit it in the SITRAC Office of the General Services Department located on the 2nd floor of AMGC-City Hall. The ADA-Paratransit Application Form is available on the Municipality's website <https://www.municipiocarolina.com/> and in the SITRAC's Office.

SITRAC Personnel is responsible for processing the ADA-Paratransit Application Form. The Application will be reviewed within twenty-one (21) days of receiving a complete application and the SITRAC's Office will provide a written resolution granting or denying eligibility. Usually eligibility is unconditional, however, depending on the circumstances; eligibility may be conditional or temporary. If the individual does not agree with the denial, conditional or temporary determination, they may appeal the decision and request reconsideration.

The SITRAC Office refers to MBA all requests for Paratransit services from riders living in the contracted coverage area (urban area). MBA has its own operational rules for paratransit service. To oversee paratransit contracted service, SITRAC personnel reviews the monthly reports of service provided by MBA. Also, periodically Municipality staff makes random monitoring calls to customers to inquire about the quality of service.

ADA PARATRANSIT ELIGIBILITY APPEAL PROCESS

The process to appeal and request reconsideration, due to a denial, conditional or temporary determination, is as follows:

- Applicants have 60 business days after received the denied resolution letter to submit to the SITRAC's Office a written notice that they will exercise their appeal rights. Prior to the evaluation or hearing, the applicant's eligibility status remains unchanged from the original determination. Regarding conditional or temporary eligibility, all eligible trips will be provided while on appeal.
- Applicants will have the right to be heard in person or in writing and to have the necessary support, such as a language or sign interpreter, if requested.
 - ☑ If decide to appeal in person, SITRAC personnel will contact the Applicant to schedule a mutually agreeable day and time for the appeal hearing. The applicant may bring additional information to the hearing and can attend with others who are able to provide information on its behalf.
 - ☑ If decide to appeal in writing, the Applicant can send all the additional information they would like to be considered.
- Appeals will be heard or evaluated by personnel that are independent of those that made the original decision to deny eligibility.
- The determination resulting from the appeal will be made in writing within 30 days and will state the reason(s) for the decision. If a decision is not made within 30 days of the date of appeal, full eligibility will be given until a decision is made.

- Applicants may reapply for service at any time if there is a change in their functional mobility.

VISITOR SERVICE

Out of town visitors are approved to use SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service for up to twenty-one (21) days in a calendar year upon submission to SITRAC's personnel of proof of paratransit eligibility from another ADA Paratransit service. If the visitor is unable to present documentation of another paratransit service, the SITRAC personnel may require proof of residence and if their disability is not apparent, the visitor will be asked to sign a certification document that states that they are unable to use fixed route transit.

Visitors who require more than twenty-one (21) days of service per year must apply for SITRAC-ADA Paratransit eligibility. The service to visitors will be the same that is provided to Carolina's residents eligible under ADA-Paratransit.

FARES

The SITRAC-ADA Paratransit service, like fixed-route service, does not charge.

SERVICE HOURS

ADA Paratransit services are required by federal regulation to have the same service hours as the fixed route system for which they are a complement. The Paratransit services are available during the following hours:

<i>Days</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Monday through Friday	6:00 AM TO 6:00 PM
Saturday and Sunday	<i>No service provided</i>

SCHEDULING RIDES

To schedule trips in the SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service, riders must call from one (1) day to fourteen (14) days before desired trip.

Riders can reserve trips on a next-day basis. The 'next day' means any time during office hours (7:30 AM-4:00 PM) the day before; that is, an individual could call Monday afternoon to schedule a trip on Tuesday morning. However, SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service appreciates as much advance possible reservation to schedule trips. Please note that same-day reservations will not be accepted.

To make reservations

Call: 787-757-2626 Exts. 8627 or 8688

From: Monday through Sunday / 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Reservation requests may be left on voice mail when the SITRAC's Office is closed. If service is requested via voicemail, SITRAC's personnel will call back to confirm that the reservation has been made.

When calling to schedule rides, please provide:

- *Name*
- *Day, date, and time of the trip or trips*
- *Number of people traveling*
- *Type of any mobility aids being used*
- *Pick-up address (street address, building, or facility name, etc.)*
- *Drop-off address (street address, building, or facility name, etc.)*

The SITRAC's personnel will make every effort to schedule the requested trip; however, as Paratransit is a shared ride service, the exact appointment time requested may not be available. In such cases, SITRAC personnel are allowed to negotiate the time of trip within the 30 minutes of requested pick-up time. Times may be offered between 30 minutes before or after the requested pick-up time.

PICK-UPS AND DROP-OFFS

SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service has established curb-to-curb service (with origin to destination, as needed) as the basic mode of paratransit service. When

needed, riders should request additional origin to destination assistance when making reservations so that SITRAC personnel have an opportunity to evaluate how to meet the need. If necessary, SITRAC's driver will come to residential door, but will not enter into lobbies of apartments, buildings, or establishments to inform that the vehicle has arrived.

TRAVEL TIME

The estimated travel time of an ADA Paratransit ride is expected to be equal to or less than comparable fixed route travel times, including transfers and walking time.

CANCELLATIONS / CHANGES

Cancellations

Riders must call to cancel an unneeded ride as soon as possible or at least two hours before, to avoid a “late cancellation” or a “no-show” and help reduce any service disruption for other riders.

Changes

No changes can be made to any trips on the day of the scheduled ride, including the time of travel or any changes to the addresses. Any changes to scheduled trips must be made in the standard reservation window for all trips (that is, no more than fourteen (14) day ahead and at least one day before the requested trip).

SHARED RIDES

The ADA Paratransit service is a shared-ride system. Vehicles are dispatched to carry multiple riders, so riders may or may not go directly to their destination after being picked up; there may be one or more pick-ups and drop-offs of other riders along the way.

UNSCHEDULED STOP REQUESTS

Only scheduled stops will be made. Drivers are not permitted to make unauthorized stops.

NO-SHOW POLICY

SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service understands that because paratransit requires trips to be scheduled in advance, riders may sometimes miss scheduled rides or forget to cancel rides they no longer need. *SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service* also understands that riders may sometimes miss scheduled trips or be unable to cancel trips in a timely way for reasons that are beyond their control. However, repeatedly missing scheduled trips or failing to cancel trips in a timely way can lead to suspension of service. The following information explains SITRAC's-ADA Paratransit Service No-Show Policy.

No-Show

A no-show occurs when a rider fails to appear to board the vehicle for a scheduled trip. This presumes the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up location within pick-up window and the driver waits at least five (5) minutes.

Pick-up Window

The pick-up window is defined as thirty (30) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time to thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. Riders must be ready to board a vehicle that arrives within the pick-up window. SITRAC's driver will wait for a maximum of five (5) minutes within the pick-up window for the rider show up.

Late Cancellation

A late cancellation is defined as either: a cancellation made less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time or as a cancellation made at the door or refusal to board a vehicle that has arrived within the pick-up window.

No-Shows Due to Operator Error or to Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control

SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service does not count as no-shows or late cancellation any missed trips due to operator error or to circumstances beyond the rider's control, such as:

Operator's Error

- ☑ *Trips placed on the schedules in error*
- ☑ *Pick-ups scheduled at the wrong pick-up location*
- ☑ *Drivers arriving and departing before the pick-up window begins*
- ☑ *Drivers arriving late (after the end of the pick-up window)*
- ☑ *Drivers arriving within the pick-up window, but departing without waiting the five (5) minutes*

Circumstances Beyond the Rider's Control

- ☑ *Medical emergency*
- ☑ *Family emergency*
- ☑ *Sudden illness or change in condition.*
- ☑ *Appointment that runs unexpectedly late without sufficient notice*

SITRAC riders should contact SITRAC's Office when experiencing no-shows or late cancellations due to circumstances beyond their control.

Policy for Handling Subsequent Trips Following No-Shows

When a rider is no-show for one trip, all subsequent trips on that day remain on the schedule unless the rider specifically cancels the trips. To avoid multiple no-shows on the same day, riders are strongly encouraged to cancel any subsequent trips they no longer need that day.

Suspension Policy for a Pattern or Practice of Excessive No-Shows and Late Cancellations

SITRAC's ADA Paratransit personnel review all recorded no-show and late cancellations to ensure accuracy before recording them in a rider's account. Each verified no-show or late cancellation consistent with the above definitions counts as one (1) penalty point. Riders will be subject to suspension after they meet all of the following conditions:

- ☑ *Accumulate four (4) penalty points in one calendar month*
- ☑ *Have booked at least twelve (12) trips that month*
- ☑ *Have "not-showed" or "late cancelled" at least ten (10) percent of those trips*

A rider will be subject to suspension only if both the minimum number of trips booked and the minimum number of penalty points are reached during the calendar month. SITRAC's ADA Paratransit personnel will notify riders by telephone after they have accumulated two (2) penalty points, and would be subject to suspension if they accumulate two (2) additional penalty points that month consistent with the criteria listed in this section of the policy above.

All suspension notice will include a copy of this policy, information on disputing no-shows or late cancellations, and how to appeal suspensions. Suspensions begin on Mondays. The first violation in a calendar year triggers a warning letter, but no suspension. Subsequent violations result in the following suspensions:

<i>Violations Number</i>	<i>Days of Suspension</i>
<i>Second violation</i>	<i>Seven (7) days</i>
<i>Third violation</i>	<i>Ten (10) days</i>
<i>Fourth violation</i>	<i>thirteen (13) days</i>

<i>Violations Number</i>	<i>Days of Suspension</i>
<i>Fifth and subsequent violations</i>	<i>Fifteen (15) days</i>

Policy for Disputing Specific No-Shows or Late Cancellations

Riders wishing to dispute no-shows or late cancellations must do so within fifteen (15) business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders should contact the SITRAC's Office at 787-757-2626, Exts. 8627 / 8688, from Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM to explain the circumstance, and request the removal of the no-show or late cancellation.

Policy for Appealing Proposed Suspensions

Riders wishing to appeal suspensions under this policy have the right to file an appeal request, which must be in a written letter. Riders must submit written appeal requests within fifteen (15) business days of receiving suspension letters. Riders who miss the appeal request deadline will be suspended from SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service on the date listed on the suspension notice. All suspension appeals must follow the established appeal policy to civil rights processes by the Municipality's Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS (PCAS) AND COMPANIONS

ADA Paratransit Service is provided to at least one other individual accompanying an eligible rider. If the eligible paratransit rider travels with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), service is provided to at least one other individual in addition to the PCA. At the time the reservation is made, riders must let know if they will be traveling with a companion, a PCA, or both.

A PCA is someone whose purpose is to help meet the rider's disability-related needs. A PCA is someone provided by the eligible rider; the paratransit service

does not provide PCAs for riders. Riders should indicate they will be traveling with a PCA when applying for eligibility and when scheduling trips.

Drivers are not permitted to provide attendant-type services (for example, carrying personal packages). However, driver may provide assistance with boarding and leaving, upon request.

CHILDREN

All rules applying to adult riders also apply to children riders registered. Children under twelve (12) years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Riders may travel with a service animal. Service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animals individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items. A service animal must be under the constant control of its owner and may not occupy a passenger seat.

Emotional support animals or “comfort animals” are not service animals. SITRAC personnel may ask whether an animal is a service animal and what functions it performs as such. SITRAC personnel may refuse to transport service animals that are deemed to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of drivers or other riders, create a seriously disruptive atmosphere, or are otherwise not under the rider’s control.

Riders should indicate they will be traveling with a service animal when scheduling trips.

MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

SITRAC's Office ensures that all vehicles include lifts and other accessibility features that meet or exceed federal and state requirements. All mobility aids and other equipment used by riders must be able to be safely secured inside the vehicle during travel in order to be permitted on the vehicle. There are no restrictions on riders using respirators for portable oxygen on vehicle.

CARRY-ON PACKAGE

Paratransit riders, PCAs and companions are permitted to carry only the number of bags or packages that they are able to manage independently without the assistance of the driver. Due to space limitations and the time it takes to board the vehicle, the number of shopping bags is restricted to those that can be easily handled by the rider and carried aboard without delaying the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to carry personal packages.

TRIP PURPOSES

Trips on the paratransit service may be scheduled for any purpose, same as fixed route services. It is prohibited from prioritizing trips based on the trips purposes.

SUBSCRIPTION RESERVATIONS

A subscription reservation is a reservation made for a recurring trip or set of trips. Subscription service is limited to riders traveling between the same origin and destination at the same time, on the same day(s) of the week, at least once weekly, for at least one month.

Riders must call every thirty (30) days to confirm that their subscription trips are still needed and on the schedule. Also, riders must call when they wish to cancel the trip for a particular day(s).

LIFTS

Lift deployment will be available at any pick-up and drop-off location requested by riders, always that the terrain or the conditions of the place allow it. If the location does not allow for the safe deployment of the lift, the nearest safe and agreed upon location will be used to pick-up or drop-off the rider. The lift is only to be occupied by one rider at a time. For safety reasons, PCAs and/or companions are not permitted to be on the lift while an ADA rider is loading or unloading.

OPERATION POLICIES WHEN ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES ARE INOPERATIVE

SITRAC Office ensures that vehicles with inoperative lifts and ramps are not put into service. SITRAC Paratransit drivers fill a daily vehicle inspection sheet to confirm they're working.

A vehicle is taken out of service for prompt repair and another vehicle with operational lifts and other ADA accessibility features is put into service. SITRAC drivers are responsible for documenting and notifying their supervisor immediately of the failure of any ADA accessibility features during pre-trip inspection or while in service. SITRAC's Office will request to the maintenance contractor to repair ADA accessibility features. SITRAC's Office ensures that Paratransit service and standards are continued to be offered while the inoperable vehicle is out of service.

ADA COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any person, who believes has been discriminated against the basis of disability by any provider of the Municipality of Carolina's (AMGC) Intermodal Transportation System (SITRAC), may fill and submit an ADA Complaint by completing and submitting a Discrimination Complaint Form in the Equal Employment Opportunity Office of the AMGC Human Resources Department.

The ADA Complaint Procedures are available on the Municipality's website <https://www.municipiocarolina.com>. Also, they can request it in the Equal Employment Opportunity Office of the Municipality of Carolina, located on the 3rd floor of the City Hall.

Contact information to ADA Complaint Procedures is as follows:

Lorna M. Tavarez / ltavarez@carolina.pr.gov

**MUNICIPALITY OF CAROLINA
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY OFFICE
PO Box 8
Carolina, PR 00986-0008**

787.757.2626, Exts. 8243 or 8327

RIDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Main rider's responsibilities, are:

- Review SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Rider's Guide
- Make trip reservations at least one (1) day and up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Trip reservation cannot be made with SITRAC's drivers.
- When making the reservation, let know if traveling with a companion, a PCA, or both.
- Same day reservations will not be accepted.
- Call to cancel an unneeded ride as soon as possible or at least two hours before.
- No changes can be made to any trips on the day of the scheduled ride, including the time of travel or any changes to the addresses.
- Be on time at the designated pickup location.
- Arrange entry for the vehicle if pickup or drop off location is inside a gated community or has special access requirements.
- If the ADA Paratransit vehicle has not arrived by the end of the pick-up window (thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time) call SITRAC's Office at 787-757-2626, Exts. 8627 / 8688.
- Avoid distracting the driver.
- Avoid inappropriate, violent or illegal behavior.

- Maintain wheelchairs or other mobility aids safely secured inside the vehicle during travel.
- Maintain acceptable standards of personal hygiene and exhibit appropriate, courteous, and respectful behavior with other riders and SITRAC's drivers.
- No eating, drinking, or smoking on board the vehicle.
- No travel under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering in the vehicle.
- Do not ask the SITRAC's driver to carry personal packages or other objects.
- Radios, recording devices, or any equipment that generate unnecessary noises are prohibited, unless utilized for purposes of communications or are used with earphones.
- Firearms, manual weapons, explosives, flammable, acid or corrosive substance, and any materials that may cause damages are prohibited.

DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Main driver's responsibilities are:

- Drive safely at all times, following transit rules, such as speed in urban, rural, and school areas.
- Attend riders with courtesy.
- Use the same standards of courtesy and personal hygiene as those required of riders.
- Wear the uniform and ID of Municipality's SITRAC driver
- Perform pre-trip inspection on the vehicle, including cycling the lift, and immediately report any defects to the supervisor.
- For safety reasons, maintain the "line of sight" of the vehicle at all times.
- Complete and submit the necessary reports in case of an accident, or passenger incident/injury.
- Keep to the assigned service schedule.
- Provide reasonable assistance to riders boarding or leaving the vehicle.
 - ✓ When requested, and if safe to do so:

- ✓ Assist passengers to and from the main door of their origin and destination.
- ✓ Help people in wheelchairs maneuver onto standard ramps, and to and from the main door of their origin and destination.

Drivers are Not Permitted to:

- Accompany riders beyond the main door of their origin and destination
- Enter the residence of a rider.
- Lift or carry a passenger.
- Make unauthorized stops, such as at an ATM/Cash machine, pharmacy, or store.
- Provide attendant-type services, such as carrying personal packages or other objects.
- Accept tips or any other gratuities.
- Do errands for riders, such as picking up prescriptions or groceries.
- Use personal cell phones, iPods, computers or similar devices when operating the vehicle.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service defines the following service characteristics for monitoring purposes:

Trip Denials

Trip denials occur when a one-way trip cannot be scheduled within the established period of one (1) hour before or after the scheduling departing time, or when requests for reservations cannot be scheduled within the established time frame.

On-Time Performance

The service is provided within the thirty (30) minute window.

Missed Trips

If the paratransit user cancels less than one hour before the trip; if driver arrives for pick-up and customer cancels the trip; if customer is not ready

when driver arrives for pick up (after waiting for five (5) minutes); if the customer could not be found at the pick-up place in the scheduled time; if the driver does not show up at all.

Excessively Long Trips

All ADA Paratransit rides shall have travel times equal to or less than comparable fixed route travel times. Any rides that are longer than the comparable fixed route travel time will be considered excessively long.

TO IMPROVE SERVICE

Provide Input and Feedback about SITRAC-ADA Paratransit Service

Riders are encouraged to let SITRAC's Office know about the quality of service. When calling or writing please provide as much detailed information, such as trip date, time of pickup or drop off, driver's name, or vehicle number. This detailed information is especially helpful if the feedback is a complaint to be looked into.

Municipality's Equal Employment Opportunity Office is responsible for tracking, reviewing, and the resulting of all complaints received. All received complaints are entered into a database for tracking. Please note that there are separate processes for different types of service feedback. To ensure that feedback response is handled most efficiently, please refer to the following table:

<i>Feedback / Complaint</i>	<i>Submit to</i>	<i>Address / Phone</i>
Trip/service feedback	SITRAC's Office	MUNICIPALITY OF CAROLINA SITRAC OFFICE PO Box 8 Carolina, PR 00986-0008 787-757-2626, Exts. 8204 / 8498
Dispute no-shows or late cancellations		
Paratransit Rider's Guide		
Paratransit Service Policy		
ADA Paratransit Service-Urban Area/ Provided by Metropolitan Bus Authority (MBA)	Equal Employment Opportunity Office	MUNICIPALITY OF CAROLINA Equal Employment Opportunity Office PO Box 8 Carolina, PR 00986-0008 787.757.2626, Exts. 8243/8327
TITLE VI Complaint		
ADA / Discrimination Complaint		
Reasonable Modification Complaint		
Appeal suspension of service		