

VAN TRAN RIDERS HANDBOOK



Fairbanks North Star Borough Transportation Department
3175 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709-5499

Glenn Miller, Transportation Director

Scheduling & Dispatcher: 459-1010
Van Tran Operations Supervisor: 459-1324
Transportation Department: 459-1002 Fax: 459-1004

Email: tpark@co.fairbanks.ak.us

Website: co.fairbanks.ak.us/Transportation/vantran.pdf

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OUR PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE YOU WITH TRANSPORTATION

WHY WE HAVE VAN TRAN SERVICE

The Fairbanks North Star Borough has been operating the Metropolitan Area Commuter Service (MACS) since 1977. This is the Borough's fixed bus route system. In 1985 the Borough began Van Tran service for the elderly and disabled. When the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was passed, it required all communities with a fixed bus route system to provide comparable paratransit service for those who cannot (because of their disabilities) use the fixed route service. Van Tran then became the Borough's paratransit service to meet the requirements of the ADA and provide door-to-door service for its patrons.

Both MACS and Van Tran vehicles are wheelchair accessible and require anyone riding in a wheelchair to use a seat belt and to have their wheelchair secured with tie down straps. The MACS buses have priority seating for senior and disabled citizens. We encourage riders to use the regular MACS system whenever possible.

ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for Van Tran service a person must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Be a person who, because of a disability, is unable to use the MACS Transit fixed route bus service, or
2. Be a person who is at least 60 years of age.

(People with temporary disabilities may be eligible for Van Tran services for the duration of the disability.)

Visitors to Fairbanks who have an ADA paratransit identification card from another city are eligible to use Van Tran services. However, a person who does not have an ADA paratransit identification card may ride Van Tran for 21 days after completing and submitting a Van Tran application.

Information about Van Tran is available in large print, Braille or on audio cassette. Contact the Van Tran Operational Supervisor at 459-1324 and request the materials in the format you need.

SERVICE AREAS

Comparable paratransit service is prioritized according to the following eligibility categories:

- A. People with qualifying disabilities living within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed bus route.
- B. People with qualifying disabilities that live beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed bus route.
- C. People over 60 years of age.

By law (ADA) people in category “A” receive the highest priority. All “A” rides must begin and end within the “A” service area. Any rides beginning or ending outside the “A” service area are considered “B” rides. **People in categories “B” and “C” ride on a space and time availability basis.**

HOW TO APPLY FOR SERVICE

You may receive an application packet either by calling the Van Tran Dispatch at 459-1010 to have an application mailed to you or by stopping by the Transit Park at 501 Cushman Street to pick one up.

Applications are also available at the FNSB Transportation Department Administration office at 3175 Peger Road, by calling 459-1324 or from our website:

<http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/Transportation/vantran.pdf>

Applications are processed in the order they are received. Completion of the process is anticipated to take 21 days. To avoid needless delays in processing please do the following:

1. Answer all questions completely.
2. Include an accurate mailing address and phone number so you can be contacted with further instructions.
3. Make sure to include your entire doctor’s information, including name, address and phone number.
4. Be sure to sign the release form and the application.

5. Return the original application packet to us, not a copy.

Please feel free to call and check on the status of your eligibility with the Van Tran Operational Supervisor at 459-1324.

As soon as the application is submitted you may start requesting rides and using Van Tran while the application is being processed. Please read this booklet before requesting your first ride, it will help you to understand the policies and procedures for using Van Tran.

After the application is approved you will be notified by mail where and how to get your ADA identification card (no charge for the card). If you need a ride to pick up your card let the dispatcher know and there will be no charge for the ride there and back.

If the application is denied you will receive a letter stating why your application was denied. You may appeal the denial in writing within five (5) days of notification date. Send appeals to:

Glenn Miller, Transportation Director
F.N.S.B. Transportation Department
3175 Peger Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99709-5499

Use of Van Tran services will continue until the Transportation Director or the Transportation Advisory Commission has made a final decision on the appeal. (See Appeal Process pages 10-11)

OPERATION DAYS & HOURS

| | <u>FIRST PICK-UP</u> | <u>LAST DROP-OFF</u> |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <u>MON.-FRI.</u> | 6:15 A.M. | 9:15 P.M. |
| <u>SATURDAY</u> | 9:00 A.M. | 6:45 P.M. |
| <u>SUNDAY</u> | NO SERVICE | NO SERVICE |

Van Tran has voice mail on its telephone line for those times that you want to request a trip or to change or cancel a trip when the office is closed. Voice mail will also record your message should the Van Tran telephone be busy when you call.

HOLIDAYS

Van Tran operates six days a week except on the following holidays:

New Years Day
Labor Day

Memorial Day
Thanksgiving Day

Independence Day
Christmas Day

FARES

VAN TRAN FARES

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Per Ride (one way) | 2.00 |
| <u>Van Tran Coupons (each)</u> | <u>2.00</u> |
| Personnel Care Attendant or Caregiver when accompanied by eligible rider. | Free |

A rider's eligibility can be suspended if a rider fails to pay for rides taken.

A Van Tran coupon is a pre-paid voucher for a one-way ride. Coupons don't have expiration dates and can be purchased in any denomination desired. The coupons are \$2.00 each and there is no discount for bulk purchases.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

Van Tran provides door-to-door service. This means that when the van pulls up to your location the driver will assist you to and from the van from your first entryway door to the drop-off location's first entryway door. If you require more assistance then you need to have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or caregiver (someone to assist you). Van Tran does not provide PCA's or caregivers.

HOW TO REQUEST A RIDE

TO REQUEST YOUR RIDES CALL 459-1010 DURING THE FOLLOWING
RIDE REQUESTS HOURS

Monday through Friday

6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

If you call outside of these times you are welcome to leave your request on our voice mail service. We will process all voice mail requests on the following day of operation.

OR BY E-MAIL AT tpark@co.fairbanks.ak.us

TYPES OF RIDES

Van Tran offers two types of rides. They are demand rides and subscription service.

DEMAND RIDES

A demand ride is a single trip, when you wish to go to any location within our service area. This could be to the store, doctor's office, the movies, post office or for any purpose. No priority is given for trip purposes. Van Tran service can be used for any reason. However, there are some restrictions for trip purposes for subscription service.

Rides must be requested by 7:30 PM for next requests, but you may schedule requests up to 14 days in advance. Please have your ride request planned out before you call the dispatcher.

YOUR RIDE IS NOT RESERVED AS SOON AS YOUR REQUEST IS MADE. YOUR REQUEST MAY BE PLACED IN STAND-BY EVEN IF IT'S AN ADVANCED REQUEST. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO CONTACT THE DISPATCHER THE DAY BEFORE YOUR REQUESTED RIDE TO CONFIRM THE RIDE AND THE TIME OF THE RIDE.

Have the following information ready:

1. Your name.
2. Your first pick up address and destination address (including street names, numbers and building numbers).
3. The time of your appointment or the time you wish to be there.
4. The time you need to return (a new address if different from where you were dropped off).
5. The date of ride.
6. Will a personal care attendant or a guest be traveling with you?
7. Do you use a wheelchair, a walker, a cane or any other device that you might need assistance with?

When requesting a ride, if the exact time you wish to ride is not available, the dispatcher may have to work with you to fit your trip in the schedule. You may have to be scheduled up to one hour before your requested time (longer for North Pole). You will have the option of accepting that time or changing your requested time. Some rides will take longer than a direct trip so that we may provide more rides to others sharing the vehicle. Trip times may vary greatly depending on the demand of service for that time of day.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

Subscription service is when a rider travels to the same place at the same time one or more times a week. This service allows riders to take regular trips without the need to call to schedule or confirm each trip. Requests for subscription service must be made in writing to the Operations Supervisor.

The ADA provisions on subscription service state that subscription service must not exceed half of the trips provided at any time, unless all non-subscription requests can be met. Subscription service is limited to specific trip purposes. These are medical (dialysis, physical therapy), education or training, and employment rides. Social and shopping trips are not eligible for subscription service. Pick-up and drop-off times may be negotiated.

Waiting lists, limits on the number of trips, and other forms of capacity constraints are permissible for subscription service.

Due to the demand for and the limited availability of subscription service, numerous cancellations or no-shows may result in a suspension or outright loss of the subscription for that rider.

Requests that qualify for subscription service during times when it is not available are placed on a waiting list. Meanwhile we will try our best to give you the ride you need under demand ride service. As soon as subscription space is available these requests are added to the subscription schedule and the riders are notified.

STAND-BY REQUESTS

When a ride cannot be fit into a regular schedule or when a request is made for same day travel, the ride is then placed on a stand-by list. The ride request will be monitored for availability in the schedule. As space and time become available, the Van Tran dispatcher will call when the request can be scheduled. A Van Tran driver will be dispatched for the pick up only if the rider verbally accepts the trip.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Van Tran may arrive 15 minutes before or after a scheduled pick up time. It is the rider's responsibility to keep track of the times for scheduled rides and to be ready to board the vehicle at any time within the 30-minute arrival window.

EXAMPLE: Your scheduled ride time is 3:00 p.m. The driver may pick you up anytime between 2:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Drivers are tightly scheduled to accommodate as many patrons as possible therefore you should be ready to leave upon the driver's arrival.

Drivers may not be able to wait or come back if the rider is not ready.

If the vehicle is more than 15 minutes late, the dispatcher will try to notify the rider. If you are not notified and the vehicle is late please call the dispatcher to check on the rides status. The dispatcher should be able to give you an

approximate arrival time for the vehicle. Traffic, weather conditions and other riders may cause delays to schedules.

RIDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Write down every scheduled trip and check it daily.**
- Be ready to board the vehicle when it arrives.**
- Cancel trips early, so others may use the service.**
- Keep Van Tran informed of any changes in your address, phone, or physical status.**

CANCELLATIONS

A cancellation is when a rider cancels or changes a ride with less than 24 hours notice. To avoid being penalized for too many cancellations make sure you write down all your scheduled trips as a reminder when you are supposed to travel.

It is very important to cancel unwanted rides to allow others to use this time and not waste a trip. Someone on standby can use this spot only if you call in and give the dispatcher enough time to schedule another rider.

NO-SHOWS

A No-Show is when you are not at your designated pick up point or when you refuse a scheduled ride when the van arrives. Cancellations called in less than hour before a scheduled pick-up time are also considered to be No-Shows.

If you have a “No-Show”, all of your other trips for that day are automatically canceled unless you immediately notify the dispatcher by calling 459-1010.

SUSPENSION POLICY

This suspension policy is designed to provide more opportunities for others to ride by imposing penalties on riders who repeatedly accumulate too many cancellations or no-shows.

YOUR RIGHTS TO RIDE VAN TRAN MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR ONE (1) MONTH IF YOU ACCUMULATE:

6 CANCELLATIONS DURING A 6-MONTH PERIOD OR,

3 NO-SHOWS DURING A 6-MONTH PERIOD OR,

A COMBINATION OF 6 CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOWS DURING A 6-MONTH PERIOD.

YOUR RIDES MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR SIX (6) MONTHS IF YOU RECEIVE A SECOND SUSPENSION DURING A 12-MONTH PERIOD.

If you are a subscription rider and receive a suspension, you will lose your subscription rides and your name will be placed on the bottom of the subscription waiting list. After your suspension period is up, you may request demand rides but the rides will no longer be automatically scheduled and dispatched. Your subscription service will be reinstated only when your name works back up through the waiting list and your times again become available.

DENIED SERVICE POLICY

Occasionally it may become necessary to deny someone Van Tran service. Such reasons could be (but are not limited to):

1. A person's disability does not meet eligibility criteria.
2. A person no longer resides in the service area.
3. Road maintenance prevents van access to your location.
4. Physical barriers at your address prevent the driver from safely assisting you from your entry door to the van and into the van.
5. Conduct or behavior that is unacceptable while using Van Tran services.

6. Not using a PCA or caregiver when warranted or required for your safety and convenience.
7. Failure to follow Van Tran rules and policy.

The length of time that riders are denied Van Tran services will be determined on a case by case basis.

APPEAL PROCESS

If your rights to ride on Van Tran are suspended or if you believe you have been improperly denied service, you have the right to appeal these decisions.

All appeals must be in writing and are made to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Transportation Director. Appeals must be received within thirty (30) business days after the date of your notification.

You may fax your appeal to 459-1004, or you may deliver or mail your appeal to:

Glenn Miller, Transportation Director
FNSB Transportation Department
3175 Peger Rd
Fairbanks, AK 99709-5499

Your appeal must contain:

- A. Your name, address, phone or contact number.
- B. Date of suspension or denied service.
- C. Reason for suspension or denied service.
- D. Your defense (or reasons) why you feel you should not be suspended or denied service.

A decision will be made by the Transportation Director within ten (10) business days after receipt of your appeal. The decision will be mailed or otherwise delivered to you at the address provided in your appeal.

If you are not satisfied with the Transportation Director's decision you may appeal to the FNSB Transportation Advisory Commission. This request must be received by the Transportation Department within five (5) business days after service of the Transportation Director's decision. If no timely appeal of the Director's decision is filed, the decision will become effective on the sixth (6th) day after service of the decision.

The Transportation Advisory Commission will schedule a hearing within thirty (30) days of the date of the appeal. Evidence or testimony may be presented at the hearing by you, or your representative(s), either in person or in writing.

You will be notified in writing within ten (10) business days of the Transportation Advisory Commission's decision.

You may continue to use Van Tran service while this appeal is pending before the Transportation Advisory Commission.

The penalty, if imposed, will become effective and enforceable ten (10) days after the Transportation Advisory Commission's final decision, unless stayed by order of court or agreement of the parties. If you wish to appeal the decision of the Transportation Advisory Commission you may file the appeal in superior court within thirty (30) days of the date the Commission's decision is mailed or otherwise distributed to you.

CHILDREN

Children requesting Van Tran service go through the same eligibility application process as adults. If a child obtains a Van Tran pass, an adult may travel with the child as a guest or personal care attendant, whichever is appropriate for the child. Personal care attendants ride with the ADA rider without charge. The ADA eligible child pays the same fare as any other ADA rider.

Van Tran eligible riders may have children accompany them as guests. Riders who will have children as guests must notify the dispatcher when requesting a ride. Guests pay the regular fare. Young children riding Van Tran must follow the State of Alaska seat belt law, which requires an approved child safety device (car seat) for children less than four years of age. Van Tran has toddler car seats available upon request. You must let the dispatcher know when scheduling if a car seat is needed. If you have a newborn infant you will need to provide your own car seat carrier. The car seats Van Tran has are for the older toddlers.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is responsible for providing transportation to and from public school (Refer to page 6). Van Tran transportation may be appropriate if Van Tran eligible children are involved in before or after school activities. Call the Van Tran Operations Supervisor to check on individual circumstances.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS AND GUESTS

Personal Care Attendant/Caregiver (PCA) - A person who is physically able to assist when a Van Tran rider requires assistance beyond the first entry door or needs to travel with another person for safety or health reasons. Van Tran riders must furnish their own PCA. The PCA may be any qualified person and does not necessarily have to be a certified Medical PCA. When the individual requires PCA's they are responsible for assisting the rider to the van and maneuvering the individual inside the van. The driver is only required to assist the rider on and off the vehicle including the lift and strapping their wheelchair down if one is being used.

The need for a PCA must be indicated on the Van Tran application. If a person needs to add PCA authorization contact the Van Tran Operations Supervisor at 459-1324. One (1) PCA may travel with the Van Tran rider at no charge.

Guests - Eligible riders are entitled to have guests accompany them on Van Tran in addition to the PCA. When requesting a ride, let the dispatcher know if you will be bringing a PCA and/or guests so that the dispatcher can reserve additional spaces on the vehicle for that trip. Guests pay regular Van Tran fares. They must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the eligible rider.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

SAFETY

The first concern Van Tran has for our riders' is their safety. The following policies are for all our riders.

Packages, parcels and other personal items must be either secured or placed so that they will not move in case of a sudden stop.

Wheelchairs and Scooters - Van Tran vehicles are lift-equipped. All riders who use the lift will sit in a boarding chair provided by Van Tran or sit in a wheel chair of their own. When on the lift, riders will sit facing outward from the van. Power wheelchairs must have the power turned off when the rider is on the lift. Wheelchair tie-down spaces are limited so riders must be sure to tell the dispatcher when they will be using a mobility device. Wheelchairs or scooters must fit on a 32" x 48" platform or Van Tran may not be able to transport them. Service may be refused if total weight of a wheelchair and passenger exceeds 600 pounds. **All wheelchairs and riders must be secured with safety belts while riding in the vehicles.**

Van Tran is not required to provide any individual with a wheelchair if the occupant's wheelchair exceeds the maximum dimensions and or weight specifications. Van Tran drivers will not transfer any rider between wheel chairs in order to gain access to ride Van Tran.

Van Tran riders who use scooters must make a seat transfer. Sitting on a scooter is not permitted while the van is in motion unless the Van Tran Supervisor has previously approved it

Seat Belts - All passengers and drivers are required to wear seat belts. Small children four years old and under must be in a child safety seat. Make sure when you are scheduling to inform the dispatcher that you will need to use a car seat. Drivers will not move the vehicle until everyone is safely secured.

Oxygen Tanks - Personal oxygen tanks may be transported. The oxygen tanks must be secured on the wheelchair. If carried onto the vehicle, the driver must secure the tanks during the trip.

TIPS, GIFTS AND GRATUITIES - Borough ordinances prohibit drivers from accepting tips, gratuities or donations of any kind. Please do not offer the drivers any tips or gratuities.

Request for emergency transportation to or from medical facilities should be referred to the Fairbanks Police and Emergency “911” phone-line.

Animals – All animals must be in a pet carrier of some kind except for service animals. Control of the service animal is the responsibility of the animal’s handler. Service animals must be on the floor and out of the aisle while the van is moving. .

Food and Beverages - Riders may not eat or drink on Van Tran vehicles. Food and beverages will be allowed only in closed containers that remain unopened during the trip.

Smoking - Smoking is not permitted on Van Tran vehicles.

Radios - Radios, audio devices or musical instruments may not be operated by riders, PCA’s or rider’s guests on Van Tran, unless equipped with individual headsets.

Offensive Language/Behavior - No offensive language or disruptive behavior is allowed.

Driveways - Van Tran vehicles will not go into any driveway that does not allow sufficient access for a safe entrance and exit. In the winter months walkways and driveways must be plowed or shoveled to allow for safe access and a reasonable turn around area.

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Packages And Groceries - Drivers are required to only make one trip to your door. The ONE trip to the door is to provide minimal assistance to the rider if they require an extra hand in getting to the door. At no time is driver obligated to carry a rider’s groceries or packages if the rider is unable or unwilling to do so. If you have several packages and/or groceries that require more than one trip, you must make arrangements with someone else to help you carry them or to ride with you to help.

WEATHER

Scheduled rides may be altered and/or canceled due to weather, temperatures, or hazardous road conditions. Van Tran may not operate vehicles under unsafe or hazardous conditions. If service is canceled or delayed due to weather, all those with scheduled rides will be notified by phone as soon as practicable.

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Transportation Department is committed to provide quality customer service and satisfaction for Van Tran riders. Pre-addressed comment cards may be found in the vehicles or ask the driver for one. Your compliments, suggestions or complaints are important and welcomed. Return the comments cards to the driver or mail them directly to Van Tran.

Complaints Process - Riders who have a complaint or concern that involves the service performed, a scheduled or requested trip, no-shows or a subscription cancellation may call the Van Tran Operations Supervisor at 459-1324.

This handbook is not meant to be all-inclusive. If you have a question or a situation that is not specifically addressed please feel free to call or write either the Van Tran Operations Supervisor or the Transportation Director.