

WESTCAT

Dial-A-Ride and Paratransit Rider's Guide

**A Reference Guide to
Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
Dial-A-Ride/ ADA Paratransit Service**

GUIDE UPDATE 2006-2007

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IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Customer Service

(510) 724-7993

Call California Relay Service for TDD

1-800-735-2922

Dial-A-Ride Registration for First Time Riders

(510) 724-7993

Dial-A-Ride Reservations

(510) 724-7433 (724-RIDE)

Dial-A-Ride Cancellations

(510) 724-4466

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit and Fixed Route Information

(510) 724-7993

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Reservations

Phone: (510) 724-6320 Fax: (510) 724-4395

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet describes the WestCAT Dial-A-Ride service and explains how best to use it. It also gives information about the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Additional information or ADA application forms may be obtained by calling (510) 724-6320.

Senior and disabled passengers throughout the WestCAT service area may use Dial-A-Ride for curb to curb transportation between any two points within WestCAT's service boundaries, and will not be required to transfer. All WestCAT vehicles are wheelchair lift equipped and WestCAT service is in full compliance with the ADA requirements.

For information about general public services and Saturday service refer to the section in this handbook entitled "Who can use Dial-A-Ride."

Dial-A-Ride serves the cities of Pinole and Hercules, and the unincorporated communities of Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, Bayview, Rodeo, Crockett, and Port Costa.

WestCAT is pleased to offer a Dial-A-Ride system that offers more service than most of the other systems in the Bay Area. Many systems are only available to those individuals certified under the Americans with Disabilities Act and few Dial-A-Ride systems carry senior citizens unless they have a mobility disability. WestCAT is committed to providing safe, dependable, and accessible service and we look forward to serving your special transportation needs.

WHO CAN USE DIAL-A-RIDE

Dial-A-Ride serves people with disabilities, and seniors age 65+ on weekdays in most of WestCAT's service area. The general public in Port Costa, Crockett, and Rodeo may also use this service because of the steep terrain in these communities.

Dial-A-Ride will transport general public passengers as far as the Hercules Transit Center to transfer to fixed route buses to complete their trip. The Hercules Transit Center is located at San Pablo Avenue and Sycamore Avenue and is a major transfer hub within the WestCAT service area.

Please note, seniors and persons with disabilities are given priority on the Dial-A-Ride system and so wait times may be longer for the general public.

On weekdays, WestCAT Route 11 serves Crockett and Rodeo every half an hour. General public passengers in these communities are encouraged to make use of this route, as they may find it more convenient than using Dial-A-Ride.

On Saturdays only, Dial-A-Ride is available to both general public and senior/disabled passengers for trips anywhere within the WestCAT service area.

DIAL-A-RIDE GENERAL INFORMATION



Days and Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday	6 AM - 8 PM
Saturdays	9 AM - 7 PM

Same day reservations can be made between 6 AM and 5:00 PM weekdays and between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Saturdays.

There is no Dial-A-Ride service on Sundays.

Holiday Service

As with regular WestCAT bus service, Dial-A-Ride service hours will differ on holidays. There is no service on Sundays or on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day

General public Dial-A-Ride service (Saturday service) will be operated on the following holidays:

Martin Luther King Day	President's Day
Veteran's Day	Friday after Thanksgiving

A modified schedule may be operated on the following days:

Christmas Eve	New Year's Eve
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Except for Routes 11 & 19, WestCAT does not operate local fixed route service on Saturdays. Between the hours of 11:50 AM and 6:30 PM, Dial-A-Ride buses make timed connections with the WestCAT Express J route at San Pablo Avenue and Oakridge Avenue to help people get to their destinations.

Please call (510) 724-7993 for details.

Dial-A-Ride Fares

	Regular Cash Fare	Discount Ticket
Regional	\$3.00	\$2.50
General Public	\$2.00	\$1.50
Seniors (65 and older)	\$1.25	\$0.75
Persons with disabilities	\$1.25	\$0.75
Medicare card holders	\$1.25	\$0.75

*Children under age 6 Free with paying adult

*A maximum of two children under age 6 may ride free per paying adult. Additionally, children under the age of 6 must be accompanied by an adult on the WestCAT System at all times.

Transfer Free with valid WestCAT transfer

	Regular Cash Fare	Discount Ticket
*Special service outside WestCAT area	\$3.00	\$2.50

(*This service is not subject to the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act, however, ADA eligible riders may use this service on a space available basis.)

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) travel free with ADA passengers.

Please have the exact fare ready in cash or tickets. Drivers cannot make change. Fixed Route, Martinez Link 30Z, and Lynx tickets are not accepted for Dial-A-Ride or ADA Paratransit service.

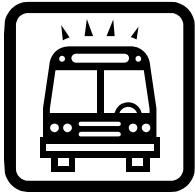
Tickets may be purchased at 601 Walter Ave., Pinole, CA 94564, or by mail at the same address. For more information about tickets, call (510) 724-7993.

Transfers

If you need to use more than one bus to get to your destination, ask for a transfer when you board the first bus. WestCAT transfers will be honored only on the day of issue at established transfer points, and within one hour of their time of issue. They are not valid for a return trip to the area in which the transfer was originally issued, nor to reboard the same route.

Seniors and passengers with disabilities may transfer free from AC Transit to Dial-A-Ride at Pinole Vista Shopping Center in Pinole only.

On weekdays, general public passengers may transfer free between Dial-A-Ride and WestCAT fixed routes, Martinez Link or WestCAT Express at the Hercules Transit Center only (San Pablo Ave. and Sycamore Ave. in Hercules).



HOW THE SYSTEM OPERATES

WestCAT Dial-A-Ride is a “curb-to-curb” service for seniors and people with disabilities throughout the WestCAT service area (general public service is also available, see “Who Can Use Dial-A-Ride”) and it operates as a shared ride system. Other passengers will be picked up and dropped off along the way to your destination. Also, you will need to wait for the bus at the curb. WestCAT drivers will not come to your door.

When you call for a trip, please understand that our dispatchers are taking calls in the order that they come in, and passenger pick-ups and drop-offs are done in a specific order so that the system can run efficiently and be available for all users.

Trips must be scheduled at least one day prior to travel. However, it is advisable that you call as early as possible. You may reserve a trip up to three days in advance.

Trips are booked on a “first-come, first-served” basis. There is no guarantee that the specific time you want will be available.

When you call to reserve a ride the dispatcher will give you a 15-minute period of time, or “pick-up window” (example; “We will pick you up between 1 PM and 1:15 PM”). Therefore, you would need to be ready and prepared to board the bus at 1:00 PM. Our drivers will give you one minute to respond. If you do not start toward the bus, the driver will continue on to the next address, as they cannot wait longer than the one minute without making the other passengers trips run late. It is your responsibility to be ready and waiting to board the bus when it arrives.

On occasion, the bus may arrive earlier than the 15-minute window, but the driver will wait for one minute past the beginning of your pick-up time. In these cases, you have the option of boarding early, or you may wait until the beginning of your pick-up window.

If you need special assistance, (example: wheelchair lift) please advise dispatch so that extra time can be scheduled for your pick-up or drop-off.

If more than one person is traveling from your address, please advise dispatch when making your reservation so they can schedule properly. Although the bus may not be full when it arrives at your pick-up there are other passengers along the way that have scheduled trips and so we cannot guarantee that there will be available space for additional riders from your address unless already prearranged.

Please keep in mind that the dispatchers are scheduling and monitoring as many as 300 Dial-A-Ride trips or more each day. Dispatchers also have to ensure that your trip can be accommodated without creating problems for other passengers whose trips have already been scheduled.

If you follow the guidelines and suggestions included in this handbook, your experience scheduling your trip should be relatively simple.

DIAL-A-RIDE REGISTRATION

Before you use this service for the first time, you must call (510) 724-7993 to register.

When calling to register for service, you will be asked to supply the following information:

- a) First and last name of the passenger;
- b) Street address with city;
- c) Telephone number;
- d) Date of birth;
- e) Whether or not the passenger uses a mobility device or has a mobility disability.

DIAL-A-RIDE RESERVATIONS

Once your information has been entered into the computer, you may schedule your trip by calling (510) 724-RIDE (510-724-7433).

When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- a) First and last name of passenger;
- b) Date of travel;
- c) Pick-up address: number, street, suite number, and city.
- d) Requested pick-up or drop-off time. (continued next page)

- e) Requested return time if booking a round trip;
- f) Drop-off address: number, street, suite number, and city.
- g) If passenger will be using a wheelchair or other mobility device;
- h) If passenger will be bringing a service animal;
- i) If passenger will be accompanied by a *Personal Care Attendant (PCA) and/or companion (including children). *A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is defined as someone whose assistance you must have in order to ride Dial-A-Ride. Your PCA and fare paying companion can both ride with you on the same trip.)

Having this information ready before you call will prevent dispatch from having to ask you to hold while they look up an address, and allows them to continue responding to other callers.

When you call, please be patient. There is a high volume of calls coming into dispatch. Dispatch monitors six telephone lines and a radio system for up twenty-five drivers all at the same time. Stay on the line, do not hang up, your call will be answered in the order that it was received. If you hang up and call back, the call sequencer will route your call to the "end of the line" and this will increase your wait time. You will experience the same thing if you hang up and call back on any other line and ask to be transferred to dispatch. Your Dial-A-Ride reservation will not be taken on any line other than at (510) 724-7433. You will be asked to hang up and call that number again.

You will need to book your return trip at the same time you arrange your first trip, thus ensuring you will be able to be picked up when you want to return. The system is busy and if you wait to call when you are ready to return, you may experience long wait times of up to two hours. We also ask that you please be considerate of your fellow passengers, and remember that if you keep dispatch on the line, they cannot help other callers. With this in mind, please make sure you have all of the details of your trip when you place the call. Please have a pencil and paper ready to write down the pick-up window that dispatch gives you. This will help to avoid misunderstandings.

CANCELLATION POLICY

To cancel your ride, call (510) 724-4466. This number is only for cancellations and is answered promptly. Please do not try to use this line to book trips because you will be referred to the dispatch number. WestCAT requires that you call a minimum of 15-minutes before your scheduled pick-up time.

There are no penalties for cancellation as long as adequate notice is given.

NO-SHOW POLICY

No-shows are different from cancellations and service can be suspended for a pattern of no-shows. Allowances will be made for missed trips that are beyond the control of the passenger.

If you get another ride or change your mind about needing a bus, please call the cancellation line at (510) 724-4466 at least 15-minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive and let us know. You are considered a no-show if you miss a scheduled trip and have not called to cancel at least 15-minutes before the beginning of the pick-up window that was agreed upon.

To prevent potential abuse of this rule, no-shows will be monitored and a letter will be sent after each incident notifying the rider of the policy and warning of the possible loss of service.

Three no-shows within six months will result in a review of the infractions and may result in a suspension of service. Suspensions range from one month for first time offenses, to six months or more for subsequent offenses.

HELPFUL TIPS WHEN RIDING DIAL-A-RIDE

Best Time of Day to Travel

The best time of day to travel on Dial-A-Ride is between the hours of 10 AM and 12 Noon. This is our least busy time and rides may be available sooner.

If You Need an Immediate Ride

If you need an immediate ride, dispatch will arrange it if possible, but if they fit you in, it is your responsibility to be ready when the bus arrives. If the driver is kept waiting while the rider runs back into the house for keys, books, etc., the bus may have to leave and you will have to re-book a ride. If the bus were to wait for every passenger, it would reduce the number of people we are able to serve, and would negatively affect other passengers who are waiting to get to their appointments on time. A driver will only wait one minute after the bus arrives to pick you up, so please be ready for the bus and come out as quickly as possible.

WestCAT Drivers

Under no circumstances can a driver enter your residence (this includes your garage). Please do not ask them to do so. Please understand that WestCAT is a curb-to-curb service and if you require further assistance, it is your responsibility to arrange for this before booking your ride.

Drivers are not permitted to:

- ✓ Come looking for you.
- ✓ Lose sight of their vehicle.
- ✓ Knock on your door.
- ✓ Enter your private residence (this includes your garage).
- ✓ Lift or carry you.
- ✓ Carry you or your wheelchair up or down steps.
- ✓ Escort you beyond the curb to board or deboard the bus.

Our drivers are not allowed to change your scheduled trip times or addresses. If you have a problem or complaint, please do not try to resolve it directly with the driver. In addition, please do not argue with our dispatchers about the details of your trip.

In the event that you experience a problem, we have staff to follow up the details of your situation and resolve it. Please refer to the section in this handbook entitled Complaint Resolution.



Boarding with a Mobility Device

Persons using “common wheelchairs” can be accommodated on the Dial-A-Ride system. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a “common wheelchair” as a mobility aid belonging to any class of three or four-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. A “common wheelchair” is such a device which does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Mobility devices exceeding these standards may not be transportable.

ADA regulations allow for a wheelchair passenger in a mobility device whether operated manually or powered, to board the bus facing either forward or backward. If you are in a manual wheelchair, and require the assistance of the driver, they will board you backwards as a safety precaution.

All wheelchairs must have operable brakes and as a safety measure, we recommend that you make sure that your mobility device is maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.

If you are concerned about your wheelchair being accommodated on any WestCAT vehicle, please call (510) 724-7933 and we will make arrangements to assist you in determining whether you may encounter any difficulty riding a WestCAT lift equipped bus.

If you require assistance in getting to the vehicle, please arrange to have someone assist you, or plan to travel with a Personal Care Attendant. Our drivers cannot provide assistance between the curbside and your ultimate destination.

If needed, a standing passenger may also use the passenger lift to board a vehicle.



Transporting Animals

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog or canine companion. Please inform the dispatcher at the time you book your trip that you will be traveling with a service animal. Pets and other non-service animals may be carried on WestCAT Dial-A-Ride only in a properly secured cage or carrier. If you require clarification as to what ADA regulations have defined as a service animal please call (510) 724-7993.

Transporting Life Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life support equipment onboard as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials. In addition, all equipment must be small enough to fit into WestCAT vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits.

Transporting Packages

When you go shopping, there is a (3) bag limit. More than (3) bags take up space on the bus that other riders may need to use and are a potential safety hazard. The only exception to this rule would be if the passenger pays for each additional bag beyond the (3) bag limit at the regular Dial-A-Ride fare. Bags of any kind must not block the aisle. It is a violation of both federal and state law to block the aisles of a public transit bus. If you need the driver's assistance loading and unloading groceries, bags must weigh *less than 15 pounds*.

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION OUTSIDE WESTCAT SERVICE AREA

Monday through Friday, WestCAT offers special curb-to-curb transportation for senior and disabled passengers traveling into the Richmond and San Pablo areas for medical appointments or other special needs. This transportation is limited to the hours of 9 AM until 3 PM and trips are provided on a space-available basis. One-way fare for this service is \$3.00.

Reservations must be made at least 48-hours in advance by calling (510) 724-7433 and are accepted Monday through Friday, from 8 AM until 5 PM. For additional information about this service, you may call (510) 724-7993. Discounted tickets are available for this service.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA), is a federal Civil Rights Law first enacted in 1990 for persons with disabilities. Section 223 of the ADA requires WestCAT to provide paratransit service to all ADA eligible riders, who because of a disability are not able to use WestCAT's regularly, scheduled fixed route buses.

In addition, WestCAT has chosen a representative from the disabled community who assists with ADA issues and compliance. If you would be interested in helping, please contact us for further information.

ELIGIBILITY FOR WESTCAT ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICES

Eligibility for ADA service is directly related to the inability of a person with a disability to use the existing regularly scheduled bus routes. It is not just based on the presence of a disability, but on the effect that the disability has on the person's ability to use the fixed route service. Several factors must be considered in determining ADA paratransit eligibility. These include:

1) Individual Disability

Any individual whose disability prevents them from boarding, riding, or disembarking from an accessible vehicle on the fixed route system, when the system is not fully accessible.

2) *Limited Accessibility of the Fixed Route System

Any individual with a disability who is unable to independently board, ride, or disembark from an accessible vehicle when the system is not fully accessible.

*The lift cannot be deployed at the boarding or disembarking location the person with a disability wishes to use. (Continued next page)

*A common wheelchair cannot be accommodated.

3) Environmental & Architectural Barriers

Individuals whose disability PREVENTS them from traveling to a boarding or disembarking location. (Example: steep terrain, extreme temperatures, severe air pollution, or inability to negotiate architectural barriers to reach a specific bus stop (this is considered a conditional eligibility and a person may be eligible for only some trips.)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) REGISTRATION

To register for WestCAT Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, contact us at (510) 724-6320 to have application materials sent to you, or you may pick up an application at our Administrative offices, located at 601 Walter Ave., Pinole.

Once WestCAT receives your completed application, you will be notified by mail of your eligibility status within 21 days.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) CERTIFICATION

Once you have been certified ADA eligible you will be entered into a regional database that is available to the nine Bay Area counties.

When traveling outside WestCAT's service area the transit provider in the Bay Area will be able to access your record and provide transportation based on their individual system rules.

RESERVATIONS FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PARATRANSIT

Once you are certified through WestCAT call (510) 724-6320 and our ADA Coordinator will book the entire trip and advise you of times and fares.

Reservations for this service are accepted Sunday through Saturday, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM by calling (510) 724-6023. For additional information about this service, you may call (510) 724-7993. Discounted tickets are available for this service.

Our ADA Coordinator will not contact you until your entire trip has been arranged. If the trip is the first trip you have taken as an ADA rider, the process with other operators may take several days. Once you have used the system, your trip will generally take only one day to book.

When you call, you will need a street address, and phone number for both your pick-up and destination.

When our coordinator calls you with times, please write the times down so there will be no misunderstandings.

Important! Regional trips (trips outside the WestCAT area) require transfers to other operators. Call as soon as you are aware you will need a ride outside the WestCAT service area. You may call up to two weeks in advance of your appointment. Some providers require more than a weeks notice for regional trips and this will help us ensure availability of the service at the time you need it.

BENEFITS FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PARATRANSIT ELIGIBLE RIDERS

There are some benefits involved with being an ADA eligible rider. Your certification will be accepted by all of the public transit operators in the nine Bay Area counties whose paratransit service operates during the same days and hours as that of their fixed route service, and you will be given priority service on WestCAT.

You will be able to make advance reservations, and for the same reduced fare, you may arrange to bring (1) one companion along on each ride (more if there is room).

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT (PCA)

An ADA eligible rider may take one Personal Care Attendant (PCA) with them at no charge.

In addition, to the PCA you may also take along one companion (additional companions may be added on a space available basis) for the regular Dial-A-Ride fare provided that you advise dispatch when the trip is booked and they are picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the eligible rider.

LATE NIGHT AND SUNDAY
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PARATRANSIT SERVICE

For Sundays and for late night transportation, ADA certified passengers who reside within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the WestCAT Route J can call (510) 724-7993 and a WestCAT representative can make advanced reservations for East Bay Paratransit. Reservations are made on a space available basis.

Transportation is available only during the service hours of the WestCAT Route J.

Reservations for this service will be accepted only during the hours of 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM, Sunday-Saturday.

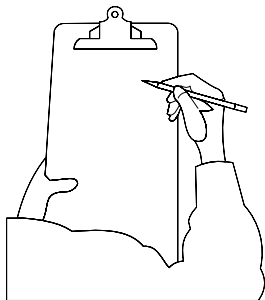
CUSTOMER SERVICE

WestCAT welcomes your compliments, complaints, and suggestions. We are committed to using customer input as a tool to improve the quality of service.

It has been our experience that most problems can be easily resolved. Our entire staff wants to serve you as efficiently and professionally as possible. However, if you do not call and make us aware that you are having a problem, the problem may persist.

We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of our riders. However, please keep in mind that anonymous service complaints, cannot receive responses.

See below for an explanation of WestCAT's complaint resolution process.



COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Because it is important to us that all of our riders have a pleasant experience on our system we welcome your comments, complaints, and suggestions.

If you experienced a problem, please contact us as soon as possible. Our dispatch center is equipped with a computer system that tracks all of our rides, and the sooner you let us know about the problem, the easier it is for us to research what may have occurred and to respond back to you quickly.

To file a complaint, please provide the following information:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- Date and time of the incident (continued next page)

- Details of the incident, along with the bus number if applicable

All comments may be submitted by mail to:

WestCAT
601 Walter Avenue
Pinole, CA. 94564

Address your concerns to the General Manager. The General Manager will research your concerns and make a determination. You will be notified by mail advising you of the determination.

Once you have received a response from the General Manager, if you are still not satisfied with the response, you may then write a letter to the attention of the WestCAT Board of Directors at the same address. The matter will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda (meetings are generally held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month), and the Board will take action and make a determination on your complaint. The Board decision is final.

Eligibility Appeals Process

An individual that applies for ADA Certification and is denied has the right to an appeal. This must be done in writing within 60 days from the date of the written appeal. You have the right to have your case heard in person and may bring an advocate or representative to the hearing. Please send a letter stating your reasons for the appeal to: **WestCAT Eligibility Appeals, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority, 601 Walter Avenue, Pinole, CA, 94564.**

Once your letter is received an appeals board will assemble to process your appeal. The appeals board should render a final, written decision within 30 days or you will receive service on the 31st day until the decision is made.

The appeals process board consists of at least 3 persons including one “peer” to the applicant, one applicable professional expert, and one staff member from WestCAT who was not involved in the original review of your application.

You may re-initiate the paratransit eligibility process, beginning at level one, at any time that there is a change in their functional ability to use the fixed route system.

WestCAT will provide any necessary aids (e.g. interpreter, transportation, in accessible format) for you to participate in the hearing. However, you need to request any necessary aids at least one week before the meeting.

RULES & REGULATIONS TO RIDE BY

WestCAT enforces all internal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free ride on WestCAT:

- ✓ No Smoking
 - ✓ No uncaged pets or animals (except service animals). Pets may ride with their owner only if in a pet carrier.
 - ✓ No eating or drinking aboard the bus.
 - ✓ The use of portable audio equipment without headphones is prohibited.
 - ✓ No profanity.
 - ✓ Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and any strollers.
- * A complete listing of the rules governing passenger conduct is available upon request.