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July, 2013

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

# STS Rider's Guide

Door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use Metrobus, Metrorail or Metromover

www.miamidade.gov/transit

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## Welcome to STS

The information contained in this Special Transportation Service (STS) Rider's Guide has been developed to help new riders become acquainted with the STS program and to provide the necessary guidelines required to use the service effectively.

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this guide or would like to request a copy of this guide in an alternate format, please contact Miami-Dade Transit's Paratransit Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000** or email us at **http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation.asp**

## What is STS?

STS is a shared-ride public transportation service of Miami-Dade County in compliance with the complementary paratransit service provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. STS operates throughout most of urbanized Miami-Dade County, some parts of southern Broward County, and up to mile marker 50 in northern Monroe County. STS can be used for work, school, shopping, recreation, medical appointments, etc.

STS provides door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use Metrobus, Metrorail, or Metromover. Transportation is provided from the main entrance of the place of origin to the main entrance of the destination.

Miami-Dade County has contracted with private transportation carriers to provide STS service. The carriers use vans, minivans, sedans, and lift-equipped vans to transport riders.

## Who is Eligible for STS?

- People whose physical or mental disabilities prevent their use of accessible public transportation
- People with temporary disabilities that may be temporarily eligible for STS during the period of their disability
- People with disabilities visiting from out-of-town who may be presumed eligible if they have been certified in another Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) jurisdiction or they can prove their disabilities
- To register with STS, contact the Miami-Dade County STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000**



## Keeping Eligibility and Information up to Date

Please call the STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000**, if there is a change in the following:

- Your address or telephone number
- Your emergency contact's name or telephone number
- The type of mobility device you are using
- Your physical or mental condition
- Your need for a personal attendant
- You are identified as an inactive customer
- You are no longer in need of the service

When a person is registered as eligible for ADA paratransit service and does not use the service for 12 (twelve) consecutive months, he or she is considered an "inactive" customer and the file is "archived." If a reservationist informs you that you are an inactive customer, then you will need to contact the STS Certification Office. They may reactivate your records and provide you with service provided your eligibility has not expired.

## Identification Card

Your STS EASY Card will be issued to you upon certification for use of the STS Service. If you have a current STS EASY card that is about to expire, you must apply for a new card. You may apply for a new card up to 60 days before expiration of your current card. If you lose your STS EASY Card, there will be a $10.00 replacement charge.

Your STS EASY Card enables you to use similar services in other cities, for twenty-one (21) days. Call the transit authority in the city you are visiting to make arrangements. You must follow their rules, scheduling procedures, and pay their fares.

The STS EASY Card must be carried and displayed to the driver upon boarding an STS Vehicle.

## Recertification of Eligibility

Each STS customer must be recertified upon reaching his/her eligibility expiration date. It may also be necessary to re-evaluate an individual's eligibility from time to time or if the condition of the disability changes. Typically, eligibility extends for three (3) years from certification. A customer's STS ID card will indicate his/her STS eligibility expiration date. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for services prior to his/her eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew their STS eligibility, he/she will be ineligible for service until he/she is determined eligible in the certification process.

## Does my Certification Expire?

Yes, eligible riders are certified for services for a period of up to three (3) years. The eligibility period will depend on the STS participant's specific disability and, if temporary, in its duration.

## Where Can I Ride With STS?

The STS Service area matches the MDT public transportation system (bus and rail) and includes most urbanized Miami-Dade County, but excludes certain locations such as: the Everglades National Park Visitors Center, Trail Glades Range, Miccosukee Indian Reservation Bingo Hall and the Tribal Center, Fisher Island, and areas south of mile marker 50 (Florida Keys).

The Miami-Dade County service area is based on regulations set forth

by the Department of Transportation (DOT) & the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

This area currently includes Miami-Dade, portions of Broward and Monroe counties as paralleled by MDT's Fixed Route system and may be changed by the County from time to time.

## STS Rider's Rights & Responsibilities

**Riders have a right to:**

- Travel in air-conditioned vehicles
- Drivers trained to meet riders' special transportation needs
- Safe, clean, properly equipped, smoke-free vehicles
- Correctly fastened seat belts and/or wheelchair tie-downs
- Pick-ups within 30 minutes after the negotiated reservation time. Riders are not required to be ready to travel before the negotiated pick up time, but can do so if desired
- Professional and courteous treatment by staff and other passengers
- Refuse unsafe service and file complaints without fear of reprisal
- Prompt investigation and effective resolution of complaints
- Current and complete program information
- Assistance getting in and out of the vehicle and to the main entrance of destination. Drivers are not permitted to physically lift riders and cannot enter buildings or residences.

**Riders have a responsibility to:**

- Be informed about program benefits and limitations
- Schedule trip requests from 1 to 7 days in advance. If you wait until the last minute to make a reservation, we may not be able to meet your exact requested time. In accordance with the ADA, riders may be asked to negotiate a different time of pick-up, up to 1 hour before and 1 hour after the requested time. Once the time has been negotiated, the service provider is not permitted to change the time without the rider's consent. It is recommended that you call between 8:30 am to 11:30 am to make a reservation.
- Be ready and waiting at the main entrance of pick-up location. Drivers will announce their presence at the main entrance door but they

will not enter buildings or residences, or call or search for riders

- Remain at the pick-up location for 30 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time
- Call in trip cancellations as soon as possible, but no later than 1 hour before the scheduled pick-up time (Calls received after one hour are considered No Show)
- Have times, addresses, zip codes, contact telephone number and other needed information ready when making a reservation
- Present the correct fare. Drivers do not make change
- Present your STS EASY Card to the driver before boarding the vehicle
- Wear seat belts and check that wheelchair tie-downs are secure
- Not smoke, eat, or drink while in the vehicle
- Be courteous to others and avoid distracting the driver
- Keep wheelchairs or other mobility aids in good working condition, including having an operable wheelchair brake



- Maintain appropriate, reasonable personal hygiene
- Refrain from abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions
- Prohibit from physical abuse of another rider or the driver
- Refrain from petting guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner
- Refrain from operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment
- Refrain from Littering
- Wear shirts and shoes or other footwear
- Control children
- Refrain from carrying dangerous weapons on any STS vehicles
- Expect share-ride service equivalent to bus (not taxi) service. Travel time should be comparable to service provided by the public transportation system including walk time and transfers.
- Request pick-up time taking the 30-minute window time, distance and rush hour periods into consideration

– Allow sufficient time, at least 1½ hours (90 minutes), between scheduled drop-off and return time
– Advise the agent of your appointment time. If you must arrive at a certain time, the agent can provide you with a pick-up time that takes into consideration travel time and your appointment time

**Drivers are not responsible for:**

– Assisting riders to dress
– Carrying riders or wheelchairs up/down flights of stairs
– Providing wheelchairs or Personal Care Attendants (PCA's)
– Entering buildings or residences to search for riders
– Waiting with a rider at a drop-off location
– Calling riders on cellular phones or building intercoms

**Drivers are responsible for:**

– Providing safe, courteous and reliable service
– Reporting all accidents and incidents immediately
– Providing a minimum amount of assistance for customers capable of transferring from a mobility aid. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the customer moves in and out of the device.



## Companions

Companions may ride with a certified passenger, provided both are picked up and dropped off at the same address. Certified riders may travel together but must always pay the fare when they travel and are not eligible to travel free of charge.

Companions, including children regardless of age, pay the same fare as the certified passenger. Additional companions may ride with advance notification, provided there is room in the vehicle. Riders traveling with children five (5) years or younger shall provide a child restraint (car seat) as required by law.

Be sure to advise the reservationist, at the time you make the reservation, if you are traveling with companions and/or a child.

## Personal Care Attendant

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible indi-

vidual meet his/her needs, and without whom the trip is not possible. Riders may travel with a PCA and additional companions as space permits.

It is recommended that persons with cognitive disabilities (Alzheimer's, dementia, organic brain syndrome, etc.) and children 12 years of age and younger, travel with a PCA.

Remember that the STS driver is the same as a bus driver and cannot function as a caregiver. Both the PCA and the certified rider must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. You must advise the reservationist, at the time you make your reservation, if you are traveling with a PCA. No fare is charged to the PCA, but the certified rider must pay the standard fare. Riders may travel with PCA and additional companions as space permits.

## Children as Certified Passengers

Children whose disability (as opposed to their age) would prevent them from using regular buses and trains may be certified for STS. However, children under the age of 12 who are eligible must travel with a parent or a PCA.

Older certified children may be required to travel with a PCA if the child



is seriously disruptive or presents a safety hazard to themselves or others.

## Children as Companions

Certified passengers may bring one child as a companion and additional children if space is available. The rider should call on the day of service to find out if there is room. The certified passenger must be able to manage the child by themselves or with the help of their PCA.

Companions may ride with a certified passenger, provided both are picked up and dropped off at the same address.

## Service Animal Policy

Service animals are permitted by law on any Miami-Dade Transit or STS vehicle.

A service animal is any animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with the disability cannot perform for him or herself. No additional fee or deposit may be charged to transport service animals.

Emotional support animals are not trained to perform specific tasks for

passengers with disabilities. Emotional support animals are not considered service animals as defined in the ADA.

STS is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. A service animal that displays vicious behavior towards other passengers or otherwise proves a direct threat to the health and safety of others will be excluded from riding the vehicle.

- A disruptive service animal will be treated according to the Illegal and Disruptive Behavior Policy
- Service animals must sit on the floor. They may not occupy a passenger seat

## Mobility Devices

Customers may use wheelchairs, canes, walkers, and other common mobility devices on STS vehicles.

A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

Transit providers must carry a wheelchair and occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements:

- "Legitimate safety requirements" includes such circumstances as a wheelchair of such size that it would block an aisle, or would be too large to fully enter a railcar, would block a vestibule, or would interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.
  - This does not apply to securement; a transit provider cannot impose a limitation on the transportation of wheelchairs and other mobility aids based on the inability of the securement system to secure the device to the satisfaction of the transportation provider. It would be inconsistent with this rule to allow transportation providers to deny service to people who use wheelchairs just because particular devices may be problematic from a securement point of view.
- "Legitimate safety requirements" must be based on actual risks, not on mere speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about individuals with disabilities or about the devices they use for mobility purposes.

Customers who are capable of transferring are able to move from their mobility device to the seat of the vehicle and back. A minimum of assistance is defined as a driver extending an arm or stabilizing the mobility device while the customer moves in and out of the device. Drivers are prohibited from physically lifting or carrying customers.

Service Providers cannot transport mobility devices that are broken, without working brakes or damaged to the extent they pose an immediate safety threat. Please be sure that wheelchairs or other mobility devices are clean, safe and in good working condition according to manufacturer's specifications before traveling aboard STS.

Drivers cannot assist customers who use mobility devices up or down steps or other obstructions over five eighths (5/8) of an inch in height. A ramp must be available or the customer must have someone available at the pick-up and drop-off location to provide assistance negotiating barriers.

## Miscellaneous Medical Equipment

Customers may travel with portable oxygen tanks, and/or respirators when using STS. Equipment must be portable and self administered.

## Reservations, Telephone Numbers and Hours

To reserve a trip, call the reservations line at **(305) 871-1111**, press 1 for English (2 for Spanish) and then 1 again to reach an agent. For Video Relay Number 711 / TDD service for the hearing impaired, call (305) 265-9435. Hours of operation are Monday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### 1) Reserving trips for service

Reservations for STS Service can be made from 1 to 7 days in advance of the expected travel date. However, next day trip reservations must be made by 5:00 p.m. the day before you wish to travel. You may choose to call for your reservation on weekends or between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on weekdays, when the phone lines are less busy.

During peak travel periods, it may be necessary for the agent to negotiate an earlier or later pick-up and/or return time based on vehicle capacity and/or availability. The agent will inform you of this at the time you place

your reservation. The agent cannot insist on a pick-up time (at either end of the trip) that varies by more than one hour from the rider's desired travel time. Remember to allow ample travel time when placing your reservation, as there may be other riders with different pick-up and drop-off points sharing the vehicle.

## Information you Should Provide When Making a Reservation

- Name, STS ID number, and telephone number
- Exact street addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers of the locations where you will be picked up and/or dropped off, including the name of the complex if applicable
- Special pick-up directions, such as landmarks, specific entrance, exit, store, or building etc., at shopping centers, college campuses, large medical complexes or other confusing locations. Please be very specific as there are multiple pick-up locations and drivers need to know exactly where you will be
- The time you would like to arrive at your destination or your desired pick-up time



- Requested return time
- Whether or not you will be traveling alone
- Number of companions, PCA's and/or children traveling with you

**2) Same-day emergency reservations**

Same-day service is not available. For life-threatening emergencies call **911**.

## Subscription Reservations

Subscriptions by definition are for trips that do not change. Frequent changes, cancellations, and no shows, will result in the cancellation of the subscription.

You may request subscription service if you make the same trip at least three times per week to work, school, religious service, medical appointments, etc. Once scheduled, subscription service is automatic and you do not need to place daily phone calls to schedule these trips, except to cancel or make minor changes for a specific date of your subscription service.

To be approved for subscription service, the subscription must remain in effect for a minimum period of one

month. You will need to cancel your subscription trip(s) for the day(s) or month(s) you will not be using it. To do so, please make it clear to the reservationist that you are cancelling for a specific day(s) and not cancelling the subscription trip permanently.

To request new subscription service, update an existing subscription (due to change pick-up or drop-off address, time, and phone number) or temporarily put your subscription service on hold, please call **(305) 871-1111** between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If you need service on any of these holidays, you must call reservations at **(305) 871-1111** at least one day in advance to schedule service.



## Cancellation and No Show Policies

### Cancellations

For a same-day cancellation of your reservation, call **(305) 871-1111**. Cancellations should be made as early as possible but at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. Be sure to indicate if you are cancelling the initial pick-up and/or the return trip. Cancelling will result in cancellation of your return trip unless you specify you will need the return trip. Cancellations are very costly to the STS program. Before placing a reservation, be certain that you really plan to travel. Excessive cancellations are an abuse of the STS program and may result in the suspension of service.

## No-Shows

It is the goal of STS to always connect with passengers and provide their scheduled ride. When riders do not cancel at least one hour in advance, it is considered a "No-Show."

If you reserve service and decide not to travel, you must call **(305) 871-1111** to cancel your service at least one hour before your requested travel time or your record will be marked "No-Show". If a rider is a "No-Show" on

the going trip, the return trip will be cancelled unless the rider advises he/she will need the return trip.

*STS reserves the right to suspend service, if a consistent pattern of No-Shows and Cancellations is identified. (This is considered an abuse of service.)*

The policy stated below will apply for abuses related to Late Cancellations, Cancellations at the door, and No-Shows

1st incident of three (3) No-Shows in any rolling 30-day period

***Verbal Warning***

2nd incident of three (3) No-Shows in a rolling 30-day period

***Verbal Warning & Written Warning***

3rd incident of three (3) No-Shows in a rolling 30-day period

***Final Verbal Warning & Written Warning***

Next single instance of No-Show

***1 Week Suspension***

Each instance of No-Show thereafter,

***2 Week Suspension each***

**Note: Rolling 30 day period starts from first incident to the next.**



## How Can I help Avoid Cancellations & No-Shows?

STS is a vital community resource and there is limited public funding to support it. Cancellations are a major contributor to service costs and system inefficiency. Rides that are cancelled too late to schedule another trip in their place result in wasted expense and capacity that goes unused. STS passengers can help by making sure they only schedule rides they plan to take.

Riders can prevent no-show situations when they:

- Review date, times and addresses with the reservationist to be sure information is correct
- Call **(305) 871-1111** and cancel rides as soon as the ride is no longer needed.
- Cancel at least one hour in advance of the scheduled pick-up time. (or if possible up to 24 hours in advance)

## If You're Running Late

Everyone has occasional circumstances outside of their control that can cause delays at a scheduled appoint-

ment. If your appointment is running later than you expected and there is a chance you will not be ready for your scheduled return trip (or if you have missed your ride), call **(305) 871-1111** as soon as possible. Your request will be coordinated with the Dispatch office that stays in radio contact with drivers.

Every effort will be made to adjust your return trip pick-up time and assign another vehicle to pick you up at a later time. *Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of an hour or up to three hours before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.*

***Remember:*** *Allow extra time for medical appointments or other appointments that may take longer than expected. This will reduce the unnecessary cost of sending an additional vehicle and your wait time.*

**Note: If a vehicle is sent and the customer is not ready, the contractor will attempt to contact the customer using telephone number provided at the time of reservation. If the customer cannot be located, the customer will be assessed a no-show.**



## How Long Does an STS Trip Take?

As a shared ride system, travel time can vary depending on the number of rides being accommodated. It is usually much less, but rides will be scheduled so your time on board is no more than the length of time that a comparable trip would take if made on a regular fixed route bus. Sometimes extenuating circumstances occur, over which STS has no control (e.g. traffic conditions, road construction, weather). Occasionally when this happens, some trips may exceed this standard. Passengers are advised to discuss their travel times with MDT, **(786) 469-5000**, if they have any concerns.

## Pick-Ups

The STS vehicle will pick up the rider within 30 minutes after the negotiated pick-up time. Be prepared to leave when the vehicle arrives. Riders must have their STS EASY Card with them at all times when traveling with STS. Drivers can only wait 5 minutes for you to board. If you do not board within 5 minutes the driver will depart without you and go to the next pick-up as they have a schedule to follow. STS is a shared ride service. Other STS riders

may ride in the same vehicle with you, or the vehicle may be scheduled to pick up another passenger right after you reach your destination. Your punctuality is required as a courtesy to other STS riders.

If the vehicle arrives before your "negotiated pick-up time" you may choose to board early or you can board within 5 minutes of the "negotiated pick-up time". You are not required to board the vehicle before the negotiated pick-up time.

**The driver will:**

– Collect the exact fare when you are picked up. Drivers do not make change.

**Note: If you prefer not to carry cash, call STS at (305) 871-1111 to purchase Pre-Paid Tickets as they can be given to the driver in lieu of a cash fare.**

– Assist the rider from the main entrance door at the pickup location to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance door at the scheduled destination.

– Ask you for your STS EASY Card or valid photo identification.

– Ask you to sign the driver's manifest, which indicates the actual time you were picked up and the dollar amount paid as fare.

***IMPORTANT:*** *You should review the trip information carefully and be sure it is correct before you sign. Report any discrepancies to STS Customer Service at* ***(786) 469-5000****. County staff will investigate all discrepancies and complaints.*

## Pick-Up Locations Procedures

To provide safe, on-time service for all passengers, STS has developed the following pick-up procedures:

### Apartments

Passengers in apartment complexes that are inaccessible to STS vehicles must be ready at the main entrance to the complex. If the facility has a guarded gate or limited access, the passenger should inform the security staff of the scheduled pick-up and return times. If a passenger is visiting someone inside a guarded gate or limited access complex, it is the passenger's responsibility to advise the person they will be visiting ahead of time for access. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside apartments.

### Office Complexes

Passengers traveling from a large office complex, medical facility or other similar area must be ready at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside the facility.

### Nursing Homes

Passengers traveling from a nursing home should be ready at the main lobby. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside the facility.

### Adult Day Care And Dialysis Centers

Passengers should be waiting in a designated area when the vehicle arrives to pick them up at the centers. Drivers will assist passengers in boarding the vehicle. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside the facility. It is highly recommended that the center contact dispatch if there is a problem with the scheduled pick-up time. STS does not provide emergency trips to the hospital.

### Malls

Passengers must specify the exact entrance at time of booking. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside the mall.

### Churches

Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside the church.

### Other Large Areas Not Specified

Passengers will be picked up and dropped off at the main reception desk or main lobby entrance in front of the building. Drivers will identify themselves at the door and will not go inside any facility.

**Note: Drivers will go to the main entrance door and will not use the horn to notify the rider.**

## Free-Fare Program

Certified STS riders can use Metrobus and Metrorail, free of charge, by simply showing their STS identification card to the bus operator or rail security officer. Elevators are available at every Metrorail station. Your decision to use public transportation whenever possible is encouraged by Miami-Dade Transit and will not jeop-

ardize your privileges in any way. To plan your public transit trip call **(305) 770-3131** or **(305) 654-6530** (Video Relay Number 711/TDD). If you live south of SW 216TH Street call **(305) 891-3131** or **(305) 654-6530** (Video Relay Number 711/TDD).

## Fare Structure

The STS fare for ADA-eligible riders is $3.00 per one-way trip. Companions pay the same $3.00 per one-way trip fare as the certified rider. The PCA travels free, but must be pre-certified by the STS Certification Office as part of the rider's permanent certification records.

The $3.00 fare falls under the guidelines of the ADA of 1990 which stipulates that fares charged for shared-ride complementary Paratransit services be no more than twice the regular public transportation fare. The current Miami-Dade Transit fare is $2.00 each way.

## Fare Pre-Payment Options

Clients may purchase STS vouchers in advance and use them to pay for trips. The following pre-payment methods will be accepted:

- Cash: Accepted at Transportation America – 2766 NW 62nd Street, Miami, Florida 33147 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (excluding holidays)
- Credit Card: Accepted at Transportation America – 2766 NW 62nd Street, Miami, Florida 33147. You may also contact a customer service agent over the phone at **(305) 871-1111** Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (excluding holidays) to place your order (credit card information will not be stored)
- Check: Make check payable and mail to Transportation America – 2766 NW 62nd Street, Miami, Florida 33147. Vouchers will be mailed to you as soon as the check is cleared
- E/check: E/check payments are available upon request. Contact Transportation America at **(305) 871-1111** to initiate this option

The fare must be paid. Fare evasion is against the law **(Florida Statute 812.015)**. You can report fare evasion by calling **(305) 375-2700**.

## Service Days & Hours

STS operates during the same days and hours as the regular fixed route service.

## Late-Vehicle Assistance

You can call for an ETA 20 minutes after your negotiated time. If your ride has not arrived 30 minutes after the negotiated pickup time, call the Late Vehicle Assistance line at **(305) 871-1111**. If your problem is not resolved, call the County's Customer Service line during regular business hours at **(786) 469-5000**. If your ride is more than 60 minutes late, the passenger is not required to pay the fare. The Contractor or County staff will dispatch a backup vehicle. However, neither the County nor the contractor will reimburse taxi fares should a rider call a taxi on his/her own.

## Passenger Assistance Policies

STS drivers will assist you to and from the vehicle. This includes a steadying arm when walking and assistance in getting your wheelchair to and from the main door of the building entrance.



If you need assistance in getting to and from your wheelchair or walker into a vehicle, or from the vehicle to your wheelchair or walker, the driver will hold the chair or walker steady for you but cannot lift you. Drivers may help carry up to two (2) bags, but no driver may go beyond the threshold of your home or beyond the main entrance of any public building.

## Unattended Passenger Policy

Customers who cannot be left unattended must have a responsible party at the pick-up and drop-off point.

The driver will only wait five (5) minutes for the arrival of a responsible party to meet the STS vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the dispatcher who will contact the service provider and receive approval to continue on his/her route. The service provider will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer's emergency contact cannot be contacted by the end of the route, the police and protective services will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party.

## Lost and Found Policy

STS is not responsible for items left in the vehicle.

Before leaving the STS vehicle check your packages and personal belongings. Any article left on a vehicle will be turned in to the dispatch office and forwarded to the MDT – Lost and Found Division. If you do forget something, call the MDT – Lost & Found, **(786) 469-5564**, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – Noon; 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. The Lost and Found Division is located at the ***Overtown Transit Village*** at 701 NW 1st Court, Suite 121, Miami, FL 33136.

Passengers are responsible for retrieving all lost items directly from the MDT – Lost and Found Division.

## Customer Satisfaction Survey

Periodically, in-house telephone and field surveys as well as independent surveys may be conducted to gauge customer satisfaction. The survey questions are asked of a random sample of riders. Please help us by participating in the survey, if you are contacted.



## Service Infractions and Suspension of Service

Misusing the system can result in suspension of your STS Service. ADA regulations allow STS Service to be denied to customers who engage in violent, illegal, or seriously disruptive behavior. The following acts are considered misuse of the STS program, which could lead to suspension of service:

1. **Obtaining or using STS services under false pretenses**

The ADA reserves STS Service for individuals certified as eligible for the services.

Your service will be cancelled and/or suspended if:

– You have made false or misleading statements on your eligibility application, or

– You allow other non-eligible individuals such as friends or family members to ride using your name.

2. **Excessive No-Shows and/or Late Cancellations.**

No-shows and/or Late Cancellations delay and detour vehicles and use up space that other riders could use. (See the Late Cancellation/No-Show Policy).

### 3. Service Suspension for Abusive or Disruptive Behavior

For the safety and comfort of all STS customers and drivers, STS has established a policy that addresses when a customer's conduct may adversely affect others involved with the STS program. Disruptive and abusive behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Hazardous Conduct: Any act which creates the potential for physical harm to the driver, other riders, or the general public
- Abusive Conduct: Any offensive act which invades the privacy rights of others, or touching another person in a rude, insolent or angry manner. This includes, but is not limited to verbal abuse of drivers, STS staff or other riders
- Unlawful Harassment: Including unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior having sexual or racial connotations
- Disability Related Conduct: Any act that would qualify as misconduct but is the direct and immediate consequence of the customer's disability may result in the customer being required to ride with a PCA. Such a determination will depend on the severity of the conduct.
- Voluntarily and repeatedly violating riding rules, including:
  - Smoking in vehicles
  - Refusing to remain seated and keeping your seat belt on
  - Eating or drinking in the vehicles
  - Fare evasion
  - Operating or tampering with any equipment while on board the vehicle. This rule includes operating a hydraulic lift and attempting to remove wheelchair "tie-downs"
  - Defacing equipment
  - Having no one to receive you at home (if necessary), causing unnecessary delays for the driver and other passengers
  - Refusing to comply with other requirements specified in other policies stated in this guide

Depending on the severity of the violation, the following penalties will be enforced for riders who violate any of the Rules of Conduct:

- One (1) violation will result in a verbal warning

– Two (2) violations will result in a written warning
– Three (3) or more violations will result in suspension of service for a minimum of 1 week per incident. Additional suspension time up to and including a permanent loss of STS Service will apply for repeated offences.

A case-by-case evaluation for continued eligibility will be conducted for passengers engaging in repeat hazardous, abusive, or disability related conduct that impacts the safety of a passenger or driver or the safe and reliable delivery of service.

**4. Violent Behavior or Illegal Activities**

Riders, their PCA or companions traveling with riders, who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or driver, or who engage in other illegal activities, will be subject to immediate and permanent suspension from STS Service. They may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

**Miami-Dade Transit reserves the right to:**

– Suspend or cancel service for any individual who:



- No longer meets the eligibility criteria; has moved outside the STS area or is unwilling to cooperate with agency procedures for the STS service
- Lives in an area that is inaccessible (i.e. unpaved roads)
- Behaves in a manner that is disruptive, abusive, threatening, or endangers the safety of staff and other passengers
- Abuses the program or has excessive No-Shows and Cancellations

## Steps of the Suspension Process

If you are reported or observed to be abusing the service in any way, including but not limited to the types of abuse mentioned above, MDT will investigate. If your behavior or use of the service is determined to be inappropriate, you will receive a written notice of service suspension, which explains the reasons for the suspension. You will also receive written instructions for appealing your service suspension.

## Appealing your Service Suspension

You may appeal your suspension within 30 days of the date on the

written notice of suspension. If you appeal your suspension, MDT Paratransit Administration will review your written appeal. If the decision to suspend remains, you may appeal to:

**Miami-Dade Transit**
*Office of Civil Rights*
701 NW First Court, Suite 1700
Miami, Florida 33136-3923

You may ride the service until a decision is made EXCEPT if you are appealing a suspension due to seriously disruptive or violent behavior. If your suspension is due to seriously disruptive or violent behavior, you may not ride unless and until the appeals panel overturns your suspension.

**Note: Riders who engage in physical abuse or cause physical injury to another rider or driver may also be subject to criminal prosecution.**

**Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for:**

- Resolving riders' concerns
- Monitoring the performance of the contracted service
- Certifying and registering eligible applicants
- Communicating program changes to riders



To assist the County in continuing to deliver quality service and at the same time keep program costs within approved budget limitations, your assistance is required.

By adhering to STS Program Policies contained in this guide you will be helping us continue to provide the disabled community with this important transportation service.

**Call Miami-Dade Transit if:**

- You have a recurring problem with late vehicles
- Your ride is unsafe
- You are treated rudely
- Your STS vehicle is in poor or unsafe condition. This includes wheelchair restraints, seatbelts, lifts or ramps, and cleanliness
- You are a wheelchair rider transported sideways. The ADA requires forward and/or backward securement using 4-point tie-downs, shoulder and lap belts
- You are injured or involved in an accident while using this service

## Resolving Service Concerns

Miami-Dade Transit is responsible for resolving service concerns quickly and efficiently. If you have a complaint

or compliment about the service, a driver, or a provider, please e-mail your comments to **Paratransit@miamidade.gov** or visit our website at: **http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/sts-comments-concerns.asp**

You can also call the County's STS Customer Service Office at **(786) 469-5000**, or you can write to:

**Miami-Dade Transit**
*Special Transportation Service*
701 NW First Court, Suite 1200
Miami, Florida 33136-3923

Complaints should be reported to the County's Customer Service on the date that the incident occurs or on the very next business day after the incident. Every complaint will be investigated.

When your complaint is filed, the County will:

- Document and research the complaint
- Require the contracted service provider to respond to the County within 7 business days from the provider's receipt of your complaint
- Work with the provider to solve the concern
- Notify you of complaint resolution



To assist us in researching your complaint, it is important to report your complaint as soon as possible, while the details are still clear. The following information is helpful:

- Date and time of incident
- Name of rider
- Rider's identification number
- Phone number
- Address
- Trip destination
- Description of vehicle and/or vehicle number
- Driver's name
- Scheduled pick-up time
- Actual pick-up time
- Details of the incident

Recurring concerns are referred to the MDT Paratransit Administration. If a provider fails to comply with the agreed upon resolution to the concern, the STS Program manager will then recommend appropriate sanctions against the service contractor.

If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your service problem, you may contact any one of the following:

– MDT Office of Civil Rights at **(786) 469-5486**
– State's Transportation Disadvantaged Helpline at **1-800-983-2435**

## Important Reminders

– Book trips at least one day in advance, preferably between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. when the phones are less busy
– Have your identification number, accurate information and directions ready to give to the reservationist when making your reservation request
– Give specifics to help the driver find you at the pickup location. This is particularly important at large medical facilities, colleges, and shopping centers
– Write down the reservation or cancellation confirmation number given to you by the reservationist. This information will help us assist you if you experience a problem.
– Call the STS Certification Office at **(786) 469-5000** to notify of any changes such as address, telephone number, disability status etc; so that way we can keep your transportation record current
– Tipping the driver is not permitted
– Service animals specially trained to assist riders with disabilities are permitted by federal law in the vehicle
– Service animals travel inside the vehicle with their owner and will be considered a rider when determining vehicle capacity. Service animals are not permitted to sit on the seats and must sit on the floor during transit
– Whenever possible, try to travel between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when traffic conditions are generally less congested

## Summary of ADA Grievance Procedure

Any Miami-Dade Transit customer who believes that service on the Metrobus, Metrorail, Metromover, or STS does not comply with the ADA may file a grievance by contacting:

**Miami-Dade Transit**
*Office of Civil Rights*
701 NW First Court, Suite 1700
Miami, Florida 33136-3923
**(786) 469-5225**

Your grievance should include sufficient detail to permit proper research and response to your concern. Be sure to include your name, address, day time phone number, date of incident, time of day, location and description of the problem. If you require a response in an accessible format – large print, Braille, or audio tape – please specify the preferred format. Assistance submitting a written grievance is available upon request.

A preliminary determination of whether or not an ADA violation exists and, if so, what actions have been or will be taken to correct the problem, will be sent to the customer within 30 calendar days of receipt. MDT customers are protected under the ADA and are free to file a grievance without fear of reprisal. For a copy of the ADA grievance procedure, please call **(786) 469-5486**.

## STS Group Meetings

The County holds a monthly STS Rider's Meeting to provide riders with the latest STS program news and policy information. The meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings alternate from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. every other month. If you are interested in attending call **(305) 871-1111** to confirm the date, time and location of the next meeting. To join the meeting via teleconference, please call **1-800-501-8979** access code **2174951**.

## Hurricane Evacuation Planning

When the County issues an evacuation order, STS will provide certified riders with a one-way trip to a shelter. MDT STS will not provide shopping trips during an emergency. Riders should stock medications and supplies well in advance of hurricane season. STS will stop operating when winds reach 40 miles per hour. The Hurricane Answer Center is activated during an emergency to answer your questions including public shelter openings. The Answer Center may be contacted at **(305) 468-5900** or (Video Relay Number **711** or **311**).

## Evacuate Early! Don't Wait!

If you are requested to evacuate, plan to seek shelter with family or friends who live inland. Remember that public evacuation centers are uncomfortable, crowded and are intended as a last

resort for people who have no other place to go during a storm.

If you plan to go to a public evacuation center and need assistance with daily living because of a medical condition or disability, contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management to register for a Special Needs Center. This program offers transportation and is available to STS and non-STS certified persons. To register, call 311 to contact the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Evacuation Assistance Registry. The Video Relay Number 711 / TTD number is **(305) 468-5402.**

This Rider's Guide is available from:

**Miami-Dade Transit**
*Special Transportation Service*
701 NW 1st Court, Suite 1200
Miami, Fl 33136-3923
**(786) 469-5000**

You can read or download and print this publication from our website at:

**www.miamidade.gov/transit/library/sts.pdf**

Copies are also available in Braille, large print, and audio cassette for the visually or hearing impaired.



# County Phone Numbers

STS Certification/Enrollment Office and Information (Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Customer Service
(Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)

**786-469-5000**

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STS Administration (Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Excluding County Holidays)
To leave a message (24 hours)

**786-469-5029**

Toll-Free number **1-888-543-4822**

Video Relay Number 711 / TDD
(Hearing impaired) **305-263-5475**

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## Transit Information 311

For information on bus, Bus, Rail and Mover (M–F: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

Transit Information for residents South of SW 216 St. **305-891-3131**

Video Relay Number 711 / TDD
(Hearing impaired) **305-654-6530**

Transportation Disadvantage Help Line **1-800-983-2435**

# Contractor Phone Numbers

Reservations (Daily: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Subscriptions (M–F: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Cancellations (24 hours)

Late Vehicle Assistance (24 hours)

Contractor Administration & Pre-Paid Ticket Purchase (M–F: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

**305-871-1111**

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Video Relay Number 711/TDD (24 hours)
**305-265-9435**

If calling from outside Miami-Dade County (24hours)
**1-888-543-4822**

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## Websites

**MDT - Paratransit**
http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation.asp

**STS Application**
http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/special-transportation-application.asp

**STS Complaints**
http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/sts-comments-concerns.asp