

### ADA Service Provisions

**Bus Stop Announcements** - Operators must announce or cause to be announced:

1. all bus stops that are transfer points with other bus lines
2. bus stops at major intersections and destination points; and
3. bus stops at intervals along the route sufficient to permit persons with disabilities to be oriented to their location along the route.

Specific bus stops must also be announced at the request of passengers with disabilities.

Bus operators are required to use the automated voice annunciation system on buses so equipped.

On all other buses, or where a passenger has requested a specific stop announcement, bus operators are to use the interior public address (PA) system to announce stops. In cases where no PA or automated annunciation system exists, or is working, bus operators are to announce stops directly to the passengers.

All non-working stop announcement equipment is to be reported to dispatch/maintenance immediately.

**Bus Route/Route Destination Identification** - All MMVTA buses are to display the bus route number and destination on the destination sign display area above the windshield in the bus exterior. The route destination will also be displayed to the bus exterior in the upper portion of the forward-most passenger window on the curbside of most buses where bus design allows.

MMVTA bus operators are to announce or cause to be announced the bus route and destination of the bus to waiting passengers at bus stops serving more than one bus route. Exterior automated annunciators, public address, and direct announcement by bus operators are to be used to effect this requirement.

**Seat and Wheelchair Securement Requirements** - When an individual with a disability needs to sit in a seat or occupy a wheelchair securement location that is occupied, the operator is instructed to ask the following persons to move in order to allow the individual with a disability to occupy the seat or securement location:

1. individuals, except other individuals with a disability or elderly persons, sitting in a location designated as priority seating for elderly and persons with disabilities (or other seat as necessary); and
2. individuals sitting in a fold-down or other movable seat in a wheelchair securement location.

Drivers are not required to compel the person to move; however, the MMVTA permits requiring individuals to move in response to such requests.

**Operators Required to Assist** - All operators will make every reasonable effort to assist riders in boarding, escorting the rider to the seating area, and securing both the conveyance device and rider. Upon arrival at destination the operator will remove all applicable travel tie down devices and lap/shoulder belt. The operator will make all reasonable efforts to assist the rider with alighting from the vehicle. Operators will also make all reasonable accommodations to also assist riders with personal belongings in both boarding and alighting from the vehicle.

**Lift/Ramp Use** - MMVTA allows passengers who request to use a lift or a ramp to board or exit buses at stops, unless the lift or ramp cannot be deployed due to the potential of damage if the lift or ramp is deployed or temporary conditions preclude the safe use of the stop by all passengers. MMVTA deploys lifts or ramps for persons who do not use wheelchairs, including standees upon request.

**Respirators, concentrators, or portable oxygen** - MMVTA does NOT deny service to individuals using respirators, concentrators, or portable oxygen.

**Boarding Time/Disembarking Time** - Generally, sufficient time is available on all fixed routes to permit persons with disabilities to board and alight buses. Bus operators should be cognizant of the additional time requested by a person with a physical disability or vision impairment to be properly seated.

Drivers are to notify dispatch of recurring circumstances along particular route(s), schedule(s) or at bus stop(s) where, based upon actual rider experience, insufficient time may exist to properly accommodate disabled passengers.

In most cases, passengers are expected to be at the bus stop at the scheduled bus arrival time. Bus operators are not to run ahead of schedule. Bus operators are to be cognizant of disabled passengers who may be in the immediate vicinity approaching the bus stop. The bus operator will momentarily delay the bus departure to allow the disabled passenger to access and board the bus.

**Wheelchair Accommodations** - MMVTA accommodates all wheelchairs regardless of size or weight as long as the lift, ramp, securement area, securement mechanisms and vehicle can accommodate them safely.

**Training** - All personnel employed in the operation of MMVTA services shall be trained to proficiency consistent with federal regulations as appropriate to their duties so that they operate vehicles and equipment safely and properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities who use MMVTA services in a respectful and courteous way, with appropriate attention to the differences among individuals with disabilities.

Such training will be arranged by the transportation contractor and provided biannually or more depending on topic and need to all affected employees, including but not limited to drivers, dispatchers, and administrative personnel. Appropriate records of such training are kept by the transportation contractor and reviewed by MMVTA.

New employees shall have training in ADA requirements as part of their initial training and refresher training occurs periodically throughout each year.

**Information in Accessible Formats** - Any information or documents that MMVTA makes available to the public must also be available in accessible formats. Information about bus services such as schedules and destinations are available by contacting MMVTA.

Accessible documents are available upon request in various formats such as Braille, CD/disk, recording or via email.

**In Service Lift/Ramp Issue** - All break downs of accessibility equipment must be reported immediately to dispatch. Operators shall follow the instructions received upon providing such a report. A vehicle with an inoperable lift or ramp is to be removed from service as soon as possible – no later than the next service day – and not returned to service until repaired.

**Rescue Service** - All MMVTA fixed-route transit providers shall provide an effective rescue system for passengers with disabilities, needing the use of a lift or ramp, that are stranded due to service interruptions.

If a service interruption is the result of bus lift/ramp failure or other mechanical breakdown, the bus operator shall stop and call dispatch for instructions and relay those instructions to the passenger before proceeding on the route. If the service interruption will result in the passenger being stranded for more than 30 minutes, a rescue of the passenger shall be conducted.

Vehicles that are dispatched for rescue shall meet the stranded passenger within 30 minutes of the request for rescue. Rescue vehicles shall transport the passenger to a location mutually agreed upon by the passenger and transit staff. Every attempt shall be made by transit staff to ensure that the passenger's trip is completed successfully. In the case of service interruptions not caused by mechanical failure on the bus, (e.g. all wheelchair securement positions are occupied), the operator shall stop the bus, call dispatch for instructions and relay instructions to the passenger before proceeding on the route. Dispatch staff shall determine if rescue is required and feasible.

In all cases, dispatch staff shall check the status of the next available bus. All MMVTA transit provider staff members shall be trained on the above policy.

**Service Animal** - means any dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability, including psychiatric, cognitive or mental disabilities. Possible tasks that service animals may perform include but are not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired to the presence of people or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, fetching dropped items, assisting an individual during a seizure, retrieving medicine or alerting the individual to a telephone call, providing physical support to assist with balance and stability to individuals with mobility

disabilities and assisting individuals including those with cognitive disabilities with navigation. A service animal is *not* a pet or a comfort animal.

The user/owner boarding a MMVTA vehicle with a service animal may not be charged an extra fee for the service animal.

The user/owner is not limited in the number of service animals he/she may have as each may provide different types of service.

The user/owner must be in control of the service animal(s) at all times.

The service animal(s) must be appropriately trained and be able to perform its tasks for the benefit of the user/owner.

There is no specific requirement about how to board a service animal onto the bus or paratransit vehicle. The bus operator, or paratransit operator should ask the user/owner how he/she would like to board with his/her service animal(s), and follow the requested procedures, if appropriate, and reasonable. An operator may call Dispatch for assistance.

Users/owners with service animals may not be required to sit in a specified area.

As long as they are not blocking aisles or exits or interfering with other passengers entering, exiting or riding MMVTA vehicles, service animals may sit or lie:

- a. At their user/owner's feet, under the seat;
- b. Directly beside their user/owner's mobility aid (e.g., wheelchair, walker, scooter);
- c. Between their user/owner's knees;
- d. On their user/owner's lap; or
- e. In some type of pouch or carrier.

Service Animals are not permitted to ride in or on MMVTA bus seats unless the vehicle provides insufficient floor space for the animal and the user/owner has a plastic sheet to cover the full area that the animal uses to sit. If there is insufficient floor space for seating of the service animal, the operator will call Dispatch for instructions.

If other passengers are afraid of animals, or have severe allergies, that does not supersede the rights of the user/owner to utilize MMVTA's transportation services with a service animal. Those other riders may be permitted to pay their fare, and then board via whichever door of the bus allows him/her access away from the service animal or they can wait for the next bus. If separation in the vehicle is not possible to avoid these issues, the operator will contact Dispatch for instructions.

A service animal may be prohibited from MMVTA facilities and from riding on MMVTA fixed route and/or paratransit vehicles if the animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the user/owner, other passengers, or MMVTA employees; or demonstrates aggressive behavior towards other passengers or other service animals; or disrupts the MMVTA driver from safely performing his/her duties.

MMVTA will not exclude a particular service animal based solely on experience with other similar type service animals, or on an unreasonable fear that is not related to the service animal's actual behavior. Each situation will be considered on the actual facts and circumstances at issue on an individual basis.

Other passengers or members of the public are not permitted to touch, or interfere in any way with a service animal without the consent of the user/owner.

Any person including a person with a disability or a user/owner who does not comply with this policy and its procedures will be asked to disembark the bus or will be asked to leave the transit facility. MMVTA operators are required to contact Dispatch for instructions before requiring any individual to alight from the vehicle or vacate a facility.

Prior to boarding/deboarding a MMVTA bus, the user/owner with a service animal must let the operator know what assistance, if any, may be required with boarding, or alighting the vehicle. The user/owner is responsible for knowing the best way to board and position the animal on the vehicle.

The user/owner is solely responsible for the supervision, control, care, and safety of his/her service animal while boarding, riding and alighting from MMVTA buses and while at MMVTA facilities.

The user/owner is responsible to make sure that any disruptive behavior (e.g., growling at other service animals, lunging toward other passengers) from the service animal is stopped immediately.

The user/owner of a service animal that displays unruly disruptive or threatening behavior (e.g., running around the vehicle out of control, aggressiveness towards others and/or other disruptive behavior) may be asked to remove the animal by MMVTA personnel.

The user/owner is responsible for managing interactions with other passengers and members of the public when situations arise, such as asking the other individuals not to pet, feed, distract or interrupt their service animal while it is working.

In the event that a service animal causes damage to MMVTA property, the user/owner shall be liable for reimbursement to MMVTA for the damages to any MMVTA vehicle or MMVTA facilities. The user/owner will also be financially responsible for any injuries which may be sustained by MMVTA passenger(s) or employee(s) that are caused by the service animal.

The MMVTA Transportation Contractor is responsible to schedule training for all MMVTA bus operators, transit supervisors, and dispatchers, so that they know how to provide service to MMVTA passengers with disabilities in an appropriate and respectful manner, including, but not limited to, providing equal treatment to users/owners with service animals using MMVTA's public transportation services and facilities.

MMVTA employees may inquire if an animal is a service animal and ask what tasks the service animal is trained to perform; however, they may not require that a customer present special identification for his/her service animal(s), or ask about the person's disability.

MMVTA employees shall receive training on providing assistance in a respectful manner to individuals with disabilities who use service animals to access MMVTA facilities, customer service, transit centers and public transportation services.

MMVTA employees are encouraged to provide reasonable assistance, as needed, to individuals with disabilities who use service animals.

All MMVTA bus operators and paratransit operators are required to provide transportation services to the general public, including people with disabilities who choose to use service animals in accordance with this regulation.

In the event that any procedure under this policy prevents or threatens to prevent a user/owner from using MMVTA fixed route service with his/her service animal(s), the MMVTA bus operator shall contact Dispatch immediately for instructions.