

# Riders' Guide

## to GNHTD ADA Services

Fare increase  
to \$3.50  
begins on  
December 4,  
2016



## ADA Complementary Paratransit

Greater New Haven Transit District  
840 Sherman Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut  
06514 Telephone: (203) 288-6282  
[www.gnhtd.org](http://www.gnhtd.org)

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## Welcome

This is a guide to information regarding the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) and its services. We operate under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

We provide a shared ride service to our riders. Other riders may be picked up and dropped off on the way to your destination. You will be picked up and dropped off according to the driver's schedule. Since the service is a shared ride system, you should expect to be on the vehicle longer than if you were using a private vehicle. Our vehicles are also restricted from using certain roadways, such as the Merritt Parkway, which may increase your travel time.

Abnormal traffic conditions, such as a severe accident on the highway, road construction, or weather, can also delay your pick-up time and increase your travel time. When weather conditions are not favorable to travel, you should expect delays and possible cancellation of your requested travel (see Inclement Weather section page 10).

## ADA Hours of Operation

GNHTD operates during the same hours and days as CTTransit's New Haven Division. Generally, we operate Sunday through Saturday between 5:30 am to 11:30 pm. All trips must be scheduled in a manner that ensure they will be completed by the end of service on the day of travel.



Example: The latest pick-up time available for a trip from New Haven to New Haven will be 11:15 pm with the final drop off time being 11:45 pm.

If a CTTransit route stops operating at a certain time in an area, GNHTD service also stops operating.

Example, the S route stops operating in Branford, Guilford, and Madison at 7:00pm, so all trips in these towns must be completed before that time. Our service mirrors the same hours of operation.

Please note that CTTransit operates on a Sunday schedule on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Subscription rides will be cancelled on the above holidays. Riders need to call GNHTD reservations up to seven (7) days in advance of the holiday to book a ride for any of the holidays listed above.

Our Customer Service Representatives will be happy to let you know if we can provide service in a certain area at a particular time.

***If the CTTransit New Haven Division routes and/or schedules change, GNHTD will adjust its service area and times accordingly. Every effort will be made to contact riders in advance of service changes.***

### **ADA Service Area**

GNHTD provides ADA paratransit service in the Greater New Haven area where CTTransit's New Haven Division operates. The service is available within a ¾ mile parameter of the fixed route service, excluding express or commuter routes. In order for GNHTD to provide a particular trip, that trip must begin and end within the designated service area. Some trips that cross service areas may require the rider to call one of our partner transit districts to book the reservation.

Our Customer Service Representatives will be happy to assist you.

### **Reservations**

ADA paratransit is a reserved-ride system. All reservations must be made no later than 5:00 PM the day before you want to use the service. We do not accept requests for rides or make changes to your reservations on the day of service.



- The Customer Service Center is open Sunday through Saturday from 9:00AM to 5:00PM.
- You can book your ADA ride between one (1) and seven (7) days prior to the day you wish to use the service. For example: for a

Monday trip, you can reserve your ride as early as the Monday before you want to travel. The latest you can book that trip is the Sunday before.

- Please have the following information ready when you call to book a ride:
  - Your client ID #
  - The addresses of your starting point and destination
  - The times you would like to be picked up. Please let the Customer Service representative know if there is a specific time you need to be at your destination so they can help you schedule a pick up time. Please note GNHTD may negotiate your requested time to ensure that all riders are accommodated.
  - If you are traveling with a PCA and or guest



Please keep in mind that the travel time on the service may be longer than using a personal vehicle. This is due to restrictions on where the vehicle can travel and other passengers traveling on the vehicle with you. Also remember that the farther you are traveling the more time you will need to get to your destination. When booking your rides please allow extra time to get to your destination.

- You are required to schedule a separate drop off and pick-up time even if you are only at a location for a short period of time. Drivers cannot wait for you while you conduct your business at these locations.
- Only you can use the service under your ID #. You may not allow another person to ride on the service using your ID #. If we verify that someone other than the rider has used the service under their ID #, they will receive a letter of warning. If we verify that this has happened a second time, the rider will be suspended for 30 days. Further violations of this policy will result in a six (6) month suspension.
- Return trips are best scheduled at the time the initial trip is requested. If you are unsure about how much time you will need to complete your trip, the Customer Service Representative can assist you. If you



transport your PCA if you did not inform the Customer Service Representative at the time of booking.

## Guests

You may travel with one (1) guest on the service. Other guests can be accommodated when space is available. Please inform the Customer Service Representative when you will be traveling with a guest. Guests are charged the same fare as the eligible rider. Guests are picked up and dropped off at the same location(s) as the rider.

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The term "Guest" refers to someone who accompanies an eligible rider, but is not a Personal Care Attendant

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Children 4 or younger ride for free while traveling with an eligible rider. If the child is under seven years, you are responsible to provide an industry approved car seat. (See the Seatbelt/Child Restraint section on page 13)

## ***Waiting for a Ride***

Please be at your pick-up location at the beginning of the pick-up window you were given when you made your reservation. The driver can only wait five (5) minutes once they arrive within that pick-up window. If the driver arrives early, you don't have to leave. The driver will wait for you until five (5) minutes within the pick-up window. (See Pick-up Window section for more information)

The service that GNHTD provides is a shared-ride system. Multiple people are depending on their ride to arrive in a timely fashion. If one person is not ready when the vehicle arrives, it may cause that driver to be late for all the stops that follow. As a courtesy to other riders, please be ready during your pick-up window.



Please wait in a location at or near the first floor front door of your pick-up location. Be sure to wait where you can see the vehicle and the driver can see you. The driver may go to a front lobby reception desk and ask for you, but he cannot go beyond that point to look for you, nor can he assist you until you reach the external door.

Unfortunately, we are unable to call to alert you that the bus has arrived.

## ***Arrangements to Meet Riders***

We understand that some riders do not travel alone or require a caretaker to meet them at the end of their trip. The caretaker must be present when the driver arrives to drop off the rider. The driver is not allowed to wait for the caretaker to arrive.

If the caretaker fails to meet the rider, the driver will return the rider to their place of origin. If the place of origin is not an option, the rider will be transported to the local police department.

## ***Assistance to the Door***

GNHTD provides door-to-door service to all its riders. Drivers are required to provide assistance as you enter and exit the vehicle and to and from the outside access door at your pick-up and drop-off locations. Drivers cannot enter any building, common area or vestibule or assist with any of your items until you have reached the outside access door.

In order to assist you to the door, the driver will need a clear, safe path of travel. Generally, the driver may not assist you through narrow walkways, across boards or temporary walkways, over grass, mud, dirt, packed ice or snow, or through low lying branches, etc. It is your responsibility to ensure that your driveway and walkways are cleared sufficiently to allow the driver to safely access your pick-up location. Drivers will not jeopardize their safety or yours to access your home.



For those using wheelchairs, drivers will assist you to the door provided there is a ramp that meets the standards for ramp design established by the ADA. Metal and wood surfaces must have non-slip material applied.

- Drivers are not allowed to lift or carry wheelchairs up or down any steps. Drivers may not tip or in any way lift a wheelchair. This is for your safety and the safety of the driver.
- Drivers may not operate or push a motorized device.
- Drivers must keep the vehicle in plain sight at all times.

If there is a concern about a path of travel or a particular ramp, a supervisor will visit the location and assess the safety concerns. You will be notified in writing if any concerns are found that will limit service. We

will still be able to transport you on the vehicle, but we will not be able to assist you to the door until the issue(s) outlined in the letter are addressed or a reasonable alternative solution is agreed upon.

## **Transfers**

You may travel from one system to another by transferring from one paratransit service to another. To do so, you either have to be a registered rider on each provider or be registered as a visitor. To become a registered rider or be set up as a visitor on another service, please contact the transit agency in which you wish to travel.

- For the New Britain/Hartford area contact: The Greater Hartford Transit District  
(860) 247-5329
- For the Meriden/Waterbury area contact: North East Transportation  
(203) 756-5550
- For the Milford area contact Milford Transit  
(203) 874-4507
- For the Seymour/Derby/Ansonia area contact Valley Transit  
(203) 735-6408

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A “visitor” is an individual who is registered as an ADA paratransit rider or has a disability and wishes to use the service for a limited period of time in a particular district. See “Visitor’s Policy”.

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Once you are registered on both services, you can book your rides. You will be charged the fare on the first vehicle but not the transferring service.

For example: If you are going from New Haven to Hartford, you will pay the fare to Greater New Haven Transit, but not pay a fare to Greater Hartford Transit. On your return trip, you will pay Greater Hartford Transit, but not Greater New Haven Transit.

You must let the Customer Service Representative of the agencies you will be travelling on know that your trip involves a transfer so that you can be charged appropriately.

## ADA Fares

The fare for a one-way ADA trip is \$3.50 (US). GNHTD drivers are prohibited from making change. ***Exact fare is required at the time of pick up.*** Bus operators do not make change.



Personal Care Attendants do not need to pay a fare. Your certification will indicate whether you may travel with a PCA. You must let us know if you will be travelling with a PCA when you book your ride for a particular trip. You may also travel with one guest. A guest pays the same fare as the eligible rider. Children 4 or younger ride for free. (See the Additional Passenger section on page 5)

For your convenience, you may pre purchase books of tickets from CTTransit's website, their information booth on the New Haven Green or from the courtesy booth at the following Stop and Shop locations:

- 100 Division Street, Ansonia
- 275 Highland Avenue, Cheshire
- 2335 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden Market Place, Hamden
- 112 Amity Road, Amity Plaza, New Haven
- 150 Whalley Avenue, New Haven
- 1360 East Town Road, (across from Westfield CT Post), Milford
- 79 Washington Avenue, North Haven
- 370 Hemingway Avenue, Trolley Square, East Haven
- 460 Elm Street, West Haven



Tickets books contain ten (10) tickets at a discounted price and currently cost twenty-four dollars (\$28.00) each.

***PLEASE NOTE: The prepaid ticket program is a service of the Connecticut Department of Transportation managed by CTTransit. Any tickets purchased cannot be returned for a refund.***

No ride will be provided without a fare or ticket. In the rare instance that a rider does not have the fare or ticket for the return trip, GNHTD will provide the trip. However, you will not be able to use the service again until the fare has been paid.

## Subscription Service

Subscription service allows you to have your regular trips automatically scheduled. Subscription service is a privilege and are handled on a case by case basis. No guarantees are made that a spot will be available.

- The Rider is responsible to cancel any subscription trips. Failure to cancel subscription rides may jeopardize your subscription service.
- Subscription service does not provide a higher level of service or guarantee pick up or drop off times
- Frequent requests to make changes to subscription rides made result in your subscription service cancelled.
- This service is not provided on the following holidays; therefore you are responsible for reserving your trips on those days. *New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day.* If you still need to take your trip on one of these Holidays, please contact us to schedule a ride. On the holidays listed above, GNHTD operates on the CTTransit Sunday schedule and service area for these days.

Please note that you may lose the privilege of subscription service if you have an excessive number of “no-shows” or cancellations. No-shows are trips that are either no-shows or late cancels (within two (2) hours of the scheduled pick up time). If the total no-shows is twenty five percent (25%) or more of your total scheduled rides within a thirty (30) day period for a two (2) month period or longer, this may result in a suspension of service.

## Inclement Weather

The determination to cancel service is made by CTTransit and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). Please note that there may be times that GNHTD vehicles are unable to navigate certain roads during inclement weather which may lead to service delays or cancellations. You can get information about temporary service changes from the following sources:



- Our website [www.gnhtd.org](http://www.gnhtd.org)
- Our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Greater-New-Haven-Transit-District>
- By calling 203-288-6282

- On FOX 61 (on-line and on air)
- On WTNH (on-line and on air)

In cases where our service is temporarily suspended due to inclement weather, GNHTD will make every effort to return every rider to their home. We may attempt to contact you to provide an earlier return trip to ensure the safety of the rider and the driver.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your driveway and walkway are sufficiently cleared to allow the driver to safely access your pick-up location. Drivers will not assist passengers across snow or ice, nor jeopardize their safety to access your home. If your home location is not sufficiently cleared for access, the operator may not assist you.

If your road or access to your condominium/apartment complex is impassable, GNHTD will be unable to provide your trip. You will not be charged with a late cancellation for a trip that could not be taken when weather conditions do not permit safe travel.

### **Mobility Devices**

You may travel with any mobility device which may aid in your travel (i.e. a wheelchair, cane walker, oxygen tank, or other medical equipment). Please let the Customer Service Representative know what kind of device you will be using when you book your ride. All mobility devices must be secured for the safety of all passengers.



***The term wheelchair refers to any three or more wheeled device, usable indoors, that is used by people with disabilities.***

- If you use a wheelchair, consider transferring to a seat, if possible, for your safety
- We will not be able to transport a particular device if:
  - 1) The device is broken to the point that assisting you poses a safety risk to the driver.
  - 2) If the uncleanliness of the device is such that it poses a health risk to other passengers or drivers
  - 3) We may ask you to board separately from your chair if your combined weight is too heavy for the lift

Reports of these situations will be examined on a case-by-case basis by a supervisor. If the supervisor finds that there is indeed a safety risk, you will be notified in writing of the supervisor's finding and recommendations. You will not be able to use the particular device on the vehicle until the issue is resolved.

- All passengers are required to wear lap belts
- You are responsible to operate your motorized devices. Drivers may not operate or push a motorized device. Be sure you can operate your device sufficiently enough to use it on the vehicle with limited assistance. If a rider is having difficulty operating their device, a supervisor will assess the situation on a case-by-case basis. You may be asked not to use the device in question until you can demonstrate that you can manage the device or you may be required to travel with a PCA who can manage the device for you.

### **Service Animals**

A service animal is any animal trained to complete specific tasks for an individual with disabilities. You are allowed to bring your service animal with you when you travel. Please let us know if you have a service animal at the time of your eligibility interview. If you acquire a service animal at a later date, contact the eligibility office so we can update your file by calling (203-281-2518 or 203-281-2501). You may not be allowed to travel with your service animal if GNHTD has not been previously informed.



- Service animals must be tethered and must be under your full control at all times
- The animal should not block the aisle of the vehicle so the driver and other passengers may safely board and disembark
- The driver may not in any way care for or clean up after the animal
- A service animal may not:
  - Wander around the vehicle
  - Harass other riders, service animals or the driver
  - Repeatedly growl or bark on the vehicle
  - Soil the vehicle in anyway
  - Damage property

You may be returned to your residence if your service animal commits one of these offenses during transport, depending on the nature and the severity of the offense.

- Your service animal will be restricted from the vehicle if: 1) they attack, harm or severely harass other riders, other service animals, or the driver; 2) they damage property or 3) there are multiple incidences of the animal soiling the vehicle or not being under the owner's control.

### **Seatbelts/Child Restraint Systems**

For your safety and the safety of others on the vehicle, you are required to use the provided lap belts. The driver will fasten the lap belt for you if you need assistance. If you have documentation from a medical professional stating that it is medically unsafe for you to use a lap belt, you are responsible to present that documentation to GNHTD. We will place a copy with your file and note it on the driver's manifest.



A shoulder belt as well as a lap belt are provided for the individual in the wheelchair position.

In accordance with Connecticut state law, all children under the age of 7 and weighing less than 60 pounds must be secured in a child restraint system or booster seat. If this requirement is not met, the child will not be able to complete the trip. You are required to provide the car seat and take it with you when you disembark the vehicle. Drivers will assist in securing the car seat, but they are not allowed to lift and place the child in the car seat.

All passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is in motion. Moving around on a moving vehicle is a safety issue for everyone aboard and is a distraction to the driver. Any passenger getting out of their seat without cause when the vehicle is in motion may be subject to GNHTD's disruptive behavior policy.

GNHTD will arrange a meeting with any rider and/or their caregiver who has been moving around on the vehicle before they can use the service again. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a mutually agreeable solution that will assure the safety of all GNHTD riders.

## ADA No Show Policy

GNHTD aims to provide quality and efficient transportation to all eligible riders. We ask that you be considerate of other riders on the service by booking rides that you are confident in taking and by canceling any trips you have booked as soon possible. Scheduled trips that are not canceled in a timely manner or not taken at all adversely impact our ability to provide quality service and the ability of other riders to make reservations.

Your trip will be considered a No-Show If:

1. The driver cannot find you when they arrive. A door tag (on right) will be left at your location
2. You are not at the vehicle within five minutes of a driver arriving within your pick up window
3. Late Cancel - you cancel your trip under 2 hours of your scheduled pick up time
4. You cancel at the door
5. Please note that trips not taken because we arrive late will not be considered a no-show
6. If you are no-showed, any other trip scheduled for that day will not be automatically cancelled. You must call us to cancel those rides as well or they will be considered no-shows.



Excessive no-shows or late cancels are defined as twenty five percent (25%) or more of your total scheduled rides are within a thirty (30) day period. You may incur a suspension of service if a pattern is established over time. Two or less no-shows within a thirty (30) day period will not be considered excessive.

1. A first offense of this policy will result in a warning letter
2. A second offense of this policy, within six (6) months of the warning letter, will result in a seven (7) day suspension
3. A third or more offense of this policy, within six (6) months of a previous suspension, will result in a fourteen (14) day suspension

Repeated incidents after the initial suspension will result in longer periods of suspension.

The date of any suspension will begin ten (10) business days from the date the suspension letter was mailed. This delay is to give you adequate time to appeal the suspension.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You may lose the privilege of subscription service if you have been found in violation of the no-show policy. Please be sure to cancel your trips in a timely fashion.

### **Packages on ADA Paratransit Vehicles**

You may bring up to three (3) grocery totes or five (5) plastic grocery bags and/or one case of water/soda/soup/etc. (see photo below).



You also may bring store bags, luggage, and pets in cages or packages that can fit under a seat. This is comparable to what you may bring on a CTTransit bus. Any items brought on board a paratransit vehicle may not occupy seat space. A driver may assist with three items that are equivalent to an average sized grocery bags. If you use a grocery cart, they must be secured by the driver on the bus and GNHTD is not responsible for damage to the cart.

You may not bring large items such as tables, chairs, televisions, boxes from wholesale stores, etc.

Violations of the Package Policy may result in your riding privileges being suspended.

## ***Eligibility Certification Process/Policies***

### **1. Process**

- a. All applicants are required to submit an application. Applications are received by mail or through the website CTADA.com.
- b. All applicants are required to come to the office for a face to face interview. Transportation is provided free of charge to the interviews. GNHTD will arrange the transportation.
- c. A professional verification may be requested from an appropriate professional on an as needed basis after the interview.

### **2. Incomplete application**

- a. At the discretion of GNHTD, applications may be returned to the applicant if there is insufficient information on the application. The application is returned with a letter requesting completion of the application. Insufficient information may include: contact information, information regarding the individual's disability, incomplete or inadequate professional verification.

### **3. Arranging the interview**

- a. Calls are made to the applicant within two business days after an application has been received.
- b. A "Need for Interview" letter is sent generally after two calls have been placed and we have been unable to make contact. The application will be withdrawn after 21 days if GNHTD is not contacted by the applicant.

### **4. Withdrawing Applications**

- a. Applications are withdrawn if: 1) the applicant requests it be withdrawn, 2) if the applicant does not respond to the Need for Interview or Missed Interview letters within 21 days, 3) if the professional verification request is not returned.

### **5. Professional Verification**

- a. Professional Verifications are requested from appropriate professionals after the applicant has been interviewed if the ADA Coordinator needs verification of disability and/or verification of limitations that would prevent the individual from taking the CTTransit fixed route system.
- b. If the verification is not returned within 14 days, the applicant is sent a letter stating that the verification has not been received. The letter indicates that if the verification is not received within 7 days, the application will be withdrawn.

## 6. Recertification

- a. Applicants are recertified every three years.
- b. A letter is sent to the rider one month before their certification is due to expire requesting they contact GNHTD if they wish to continue using the service.
- c. When an application is received, it is reviewed and a decision is made to whether that applicant needs to come in for a reassessment.
- d. Riders who do not contact GNHTD prior to their expiration date, will be made inactive and not be able to use the service.

## 7. Visitors

Someone who does not live within our jurisdiction, may use the service without completing the certification process. Someone with visitor status may use the service up to 21 days within a 365 day period. In order to obtain visitor status, the applicant must provide proof of eligibility for ADA paratransit on another service or, if they are not eligible on another service, proof of a disability to GNHTD.

## 8. Transferring eligibility

- a. Submit an application
- b. Sign a release for the certifying agency in Connecticut, so that GNHTD can request the certifying materials from that agency

## *Inappropriate Behavior*

Our goal at GNHTD is to ensure that all riders have a safe and comfortable trip. GNHTD has instituted specific policies and procedures. Any individual that engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct, or represents a direct threat to the health or safety of others will be addressed.

Note: CT Public Act No. 09-191 makes it a felony to assault a public transit employee.

**Violations** that may result in suspension of a rider's service include but are not limited to:

- Distracting the driver's attention
- Standing or removing your seat belt while the vehicle is in motion
- Discourteous treatment of other passengers, the drivers or agency staff

- Eating, drinking (unless medically necessary) or leaving trash on a transit vehicle
- Improperly dressed
- Use of profanity and /or racial comments in an abusive or threatening manner towards agency personnel or other riders
- Physical violence, intimidation and/or harassment toward agency personnel or other riders
- Participation in any illegal activity
- Failure to follow the direction of the transit agency personnel or other authorities

For a full list, please contact us at 860-288-6282.

If it has been determined that the behavior of a rider warrants the suspension of service, the duration of the suspension shall be determined by GNHTD based upon the nature and severity of the infraction.

GNHTD reserves the right to require you to provide such assurances that the violating behavior will not be repeated during transport before restoring service.

**All violent and/or illegal conduct that occurs during transport shall be reported to local law enforcement.**

### ***Appealing a Suspension / Eligibility Decision***

Riders may appeal a proposed suspension / eligibility decision by contacting GNHTD no later than ten (10) business days from the date the letter was mailed. Once GNHTD receives an appeal, GNHTD will contact the rider within seven (7) business days to schedule a meeting. A service suspension will be delayed pending determination of the appeal.

Appeals must be sent to the **Greater New Haven Transit District, Executive Director, 840 Sherman Avenue, Hamden, CT 06514**. All envelopes must be marked "APPEAL" in the lower left hand corner. You have the right to present witnesses and other supporting material at the hearing and be represented by counsel at your own expense.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 7-273d, further appeals may be made to: **The Connecticut Department of Transportation, Community**

**Transit Division, P.O. Box 317546, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT 06131-7546.**

GNHTD reserves the right to be represented by counsel and to present its own witnesses and supporting material at all hearings. A recording of all appeals proceedings will be made. A transcript of the appeals proceedings will be provided to you at your own expense.

Please note that GNHTD reserves the right to immediately suspend the service of anyone who violates one of the Violations (see the Inappropriate Behavior section for more information.). For such behavior, law enforcement may be asked to intervene. Should GNHTD determine that a rider's action(s) violated this policy and warrants a continued revocation of service, service may not be reinstated until the appropriate appeals process has been completed.

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## Helpful Ride Information

- Be ready for your ride within your pick-up window
- Have exact fare ready for the driver
- Stay seated at all times while vehicle is in motion
- Drivers only assists with three (3) grocery totes or five (5) plastic grocery bags and/or one case of water/soda/soup/etc.



Greater New Haven Transit District