




**RIVER
VALLEY
TRANSIT**

**River Valley Transit
Dial-A-Ride & ADA Paratransit
Riders' Guide**

Effective: February 2025
www.rivervalleytransit.com
 facebook.com/RVTransit
91 N. Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457

What Every Rider Should Know



Get out and about!

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Welcome | 4 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Where and When You Can Travel | 6 |
| Eligibility | 7 |
| Reservations | 8 |
| Will Calls | 12 |
| Arrangements to Meet Riders | 12 |
| Cancellations/No Shows | 12 |
| Pick Up Procedures | 14 |
| Driver Assistance | 16 |
| Transfers | 17 |
| Who Can Travel With Me? | 18 |
| Fares | 19 |
| Using RVT Services | 20 |
| Complaints | 23 |
| Title VI | 25 |
| Important Numbers | 26 |
| Taxi Voucher Program | 27 |
| Other Services | 30 |

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Welcome

Thank you for considering River Valley Transit (RVT) and our Dial-A-Ride service and ADA Paratransit service for riders with disabilities. This booklet explains the Dial-A-Ride and ADA Paratransit services provided by River Valley Transit. It is the mission of RVT to provide the highest quality transportation and transit related support services. Safety is our top priority and our operators are always ready and available to assist you with your travel experience.

Introduction

RVT is the public transportation provider for the lower Connecticut River valley region. These services include Dial-A-Ride, ADA Paratransit, on-demand, fixed route, and deviate-fixed route service.

We provide a shared ride service to our riders. Other riders may be picked up and dropped off on the way to your destination. Riders 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.

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 cancellations of your requested travel (see Weather Emergencies on page 7).

Fixed and deviated-fixed routes run on a published schedule and may be used by waiting anywhere along the route and flagging down the bus as it nears. No reservations are required. Routes connect at locations such as train stations, bus stations and shopping centers, where transfers may be made. Routes and schedules are available on-line, on the bus, and at many public locations throughout the region.

Deviated-fixed routes also offer off-route service up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off of the published route. All off-route stops must be scheduled at least one day in advance.

ADA Paratransit is available within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed routes for people who have been pre-certified. Applications may be found at www.rivervalleytransit.com or may be mailed by calling.

In areas of the region not served by routes, RVT offers Dial-A-Ride (DAR). DAR service provides curb to curb shared ride transit service to and from anywhere in the 16-town region, as long as the trip is not along a fixed route. Reservations must be made at least one day in advance but up to two weeks in advance.

Where and When You Can Travel with RVT

Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service operates Monday through Friday. The service area includes the towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Durham, Essex, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook. However, service is not provided for any trip where the origin and destination are within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route or deviated route.

ADA paratransit (ADA) service operates the same days and times as the fixed route service, generally Monday through Saturday. ADA service operates within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of any fixed route. The days and hours of service are planned this way to ensure that riders with disabilities have access to bus service during the same days and hours as riders on the city buses and is an ADA requirement. Some trips that cross service areas may require the rider to call one of our partner transit districts to book the reservation (see Transfers page 16). Our Customer Service Representatives will be able to help you with the schedule when you are planning your trips.

Off-route service is available on any deviated fixed-route. The bus will deviate up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off of the route with a reservation.

To get more information regarding the RVT service area, please call and speak with one of our customer service representatives.

Important Phone Numbers

Reservations/Information

(860) 510-0429

(860) 346-0212

TTY (800) 842-9710

Book online at www.rivervalleytransit.com or on your smartphone with the Mobility by Ecolane app

If you are not sure if RVT operates when you need to travel, please call a Customer Service Representative at (860) 510-0429.

Holidays

RVT does not operate on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.



Weather Emergencies

The determination to cancel service is made by RVT. Please note that there may be times that RVT vehicles are unable to navigate certain roads during inclement weather which may lead to service delays or cancellations. The ADA/Dial-A-Ride Service follows the same cancellation/delays as our Fixed Route Bus Service. You can get information about temporary service changes from the following sources:

- Our website www.rivervalleytransit.com
- Our Facebook page at: facebook.com/RVTransit
- By calling (860) 510-0429
- On Fox 61 (on-line and on air)
- On NBC 30 (on-line and on air)
- On WFSB 3(on-line and on air)
- ON WTNH (on-line and on air)

In cases where our service is temporarily suspended due to inclement weather, RVT 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.

Be sure that entrances (sidewalks, driveways, ramps, and steps) proceeding up to your home address are clear of ice and snow. This will make it safer for our DAR/ADA Paratransit vehicles and drivers to get to you. Failure to comply with this request might result in our drivers not being able to provide transportation to you.

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.

Eligibility

RVT's Dial-A-Ride and off-route deviation service is open to the general public, with no age or disability limitations. These services require no eligibility process and may be used by anyone. Registering can be done by calling 860-510-0429 option 3 or in our Mobility by Ecolane smartphone app.

RVT's ADA paratransit service is for people with a disability that prevents them from using a regular fixed route as determined through an eligibility process. Applications may be

completed online at www.rivervalleytransit.com. Paper copies of the application are available by calling our information numbers.

ADA Visitor Information

RVT will grant eligibility, for a period of 21 days, to any visitor with disabilities who does not reside in the RVT service area on either of two conditions:

- a. The visitor presents documentation that he/she meets the ADA eligibility guidelines for ADA paratransit service from another jurisdiction. This documentation may include, but is not limited to, presentation of a valid ADA paratransit ID card or determination letter from any other transit provider.
- b. The visitor provides proof of residency in another jurisdiction, documentation indicating a disability that prevents him/her from using the fixed route system, and certification that he/she is unable to use the RVT fixed route system.

To obtain visitor status, please contact the ADA assessor at (860) 510-0429 x 104 or adaapp@estuarytransit.org.

Reservations

There are two types of reservations for Dial-A-Ride, off-route deviation and ADA Paratransit trips that are offered by RVT:

Advanced Reservation service allows an individual rider to make a reservation for a trip anywhere from two weeks up to the day before they wish to travel. There is no limit to the number of non-subscription trips that a passenger can book on any given service day. Multiple trips may be reserved during one telephone call.

Subscription Service is offered to RVT customers who have travel patterns to and from the same destinations, during the same days and hours. Individuals who have schedules that change frequently are not eligible for subscription service. Subscription service is restricted to work, medical and educational trips. Subscription availability is limited and may not be available at all times.

Once a subscription schedule is confirmed by RVT, the customer does not have to make any further reservation calls except to cancel any trip you do not plan to take.

Long term or permanent changes to a rider's subscription service must be submitted to RVT at least one week prior to the date when the change will take effect. RVT cannot guarantee that changes in subscription service can be accommodated. Temporary changes to subscription service must be in effect for a minimum of two weeks and be submitted one week in advance of the effective date.

The regular subscription service can be reinstated with as little as one day's notice, if available. Unfortunately, same day changes cannot be accommodated. Subscription service is offered as a convenience to our customers. Availability is based upon a first come/first serve basis, and certain restrictions may apply due to capacity constraints.



Making a Reservation

Reservations may be made by calling our reservation agents at 860-510-0429 or 860-346-0212, through our self-service website at www.rivervalleytransit.com or in the Mobility by Ecolane smartphone app. **Reservation requests cannot be called in to any other phone numbers, left on voicemail (except on Sundays or holidays) or made through the driver.**

Reservation Periods

Monday - Saturday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

On Sundays, you may leave a message on the dispatch voicemail to cancel trips for the next day. ADA trips may be reserved by voicemail on Sundays and holidays by 4:30 PM for the following day trips. Trips can be made seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day through the self-service website or in our Mobility by Ecolane smartphone app.

Please remember, drivers cannot make, change, or cancel your reservations. In order to change your reservation, you need to contact an RVT reservation agent, use the self-service website or use our app.

Please keep in mind that the travel time on the service may be longer than using a personal vehicle. This is due to 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.
- 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 (see Will Calls on page 11).



Reservation Information

Please have the following information available when making a reservation:

- Customer number
- The exact street address (origin and destination).
- Names of complexes or subdivisions, as well as building, apartment, or suite numbers.
- Easily identified pick-up points should be communicated, where applicable, such as a hospital, shopping mall, or doctor's office.
- The appointment or the pick-up time. (Remember to indicate if the customer is traveling with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or any companions.)
- If you will be using a mobility device (i.e. cane, wheelchair, scooter, etc.)
- The return trip information, including pick-up time. If no return trip pick-up time is provided, then the trip will be scheduled as one-way.

A customer can make a reservation for a trip from one to fourteen days in advance. RVT requires one day advance notice for all reservations, including return trips. However, RVT may, at the discretion of the dispatcher, permit same day trips if the schedule allows, at a premium fare.

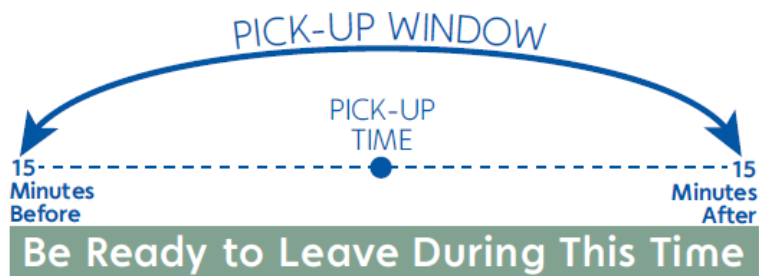
RVT will attempt to offer a pick-up time one hour before and one hour after the requested time. Trips with an appointment time will be booked to arrive no later than the appointment time but up to one hour prior.

ADA Paratransit does not have limited capacity, and every effort will be made to book your trip within the two-hour scheduling window.

Dial-A-Ride is a first-come, first-served service with limited trip availability. If we cannot offer a time within the two-hour window, we will offer a time beyond the scheduling window, if available.

Time to Go: Being Ready – The Pick-Up Window

RVT requires that all riders be ready when the bus arrives. Upon booking, you will be provided a pickup window. Please be ready to board the bus any time within this window. The pick-up window will be from 15 minutes before the agreed to pick-up time to 15 minutes after that time. The bus may arrive at any time in this window, and we ask that riders be ready to go at any time within this window. To keep the service on-time for everyone, drivers will only be able to wait for five (5) minutes after they arrive for you to begin your boarding. After that, they will need to go on to the next stop.



You may get specific information on when the scheduled vehicle is expected to arrive through the Mobility by Ecolane smartphone app, by signing up for text message alerts or through our automated call-out service. Text message alerts are sent five minutes before the beginning of the pick-up window with the estimated arrival time and the vehicle number. Specific arrival times are not available by phone, but real-time vehicle location information is available in the Mobility by Ecolane app. Please limit calls to when the vehicle has not arrived within the pick-up window.

Please remember that you are responsible for making arrangements for the vehicle to gain access to gated communities or secured complexes. A driver cannot be delayed trying to locate personnel to provide access to a complex.

If you have any questions about the pick-up window, please feel free to call our customer service office at (860) 510-0429.

- Riders who are not available to board within five (5) minutes after the bus arrives are considered "no-shows" (more about "no-shows" later in the booklet).
- For ADA trips you will need to have your RVT identification card.

- Please have the exact fare or pre-paid ticket ready to present to the driver when boarding the bus.
- Sometimes traffic conditions or unexpected events may delay the bus. If the bus has not arrived by the end of the pick-up window, you may call the RVT dispatch office at (860) 510-0429 to inquire about your ride.

Will Calls

RVT requires a return trip pick-up time for most trip purposes, however, RVT will allow “will calls” for medical trips. You must inform the reservation agent when you schedule the trip that you will call for the return trip. Will calls will not be permitted for any other trip purpose. When your appointment is completed, call the reservation line to arrange a return trip. RVT will attempt to arrive within one hour of the will call.

Arrangements to Meet Riders

We understand that some riders travel alone and 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 brought to the local police department.

Cancellations and No Shows

To cancel a scheduled trip, call RVT Reservations, utilize our self-service website or our Mobility by Ecolane app. Trips must be canceled no later than 5 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled pickup.

A customer who demonstrates a pattern of missing scheduled trips creates problems for all transit patrons since scheduled but not taken trips lower the capacity of the RVT services. The term for this practice is "No Show" and is further defined for RVT services as a person who cancels a reserved trip too late for the trip to be reassigned to another patron or who fails to be at the pick-up point when the RVT vehicle arrives.

Dial-A-Ride Late Cancellation & No-Show Penalties

For Dial-A-Ride trips, if the rider gives notice by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled ride, the trip is canceled without penalty. Trips canceled after 5:00 p.m. the day prior but more than 60 minutes before the pick-up window are considered late notice. Trips canceled with less than

60 minutes notice are considered a no-show. The penalty points for each category are listed below:

Early Notice - Any ride cancelled by 5:00 pm the day prior to the scheduled pick up. **No points assessed.**

Limited Notice - Any ride canceled after 5 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled pick up until four hours prior to the pick-up time. **Two points assessed.**

Late Notice - Any ride canceled from within four hours to 60 minutes prior to the beginning of the pick-up window (15 minutes before and 15 minutes after). **Three points assessed.**

No Notice - Any ride canceled by telephone from 60 minutes prior to the beginning of the pick-up window (15 minutes before and 15 minutes after). **Five points assessed.**

If you are a no-show, the vehicle may not return unless there is availability. A premium fare will be charged if the vehicle has to return. Both cancellations and no shows may result in a suspension of service as outlined below.

| No-Show Point Value | Within Period of | Suspension Period |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 15 | 30 Days | 7 Day |
| 30 | 60 Days | 14 Day |
| 54 | 120 Days | 28 Day |
| 90 | 180 Days | 6 Month |

ADA Paratransit/Off-Route Deviation No-Show Penalties

A no-show for ADA paratransit and off-route deviations is considered any time that the customer fails to board the vehicle provided it arrives within the pick-up window and has given the five-minute grace period. Trips canceled less than one hour before the pick-up window will also be considered a no-show. When a customer's no-show percentage reaches 10% in a thirty-day period (but no less than 3 trips), the customer will be issued a notice of a 5-day suspension of ADA para-transit service, subject to the appeals hearing process. With each successive no-show, the percentage will be recalculated. If the percentage is equal to or greater than 10% with no less than 3 trips, each successive no-

show (within 6 months of the last suspension) will result in the length of suspension as follows:

- Second occurrence— 7 consecutive day suspension.
- Third occurrence—14 consecutive day suspension.
- Fourth occurrence—21 consecutive day suspension.
- Fifth occurrence and beyond—30 consecutive day suspension.

Emergency Cancellations or No-Shows

Cancellations or no-shows that occur because of an emergency situation beyond the customer's control will be considered a "non-chargeable" late cancellation, provided the customer can offer an explanation with documentation.

Appeals

Customers have the right to appeal any penalty they receive from RVT relating to their eligibility or any charged no-show or late cancellation. The customer must appeal the notification within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notification. Appeals must be in writing and forwarded to:

**River Valley Transit
Attn: Appeals
91 N Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457**

RVT will respond to all customer appeals in writing within fourteen (14) days of the receipt. If a customer chooses not to appeal the warning or the suspension notification letter, then sanctions will occur and become effective on the date stated in the notification letter.

Pickup Procedures

In order for us to provide you with safe, on-time service you must specifically designate a location and inform us where you will be waiting for your pick-up. RVT has developed the following procedures for all DAR, ADA Paratransit, and off-route deviation pick-ups to ensure safe vehicle movement and standardized connecting point guidelines:

Customers living in a large, multiple unit apartment or condo complexes must meet the paratransit vehicle either the curb closest to their address or at the curb closest to the main lobby, unless instructed otherwise.

If the apartment or condo complex is inaccessible to an RVT vehicle, the customer must meet the vehicle at the main entrance to the complex. A customer traveling from a large office complex, medical facility, or other similar area must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance.

Before any RVT vehicle can enter apartment complexes that are not easily accessible, the location must be inspected. If the facility has a guarded gate or limited access, the customer of the scheduled pick-up and return times should inform the security staff. It is your responsibility to notify RVT of security procedures when the reservation is made and to arrange access for the vehicle. The vehicle cannot be delayed due to complicated access requirements.

THE VEHICLE WILL WAIT AT THE CURB, IT WILL NOT PULL INTO DRIVEWAYS. If you need assistance from the door, the Operator will meet you at your outermost door to assist you to the vehicle on Dial-A-Ride and ADA Paratransit upon request. Drivers must be able to see their vehicle at all times. Customers are also responsible for ensuring that driveways and/or walkways are cleared of snow and ice. RVT drivers may not enter un-cleared driveways or use un-cleared walkways. If the driveway and/or walkway is not cleared, the customer will be required to meet the vehicle at the curb. For ADA Paratransit customers, RVT will not enter un-cleared driveways or use un-cleared walkways if they pose a direct threat to the bus operator.

RVT will make every effort to arrive within the 30-minute pick-up window (15 minutes before or after the scheduled time). If the customer is not at the proper pick-up location within the designated pick-up window and the five-minute grace period has expired, the vehicle will depart, and the customer will be declared a “No-Show”. Out of courtesy for other RVT customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the driver will wait no longer than a five-minute grace period. Customers must be ready to depart at any time during the 30-minute window described when reservations are made.

It is the customer’s responsibility to be looking for the vehicle to arrive. If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within the five-minute grace period, the vehicle will depart. *RVT will not call the customer by telephone, sound the horn, or knock at the door.* RVT does offer automated arrival notification calls. It is the customer’s responsibility to be within viewing distance of the driver when the vehicle arrives. RVT operators are not responsible for going inside of establishments to look for passengers.

Please note that for your and other customer’s convenience the RVT vehicle *cannot wait* while customers conduct business at their destination.

Boarding the RVT Vehicle:

RVT customers are required to have the correct fare in cash or authorized RVT fare tickets when boarding the vehicle. *Drivers cannot make change, nor get change for passengers.* Fares are to be paid as the customer boards the vehicle, prior to sitting down.

Customers are only to pay for the current one-way trip, since the customer may ride with a different driver on the return trip. Each time the customer boards the vehicle, a cash fare, credit card payment or ticket is required. RVT cannot be held responsible for any overpayment of fare. Credit card payment may only be made using the Mobility by Ecolane app.

Driver Assistance



Drivers will assist the customer on or off the vehicle on any RVT service. While all services are generally curb-to-curb, DAR, off-route deviation, and ADA Paratransit offers origin-to-destination service on request, meaning the driver will assist a customer from the outermost door of a building to the outermost door of the destination. RVT drivers are strictly prohibited from entering any building. Drivers are not permitted to be out of the site of their vehicle at any time.

Driver assistance does not include lifting/pulling/carrying a passenger from their seat or home, holding them upright, or carrying a customer up or down stairs.

In order to escort you to/from the door, the driver will need a clear, safe path of travel. 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 anyway lift a wheelchair. This is for your safety and the safety of the driver.
- Drivers may not operate or push a motorized device.
- Drivers cannot push customers sitting on a rollator walker. The rollator walker is a walking aid only and cannot be used as a transportation device.

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 reasonable alternative solution is agreed upon.



TRANSFERS TO OTHER ADA PARATRANSIT DISTRICTS IN CONNECTICUT

You may travel from one system to another by transferring from one paratransit 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.

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 vehicle.

Example: If you are going from Middletown to Hartford, you will pay the fare to River Valley Transit, but not pay the fare to Greater Hartford Transit. On your return trip, you will pay Greater Hartford Transit, but not Estuary Transit.

You must let the Customer Service Representatives of the agencies you will be traveling on know that your trip involves a transfer so that you can be charge appropriately.

River Valley Transit provides connecting services to:

Greater Hartford Transit District (GHTD) www.hartfordtransit.org

The District provides ADA paratransit service in the Hartford region seven days a week during the same hours the fixed route bus operates. Communities served include Bloomfield, Bristol, Cromwell, East Hartford, Ellington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Hartford, Kensington, Manchester, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. For information call 860-247-5329; for ADA ride reservations call 860-724-5340.

The TRANSFER LOCATION for RVT/GHTD is: RVT Bus Terminal, 340 Main Street, Middletown

Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) www.gnhtd.org

The District provides ADA paratransit service to the New Haven area, including Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, Woodbridge. Limited dial-a-ride service is provided to Ansonia, Cheshire, Guilford, Madison, Seymour, Shelton, Wallingford, and Waterbury. Transportation is offered seven days a week during the same hours as the fixed route bus operates. For information call 203-288-6282; for paratransit service call 203-288-6643.

The TRANSFER LOCATION for RVT/GNHTD is:

- Shoreline: Walmart, 120 Commercial Parkway, Branford
- Middletown: Meriden Train Station, 60 State Street, Meriden

Northeast Transportation Company www.northeasttransport.com

ADA paratransit service in the greater Waterbury area is provided by Northeast Transportation Company, serving the towns of Cheshire, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect, Waterbury, Watertown, and Wolcott. Service is provided during the same days and hours as the fixed route bus. The ADA reservation number is 203-756-5550.

ADA paratransit service is also provided to Meriden and Wallingford by Northeast Transportation Company. Service is provided during the same days and hours as the fixed route bus. The ADA reservation number is 1-800-441-8901.

The TRANSFER LOCATION for RVT/NET is: Meriden Train Station, 60 State Street, Meriden

Who Can Travel With Me?

It is sometimes hard to manage alone. RVT allows others to travel with you including companions and personal care attendants.

Companion

Please inform a Customer Service Representative (while making your reservation); you may take along a friend (companion). All companions must have the same pick-up time and location as the eligible rider and are required to pay the full fare.

Personal Care Attendants (PCA)

When you are unable to travel alone, RVT encourages you to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Authorized PCA's can travel with RVT customers at no cost on all RVT services. A PCA may include a friend, family member, or a paid employee who will assist you. PCAs must have the same pick-up time and location as the eligible rider.

When using DAR, ADA Paratransit or Off-Route deviation, you must inform the reservation agent at the time of the reservation whether a guest or PCA will be accompanying you to ensure an accurate count of individuals traveling on a vehicle.

A PCA, (unlike a “companion”) assists the ADA passenger with personal needs that the eligible rider is unable to achieve independently due to a disability, and that Paratransit

drivers are not permitted to do. Some of these tasks include, but are not limited to (1) supervising an individual with an intellectual disability, (2) assisting a passenger diagnosed with cognitive issues or dementia, (3) guiding a passenger who is visually impaired (4) calming a passenger who experiences anxiety attacks, and/or (5) assisting a passenger with managing his/her ADA trip commitments in order to prevent excessive “no-shows” and potential suspensions of his/her ADA Paratransit service.

For these reasons, we strongly recommend that if an ADA Paratransit rider is authorized to travel with a PCA, he/she should consider always traveling with a PCA (the ADA ID card will note “yes” next to “PCA”).

It is important that you do not indicate a person accompanying you on your ADA trip as a PCA, unless that person is designated specifically to assist you with your personal needs. RVT reserves the right to require documentation of the need for a PCA.



FARES

The cash fare to ride RVT’s Dial-A-Ride, off-route deviation, and ADA Paratransit is \$3.50 per one-way trip. Exact cash fare or RVT ticket is required, no change will be provided. Fare may also be paid by credit card through our Mobility by Ecolane smartphone app. Credit cards cannot be used for subscription trips.

A fare is required upon each boarding of the vehicle. Authorized personal care attendants and children aged four and under accompanied by an adult ride free. Seniors aged 60 or over residing in the sixteen towns serviced by Dial-A-Ride may be eligible for a fare subsidy for Dial-A-Ride trips only. Contact customer service to register.

RVT also offers ticket books at a significantly discounted rate. Tickets may be purchased at the RVT Middletown bus terminal, online at www.rivervalleytransit.com or by mail by sending your payment to:

**River Valley Transit
91 N Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457**

Failure to pay a fare will result in denial of service and will be considered a No-Show. Customers with a pattern of failing to pay fares are subject to suspension of service.

Using RVT Services

Revised May 2024

Ambulatory Customers:

Customers unable to use the steps to enter the vehicle may request the ramp or wheelchair lift be extended to board the vehicle. Ambulatory customers who use the lift must be able to stand without assistance to hold onto the handrails.



Wheelchairs:

RVT vehicles are designed to transport all types of “Common Wheelchairs” as defined by the ADA regulations. However, RVT will transport any wheelchair that fits on the lift and/or wheelchair tie-down area. RVT cannot transport customers with inoperative mobility devices or with inoperative locking brakes.

Wheelchair Securement / Seat Belts:

It is the responsibility of your RVT driver to see that mobility devices are properly secured prior to transporting you. Passengers using wheelchairs or scooters are required to be secured, using a four-point tie down system at all times while riding the vehicle. RVT policy recommends for your safety that the operators secure the lap and shoulder belts.

Shopping Bags



Please limit the number of shopping bags/carry-ons to no more than three (3). DAR and ADA Paratransit drivers will be happy you with grocery/shopping bags which are durable and have a combined weight of no more than 25 pounds. Deviated-fixed route drivers are not allowed to carry packages to/from the vehicle. A driver will not assist with any boxes. If you need assistance with a box, the box must be in a bag as described above. The driver will not be able to assist with cases of soda, water, soup, etc. You should take only as many bags/packages as you can manage. Passengers must be able to load all their packages in one trip. Be sure that your bags do not block the walkways or use any seating needed by other riders. Riders may be required to secure their packages at their seats, as storage space on the vehicle is limited. Although the DAR/ADA Paratransit driver will assist you with bags from the designated safe entrance of a store to the vehicle, under no circumstances will a driver go into a store or an ADA/DAR rider’s residence. If a rider is traveling with a personal care attendant (PCA), friend, escort or companion and they choose to carry additional bags for the rider, the additional bags are only allowed if there is room on the vehicle.



Shopping Carts & Strollers

Shopping carts and strollers must be emptied, folded, and safely stowed out of the aisle by the passenger.



Service Animals

Service animals are always welcome on all RVT public buses. A Service Animal is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

While most service animals are dogs, RVT recognizes the possibility of other types of service animals.

Service animals and service animals in-training are allowed on all RVT vehicles without being caged. RVT will transport other animals if they are caged and small enough to be kept in the customer's lap. For safety reasons, drivers are not allowed to carry or handle the service animals.

When you are reserving a trip, please let our Reservationist know if you are traveling with a service animal. Riders with an animal must maintain control of their animal at all times. Drivers will refuse to transport a service animal if it demonstrates disruptive behavior such as growling, being threatening, or lunging towards passengers or other animals on the vehicle.

Your Responsibility when Riding an RVT Vehicle:

The following rules of conduct are provided for your safety and comfort as well as all RVT customers:

- Each customer must comply with the rules of conduct. Actions of misconduct, including illegal, violent, or seriously disruptive behavior, will be grounds for suspension of service for the customer. Anyone found acting in an unsafe manner, which may endanger other customers, the driver, or the vehicle, may be terminated from service immediately. RVT will consider an appeal for such suspension of services on a case-by-case basis.
- Customers requiring physical assistance beyond that described in "Driver Assistance" should have a PCA or a guest accompany them on the vehicle. The PCA will be responsible for providing the physical assistance the customer requires. Operators will assist you on or off the bus; however, RVT drivers are not allowed to be out of sight of their vehicle. It is the responsibility of the customer to watch for the bus.
- Customers requiring medication or oxygen at regular intervals should be advised that travel time on the paratransit vehicle is comparable to that of the fixed-route system. Rides are subject to delays that may result in a customer's on-board time being longer than 60 minutes. Public transportation is subject to unpredictable conditions such as traffic delays and mechanical problems.
- RVT operators cannot be held responsible for the administration of medications. The administration of medication when in an RVT vehicle is the customer's responsibility.

Any customer requiring assistance in the administration of medication or oxygen while on the vehicle must travel with a PCA or companion. Should the administration of medications or oxygen become necessary while on the vehicle, RVT will contact emergency medical assistance to administer the required medication at the customer's expense. Repeated incidents in which medication schedules disrupt or delay other RVT customers may result in the evaluation of the individual's suitability to use RVT services.

- RVT has a no smoking policy throughout the transit system and all facilities and grounds.
- Customers are prohibited from eating or drinking on the vehicle unless a documented medical problem exists that requires eating or drinking at specified time periods. In such cases, the customer must advise the driver of this fact.
- The use of alcoholic beverages or riding under the influence of intoxicating drugs or alcohol is prohibited at all times.
- Customers are prohibited from playing radios without the use of headphones.
- Customers must be respectful of other customers and refrain from being loud and/or disruptive. This includes cell phone conversations. The use of foul language is prohibited.
- Customers may not operate or tamper with any equipment while on the vehicle. This rule includes the operation of the hydraulic lift, ramp and attempts to remove wheelchair tie-downs.

Failure to adhere to these regulations may result in suspension of service.

Driver's Responsibilities:

Drivers are expected to obey the same rules as our customers. The following additional rules also apply:

- Drivers do not accept tips or gratuities or act in a manner that would suggest that tipping is appropriate.
- Drivers are responsible for the operation of the hydraulic lift, ramp and securing mobility devices safely in the vehicle.
- Drivers cannot leave their vehicle in a location where it is out of their sight.
- Drivers cannot handle fares or cash unless the customer is unable to insert the fare in the farebox without assistance.
- Drivers cannot make unscheduled stops or deviations.
- Drivers cannot make change.

Lost & Found Procedure:

Any article left on an RVT vehicle will be stored at the RVT. Articles will be held for 30 days. To claim a lost article, please call the reservationist. Customers are responsible for claiming lost articles, RVT will not deliver items.

Accessibility

River Valley Transit is accessible to persons with disabilities. All buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts or ramps that enable persons in wheelchairs or persons who cannot navigate steps to utilize our services. Bus Operators are trained to assist riders in use of lifts and ramps and secure wheelchairs. Passengers may travel with a respirator, concentrator, and/or portable oxygen. Service animals are welcome on board our vehicles and in our facilities. Public information is available in alternative formats upon request.

Reasonable Modification Policy

Passengers with disabilities may request modifications to current service procedures to access the service. To make a request, please call us at 860-510-0429 option 3 or email us at info@estuarytransit.org. Please submit requests at least two business days before the trip.

ADA Complaints

If you have a complaint about the accessibility of our transit system or service or believe you have been discriminated against because of your disability, you can file a complaint. Complaint forms are available at www.rivervalleytransit.com or by mail by calling our reservationists. Please provide all facts and circumstances surrounding your issue or complaint so we can fully investigate the incident. If you are unable to complete a written complaint due to a disability or if information is needed in another language we can assist you. Please contact us at 860-510-0429 extension 122 or info@estuarytransit.org



Suggestions, Comments & Complaints

RVT seeks to provide its customers with safe, reliable, and customer-oriented service. We look forward to working with you to provide the best service possible. If you have a suggestion, comment or a complaint about our services, please call our us at (860) 510-0429 or

(860) 346-0212 or write to:

**River Valley Transit
91 N Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457**

Specific details will help RVT thoroughly address your suggestions, complaints, or comments in an expeditious fashion.

Senior citizens utilizing the Senior Resources Agency on Aging grant may appeal to Senior Resources Agency on Aging for assistance in resolving the grievance. The full grievance procedure is available on request.

Accessible Formats

Information is available in alternative formats. Anyone requesting service information or assistance in any accessible format may call the Customer Service Department at (860) 510-0429 – 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or Fax (860) 346-0871.

Notifying the Public of Rights Under Title VI

RIVER VALLEY TRANSIT

River Valley Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person who believes he or she has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with the River Valley Transit. If you believe that you have received discriminatory treatment by RVT, because of your race, color, or national origin, you have the right to file a complaint with the RVT, Title VI Officer. For more information, visit www.rivervalleytransit.com.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

CONTACT US AT (860) 510-0429 or (860) 346-0212

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| ADA Paratransit | Option 3 |
| Dial-A-Ride/Off-Route | Option 2 |
| ADA Application Status | Ext. 104 |
| Customer Service | Option 2 |

**River Valley Transit
91 N. Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 510-0429 or
(860) 346-0212
Fax: (860) 346-0871
www.estuarytransit.org**

TAXI VOUCHER PROGRAM

Program Overview

The River Valley Transit's Taxi Voucher Program provides accessible transportation outside of our service area and hours and is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The service is available to seniors and persons with disabilities. Participant's payments are matched 100% through the program, making taxi trips more affordable.

Eligibility and Application Process

Anyone with a CT statewide reduced fare ID, a Medicare card, certified for ADA paratransit or age 60 and over is immediately eligible for the Taxi Voucher Program. The participant must complete the Taxi Voucher Application form with payment and proof of eligibility to begin using the program. Please allow 5 business days plus mail time (if mailing application) for the account to be loaded. The application can be found at www.rivervalleytransit.com or by calling 860-510-0429 extension 106.

If you do not have any of the above, you may apply for a CT statewide ID by downloading the application at www.rivervalleytransit.com an application may be mailed to you by calling 860-510-0429 option 2.

Service Area

To use the Taxi Voucher Program, the trip must either begin or end in one of the following towns: Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Durham, Essex, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland and Westbrook. The other end of the trip can be anywhere that Curtin Transportation is able to travel, which includes most of Connecticut.

Purchasing Vouchers

Simply mail your Taxi Voucher Application with your initial payment of at least \$25. RVT will credit an account in your name with Curtin Transportation at double the amount of your payment. Voucher refills may be done by mail or online at www.rivervalleytransit.com.

Attendants/Companions

Up to three (3) companions, including a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), may ride for free with the eligible rider. The eligible rider and companions must have the same origin and destination, and the voucher may only be used by the eligible rider. Individuals must present identification when using the taxi voucher. Service animals are welcome.

[How To Book A Trip](#)

Once your account has been funded, you may book a trip by calling the taxi provider. Reservations may be made between 9:00 AM and 1:30 PM Monday through Friday at least two days in advance, but up to three months in advance. **Be sure you have sufficient funds on your account before booking the trip.**

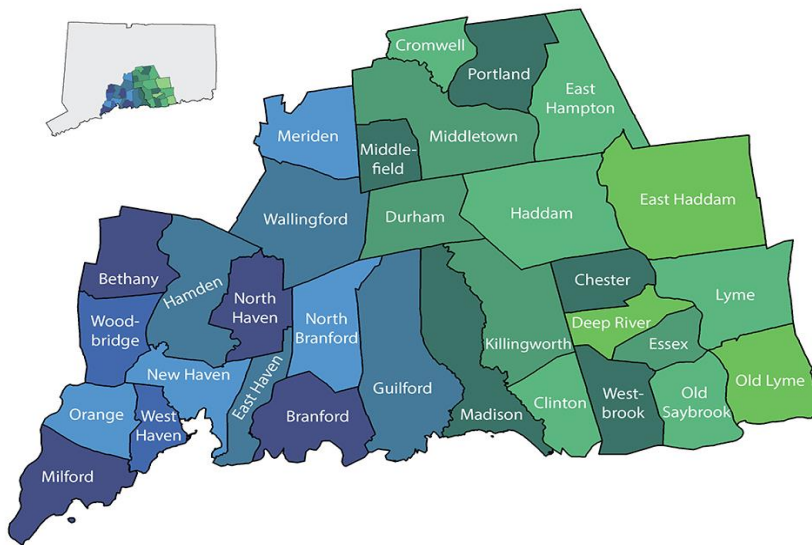
[Cancellations/No Shows](#)

Cancellations must be made at least one business day before the pick-up time to avoid a charge. No-Shows will be charged for the full one-way trip.

KNOW HOW TO GO/SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

Know How to Go South Central CT is a mobility management program sponsored by the South-Central Regional Council of Governments (SCROCOG), the Federal Transit Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Working together with the Kennedy Collective and the Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments, the program serves as an advocate for individuals with disabilities and seniors who have transportation issues to help them navigate transportation options to better access the community.

The program serves the following towns:



The website <http://www.knowhowtogoscct.org/> contains a resource guide with information on transportation options including: ADA paratransit, travel training, taxi voucher programs, Dial-A-Ride, fixed bus route services and rail services.

For more information contact:

Laurie McElwee
South Central CT Mobility Manager
The Kennedy Collective Inc.
lmcelwee@thekennedycollective.org
(860) 333-7302



OTHER SERVICES

Free Travel Training

River Valley Transit offers free travel training through an arrangement with the Kennedy Center, Inc. Their transit experts will plan your trip and even ride with you the first time!

Travel training is a series of one-on-one sessions offered by a professionally trained staff person with the aim of providing a rider who is a senior or a person with a disability the independence needed to use RVT's bus service safely and conveniently.

If you think travel training would be helpful to you, please call us at (860) 510-0429.

XtraMile

XtraMile is an inexpensive ride sharing service that anyone can use to get to and from anywhere in the RVT service area. The shuttle bus picks you up and takes you to wherever it is that you need to go right when you need it.

XtraMile now operates in multiple service areas. Anyone can ride to anywhere within the service area or from a designated XtraMile stop. Download the app and try it out. Learn more at www.rivervalleytransit.com/Xtramile.

Our shuttle buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and drivers are trained at helping people with disabilities.

Have questions? Give us a call at 860-510-0429.

F.I.S.H (Friends in Service Here)

Provides free transportation to and from medical, dental, and physical therapy appointments in the area roughly bounded by Middletown, New London, and Guilford. Available Mondays through Fridays (except holidays) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for ambulatory residents of Centerbrook, Chester, Deep River, Essex and Ivoryton, who have no other means of transportation. Call (860) 388-2693.

Estuary Council of Seniors

Serving: Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook

Phone: 860-388-1611

American Cancer Society “Road to Recovery” Program

Phone: 800-227-2345

Veyo Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Veyo, a Total Transit Company, is a statewide transportation service which provides non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid recipients. The service hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Members will need to call at least 48 hours (not including weekends and holidays) prior to their appointment. For more information, call 1-855-478-7350.

Municipal Dial-A-Ride

Some towns in the region operate a local Dial-A-Ride service. These services are generally available to town residents only, stay within town, and often require no fare. If you would like more information about Dial-A-Ride in your area, please call your town hall.

Infoline (Community Services)

Call **2-1-1** or visit the internet at www.211infoline.org for help with answers to life’s toughest questions.



Get out and about!