

JUNE 2023

RIDER'S GUIDE | FAQs

Frequently asked questions on riding OC ACCESS



This information has been created to answer some of the most frequently asked questions for applying for and using the OC ACCESS service. Please refer to the OC ACCESS Rider's Guide for more comprehensive information.





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OC ACCESS Rider Information

Name: _____

OC Access ID Number: _____



FAQ 1

Understanding and applying for OC ACCESS



**What is OC ACCESS service?
(Complementary ADA Paratransit)**

OC ACCESS is a curb-to-curb shared-ride public transportation service provided within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of fixed-route service that is comparable to the level of service (service area, operating hours, etc.) and travel time provided on OC Bus.

OC ACCESS is not a medical transportation service, a private service without other riders on the vehicle, or a shopping service allowing unlimited bags and packages.

Do I qualify for OC ACCESS if I have a disability or am sixty (60) years or older?

Eligibility is based on a person’s individual functional abilities and limitations, not on a specific age, diagnosis, or disability.

The ADA regulations provide three (3) categories of ADA Complementary Paratransit Eligibility:

Eligibility Category 1

Inability to Navigate System Independently

Unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), to board, ride, or exit a fixed-route bus.

Eligibility Category 2

Lack of Accessible Vehicles, Stations, or Bus Stops

Unable to get to or from a bus stop due to physical and/or environmental barriers.

Eligibility Category 3

Inability to Reach a Boarding Point or Final Destination

Unable to access a bus stop to board the fixed-route bus and cannot access a destination after exiting the bus.

Is an in-person assessment really needed when applying for OC ACCESS?

Yes. 49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.125 of the ADA states that OC ACCESS must establish a process for determining ADA paratransit eligibility. The OC ACCESS eligibility determination process requires the completion of a paper application and in-person interview with a functional assessment.

To schedule an OC ACCESS in-person assessment, applicants may call OC ACCESS Eligibility at (714) 560-5956 ext. 2, TDD 7-1-1.

How long will the eligibility determination process take and is transportation provided?

The entire eligibility determination process, including travel to and from the appointment, varies but can take

3 to 4 hours. OC ACCESS provides transportation to and from the eligibility center free of charge.

Applicants are encouraged to bring their mobility devices, walking aids and/or service animals that will be used on the OC ACCESS service.

If I qualify for OC ACCESS, will I get an I.D. number and can I begin riding immediately?

Applicants approved for OC ACCESS will receive a unique identification number for use during ride reservations. The applicant will be notified in writing about their eligibility within twenty one (21) days following the completion of the in-person assessment.

What if I disagree with my eligibility determination?

Individuals who have been found ineligible, conditional, trip-by-trip, or temporarily eligible for OC ACCESS have the right to appeal their eligibility determination by contacting OC ACCESS Eligibility. Requests for an appeal must be made within sixty (60) calendar days from the date the notice of eligibility determination was issued.

Upon receipt of a request to appeal, OC ACCESS will contact the individual to schedule an appeal hearing within thirty (30) days. Individuals must be available to participate at a mutually agreed upon date, location (if applicable), and time. Upon request, transportation is provided to the appeal hearing at no charge.



FAQ 2

Using OC ACCESS



I forgot my OC ACCESS I.D. number; how can I get it?

To obtain an identification number or password, please call OC ACCESS Eligibility at (714) 560-5956, TDD 7-1-1 or email accesseligibility@octa.net.

Why are pick-up / arrival times negotiated?

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.131(b)(2) of the ADA allows for a negotiated pick-up time within one (1) hour before or after the requested pick-up time. OC ACCESS makes every effort to offer ride times as close as possible to the rider's requested pick-up or arrival time, however, due to the large volume of OC ACCESS rides requested, OC ACCESS is not always able to assign riders the exact pick-up time that they request.

How much does OC ACCESS cost and who can ride with me?

The base fare for OC ACCESS is \$3.60 per rider (19 years and older) for each one-way ride. See page 15 of the OC ACCESS Rider's Guide for more details.

Can I select my vehicle type on OC ACCESS?

Accessible vehicles will be sent to riders with disabilities using wheelchairs and scooters. According to Appendix E of 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37, Final Rule, specific vehicle requests will be denied as it presents a fundamental alteration of the service. However, through the reasonable

modification process, a request for an accessible vehicle for riders who have difficulty using steps, including those that use canes, crutches, walkers, and other assistive devices may be allowed.

Will there be other riders on the vehicle and how long will my ride take?

When planning a ride, please be aware that the ride will likely be shared with other OC ACCESS riders and pick-ups and drop-offs will occur during most or all rides. Therefore, riders cannot expect to be taken directly to their destination.

OC ACCESS travel time is determined by considering the equivalent ride if taken on OC Bus. This includes the time it takes to walk to the bus stop, wait for the bus, travel time on the bus, and walking to the final destination. Many rides on OC Bus include transfers and, therefore, travel time also includes the additional wait times when transferring from one OC Bus route to another. For estimates on how long a ride may take, see page 28 of the OC ACCESS Rider's Guide.

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.131(f)(3)(i)(c) of the ADA prohibits OC ACCESS from having a substantial number of trips with excessive trip lengths. As suggested in the FTA ADA Circular C 4710.1 Section 8.5.5, OCTA analyzes a sample of trips lengths periodically to ensure that trip lengths are comparable to using OC Bus.

Do I have to wait at the curb for my pick-up?

Curb-to-Curb

OC ACCESS provides curb-to-curb transportation services to OC ACCESS riders. The definition of curb-to-curb assistance is that the rider will be picked up at the closest and safest curb to the pick-up location and will be taken to the closest and safest curb of the drop-off location. This is OC ACCESS' base level of service. OC ACCESS will only service locations that can be safely and legally accessed by drivers.

The reservation operator will provide the rider a 30-minute pick-up window (for example: 6:45 a.m. – 7:15 a.m.). The vehicle may arrive at any time within this 30-minute period. As a result, the rider must be ready and waiting in a visible location at the start of the pick-up window and wait the entire 30 minutes or until the vehicle arrives.

Door-to-Door

For those requiring assistance beyond the curb due to their disability, drivers will assist riders as far as their door if it is safe for the driver to do so. However, riders may also request door-to-door assistance while making a ride reservation or at the ride origin and/or destination.

In order to receive door-to-door assistance, the following conditions must be met:

- There must be a safe place to park, without blocking or impeding traffic, on a roadway or parking lot.
- The first exterior door at the building's entrance must be no more than 50 feet from the vehicle.
- The driver must be able to always maintain sight of vehicle.
- There must be a safe and accessible path of travel from the vehicle to the first exterior door. No steps or stairs are allowed.

If any of the above conditions are not met, the location is considered non-serviceable for door-to-door assistance and the driver will instead provide curb-to-curb service for that location.

Can I go to the movies and dinner, or only the doctor?

There are no restrictions or priorities on the reason or destination of a ride. There are also no limits on the number of rides that can be made using ADA paratransit service. A ride will be scheduled if it begins and ends within the OC ACCESS service area and hours of operation.

How do I cancel a ride?

Riders must cancel the ride by calling OC ACCESS as soon as possible. In order to avoid a no-show, rides must be cancelled at least one (1) hour before the pick-up time by calling (877) OCTA-ADA (628-2232), TDD 7-1-1, pressing “2”, or using the online booking system ocaccessonline.octa.net.

Can I be suspended from service for missing rides?

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.125(h) of the ADA allows OC ACCESS service to be suspended for a rider who establishes a “pattern or practice” of no-shows.

If no-shows exceed 10% of a rider’s overall scheduled monthly rides, accrued three (3) or more no-shows in a calendar month, and has scheduled at least ten (10) trips that month, services may be suspended.

Definition of a No-Show

- A ride that is cancelled less than one (1) hour before the scheduled pick-up time (also called a late cancellation).
- Cancelling a ride with a driver upon arrival of the vehicle.
- Missing a scheduled ride when the vehicle arrived within the 30-minute window.

If the rider is not at the scheduled pick-up location at the scheduled time, the driver will wait for five (5) minutes before reporting the rider as a no-show (missing a scheduled ride).

Circumstances Beyond a Rider's Control

OC ACCESS understands that there are times when a rider misses a ride due to a medical emergency or other circumstance beyond their control. Riders have the right to appeal or dispute all no-show decisions. No-shows that have been identified as “invalid” will not count towards suspension of service.

I live outside of Orange County; can I still use OC ACCESS?

OC ACCESS also provides complementary paratransit service to individuals who reside outside of Orange County, as is required by 49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.127 of the ADA. Visitors will be provided use of OC ACCESS services for twenty one (21) days within a 365-day period. For more information about the OC ACCESS visitor policy, or to become a registered visitor in Orange County, please call (714) 560-5956, TDD 7-1-1 or email accesseligibility@octa.net.



FAQ 3

Safely Riding OC ACCESS



Will OC ACCESS drivers assist me if I need help?

OC ACCESS drivers are trained and expected to provide a reasonable level of assistance to riders. This means that OC ACCESS drivers will assist riders as needed or requested as long as the assistance does not create an unsafe situation for the driver or other riders. Please be prepared to share with the driver what assistance you may need.

Here are some examples of how drivers assist OC ACCESS riders:

- Boarding and/or exiting the vehicle.
- Assistance to and from the curb of their destination or point of origin.
- Use of the lift and other equipment.
- Securing wheelchairs and rider seat belts in the vehicle.

Drivers will not lift or carry a rider, nor will they accompany a rider to or from locations far away from the vehicle. If such assistance is required, the rider should consider bringing a personal care attendant or have someone available at the pick-up and/or drop-off locations to assist.

Personal care attendants, including facility staff, may only provide onboard assistance to an OC ACCESS rider with driver approval.

Do I have to wear the seatbelts?

Yes. Drivers are required to secure the lap and shoulder belts to ensure the rider’s safety. If a rider refuses use of seatbelts, service will be denied. Seatbelts must remain secured until the driver confirms arrival at the rider’s destination.

Is my wheelchair (scooter, walker, etc.) allowed on OC ACCESS?

OC ACCESS will transport riders using mobility devices. A wheelchair is defined as having three (3) or more wheels usable indoors, designed or modified to assist with mobility, and manual or battery powered.

The OC ACCESS vehicle lift, and ramp capabilities are 1,000 lbs. and can accommodate wheelchairs up to 30” wide x 52” long. OC ACCESS may be unable to transport a rider in a mobility device that exceeds the lift manufacturer’s dimensions and design load. However, riders will have the opportunity to attempt to board an OC ACCESS vehicle in order to objectively determine if the wheelchair, scooter, etc., is too large and/or heavy to board safely. If the rider can board and fit safely in the securement area, services will be provided.

For rider safety and comfort, the following guidance and procedures must be met:

- Riders using wheelchairs must wait for the driver's assistance and follow instructions for entering the vehicle.
- It is strongly recommended that wheelchairs/scooters back onto the lift platform.
- It is strongly recommended that brakes be locked while on the lift and when secured on the vehicle.
- It is strongly recommended that a rider using a manual wheelchair have attached footrests.

Can I bring my medical device, oxygen tank, and medication on OC ACCESS?

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.167(h) of the ADA requires that OC ACCESS allow medical devices and oxygen tanks on OC ACCESS vehicles. Two (2) oxygen tanks up to 18" long or a single tank up to 36" long are allowed. Riders who require oxygen or medication at regular intervals should bring what is needed to keep them safe during a delayed ride.

Drivers are prohibited from operating or adjusting oxygen tanks or administering medication. Should such assistance be necessary, the rider must make arrangements to travel with a personal care attendant.

Are service animals allowed on OC ACCESS and how do they differ from pets?

Service Animals

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.167(d) of the ADA states that service animals are allowed in all OC ACCESS vehicles and facilities. It also defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog or other animal individually trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with 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.
- Fetching dropped items.

If traveling with a newly acquired service animal, riders are asked to contact OC ACCESS Eligibility to add a service animal to their profile.

OC ACCESS may refuse to transport service animals that are deemed to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, create a seriously disruptive atmosphere, or are otherwise not under the rider's control.

Pets

Per the ADA, emotional support animals, comfort animals and pets are NOT service animals as they have not been trained to perform a task. Therefore, emotional support, comfort animals and pets are not allowed on OC ACCESS vehicles unless they are in an enclosed carrier at all times. Please be aware that the driver cannot assist with loading or unloading the carrier.

Can I bring grocery bags, folding carts, or luggage on OC ACCESS?

Bags

Riders are limited to only two (2) bags up to 12" wide x 7" deep x 17" high and they must fit on the rider's lap or under the seat. Bulky items that fill a seat, or are a safety hazard, are not permitted on an OC ACCESS vehicle. All items must be under full control of the rider or their personal care attendant and/or guest at all times.

In addition, riders must comply with the following:

- No items that are wet, leaking, or considered hazardous will be allowed.
- No large bags of recycled cans or other materials will be allowed.

Folding Carts and Luggage

Riders may also travel with folding carts, but they must be folded and kept away from any path of travel, such as the aisles, and must always remain in the rider’s control.

In addition, when a rider uses a folding cart or carry-on, they must comply with the following guidelines:

- Cannot exceed 30” tall, 18” wide and 18” deep (not including wheels and handle).
- Cannot contain loads that exceed the height or capacity of the cart.
- Items cannot hang off the exterior of the cart.
- Cannot block aisles, any doors or take seats.
- Must be attended and held firmly at all times.

Additional shopping carts, bags, and parcels carried by a personal care attendant and/or guest cannot be accommodated. Drivers are not required to assist riders with packages or shopping carts.

Are there rules that riders must follow when using OC ACCESS?

Rules of Conduct

Riders must be respectful and courteous to drivers and others on board at all times. Riders must maintain an acceptable standard of cleanliness. Exposed bodily fluids and/or bloodborne pathogens are not permitted. OCTA has developed policies for addressing riders whose conduct interferes with the safe operation of OC ACCESS vehicles.

All vehicles are equipped with cameras and vehicle occupants are subject to video and audio recording for the safety of all riders. OC ACCESS will work with parents, personal care attendants, school or employment personnel, or anyone immediately involved with the rider to educate that rider on appropriate behavior aboard OC ACCESS vehicles.

Denying Services to Riders

49 CFR Part 37 Section 37.5(h) of the ADA allows transit agencies to refuse service to anyone engaging in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct, or representing a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Therefore, riders who engage in such conduct may be subject to immediate and indefinite suspension from receiving OC ACCESS services. Riders may also be subject to criminal prosecution, which may include fines.

OCTA's Customer Conduct Policy can be found at www.octa.net/CustomerConduct.

Are there days and times where I may experience delays?

When reserving a ride, OC ACCESS riders are encouraged to consider the busiest times of day, as they may experience significant travel delays. Delays can be unpredictable and are often due to more vehicles being on the road, accidents, and construction. These delays, unfortunately, may impact the services provided by OC ACCESS.

Days and times when riders may experience delays include:

- Mornings 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.
- Afternoons 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Who do I call to submit a compliment or file a complaint?

Please call OCTA’s Customer Relations Department at (800) 636-7433, TDD 7-1-1 or email at customers@octa.net to share any comments/complaints about OC ACCESS service. For OCTA Customer Information Center days and hours of operation, see page 3 of the OC ACCESS Rider’s Guide.

Specific details help OC ACCESS thoroughly address rider comments or suggestions. When calling OCTA’s Customer Information Center, riders should include the following information regarding their experience:

- Full name, address, and telephone number
- Date and time of incident / experience
- Vehicle number and/or driver name, if applicable
- Reservation operator’s name or other employee name, if concerning a telephone conversation
- Detailed explanation of the incident, suggestion, or commendation



FAQ 4

Additional Transportation Options



What other transportation services are available in Orange County?

Orange County Office of Aging Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (SNEMT)

(800) 510-2020, TDD 7-1-1

The Orange County Office on Aging provides senior non-emergency medical transportation (SNEMT). This program provides transportation to older adults who need low-cost transportation to and from medical appointments, dentists, therapies, exercise programs, testing and other health-related rides.

Dayle McIntosh Center

(714) 621-3300, TDD 7-1-1

www.daylemc.org

The Dayle McIntosh Center is committed to being a reliable resource on disability topics and issues for professionals and the public at large in Orange County.

211 Orange County

Phone: 2-1-1, TDD 7-1-1

www.211RIDE.org

The Orange County resource hotline can connect callers with specialized transportation providers that best suit their needs. 211OC also provides the online find-a-ride webtool 211RIDE that allows users to search for transportation resources based on their individual needs.

Senior Mobility Programs

(714) 560-5660, TDD 7-1-1

The Senior Mobility Program (SMP) offers transportation alternatives for seniors over sixty (60) years of age in addition to local fixed-route bus and ADA paratransit (OC ACCESS) services.

OCTA provides funding to thirty-two (32) cities and three (3) non-profit agencies for the Senior Mobility Program. Each city/agency designs a transportation program that best fits the unique needs of its senior community. To use this program, users must be sixty (60) years old or older and a resident of that city. To view a program description for each city and agency, please visit: www.octa.net/SMP/ and scroll towards the bottom of the page to access information for each city. Services and costs vary by city.

Can OC Bus be used by OC ACCESS eligible riders?

Yes, OC Bus can be used by OC ACCESS eligible riders and riding the bus does not disqualify a rider from using OC ACCESS. OC Bus is accessible to people with disabilities and drivers are trained to provide assistance when needed. OC Bus runs on a regular schedule and does not require a reservation. It is convenient and more flexible than OC ACCESS.

OC ACCESS riders and personal care attendants assisting OC ACCESS riders may ride fixed-route local bus service for a fare of .25 cents per boarding, per person. The price of a Senior or Disabled Day Pass is \$1.50. For more information, please call the Reduced Fare Department at (714) 560-5596, TDD 7-1-1. All OC Bus vehicles are accessible to people with disabilities.

OC Bus Transit Training Program

(888) 878-7099, TDD 7-1-1

www.ocbus.com/transittraining

The OC Bus Transit Training program offers free training on OC Bus. The training program equips individuals with the skills needed to safely and independently navigate the public bus system and fosters greater mobility. One-on-one, small group, and large group training are available. All training is free and participants who complete training will receive a free OC Bus pass. In addition to English, travel training is provided in multiple languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Mandarin.

Can I use Same-Day service and OC ACCESS?

Yes, Same-Day service is available for all OC ACCESS eligible riders. Same-Day service is good for local, short trips.

OCTA subsidizes up to five (5) miles for a Same-Day service ride. Riders pay the OC ACCESS base fare of \$3.60 for a five (5) mile ride. Any additional costs above the five (5) mile ride are paid by the OC ACCESS-eligible rider.

Please call OC ACCESS reservations at (877) 628-2232, TDD 7-1-1, or visit www.octa.net/Bus/OC-ACCESS-Service/Same-Day-Taxi/ for more details.

Can I transfer to a neighboring county?

OC ACCESS riders can transfer directly to Los Angeles County only. Riders may contact Access Services, the Los Angeles County provider of ADA paratransit services, by calling (800) 827-0829, TDD (800) 827-1359.

Frequently used Los Angeles County transfer points include:

- Brea Mall – Outside Sears or Upper-Level Food Court
- Buena Park Mall – Main Entrance
- Disneyland (Anaheim) – East Shuttle
@ 1313 S. Harbor Blvd.
- Knott’s Berry Farm (Buena Park) – Crescent & Grand or
@ Ticket Booth
- Long Beach VA Hospital – Building 126 Main Entrance

Riders may contact other neighboring counties to learn about their ADA paratransit services using the information below. OC ACCESS does not, however, provide transfers to Riverside, San Diego, or San Bernardino counties.

Riverside County

(800) 795-7887, TDD (800) 369-3610

San Diego County - North

(760) 726-1111, TDD (310) 410-0985

San Diego County - South

(844) 299-6326, TDD 7-1-1

San Bernardino County

(800) 990-2404, TDD 7-1-1



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