

Operated by
Disability In Action
317 N. Willis
Abilene TX 79603
325-672-5460
1-888-672-5460 toll free
www.disabilityinaction.org

Public Transportation
Passenger Handbook



Serving the following counties:
Taylor Stephens Jones
Eastland Callahan Shackelford

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I. Operations

A. General – The following operating Policies and Procedures were established for Disability In Action.

B. Hours –

Disability in Action will make the following schedule available to the City of Abilene for supplemental rides:

Monday: 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Tuesday: 7:00 am to 12:00 pm

Thursday: 7:00 am to 12:00 pm

Friday: 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Break from 12:00pm to 12:30 pm

Disability in Action will operate the bus through private funding with the following schedule:

Monday: 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Tuesday 8:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Wednesday 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Thursday 8:00 pm to 3:00 pm

C. Fare Structure

Note: Fares are based on the availability of supplemental grant funds and are subject to change at any time, dependent on funding and grantor guidelines, during the hours the bus is providing trips through private donors. Contact the Mobility Manager for fare structure. Disability in Action subcontracts with the City of Abilene to provide transportation during the hours listed above. Fares to consumers are based on the City of Abilene fare structure.

Invoice: A fare per each one-way trip shall be charged to all passengers and their escorts with the exception of required personal care attendants, who may travel with an eligible passenger at no cost. Fares are based on a one-way trip. An invoice will be mailed out to consumer by the 10th of each month for rides even the prior month.

Note: The ability to purchase fares by invoice, rather than pre-payment for fares is dependent on the guidelines set by the grantor/source of grant funding and is at the discretion of Disability in Action, Inc.

D. Inclement Weather – If inclement weather exists, Disability In Action may with approval of the Executive Director, reschedule or cancel service. Employees are to report to work unless otherwise informed by Mobility Manager. Disability In Action will attempt to inform passengers by calling the passenger and by posting on the Disability In Action Facebook Page. Disability in Action follows inclement weather closure as the Abilene Independent School District.

E. Requesting Service

1. Advance Scheduling – A request for demand service should be made at least two business days or up to 14 days prior to the desired trip time. Trips must be scheduled in the order wished to complete; trips cannot be rearranged the day of travel. Rides are scheduled based upon seating, vehicle and capacity availability.

2. Same Day Scheduling – Request for same-day service will be accepted from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Same Day Scheduling service is contingent on driver availability. The Mobility Manager will attempt to schedule both the origin and return trip into existing schedules utilizing the following criteria:

- a)* The vehicle must have seating/mobility device space available.
- b)* The vehicle must be in the near vicinity/location of the origin and destination in order to accommodate the request without disrupting the passengers already scheduled.
- c)* Time must be available to allow the trip to be accommodated without disrupting the passengers already scheduled.
- d)* The Mobility Manager may refuse the request for same-day service if it cannot be worked into the existing schedule or it otherwise causes operational problems for Disability In Action
- e)* The passenger will be advised, when accepting the same-day, that there may be considerable waiting time for a return vehicle during peak periods.

F. Riding Disability In Action – Disability in Action Van Service is a public transit system, providing rides for many passengers each day. Driver cannot be at three or four pick-up points at one time and must allow for time to ensure that customer makes it from origin to destination by scheduled appointment time. Therefore, passengers must be ready for pick-up and allow for travel time for transportation to destination. For local scheduled trips, passengers should be ready at least one hour and 45 minutes prior to required arrival time at destination. In the event that a rider will be required to be ready earlier, then Mobility Manager will contact passengers by telephone as to the approximate pick-up time. Disability In Action will attempt

to drop off passengers no more than 1 hour prior to requested time. It is the responsibility of the public transit passenger to ensure the requested drop off destination will allow early entry. Driver is permitted to drop off public transit passengers regardless of inclement weather and/or entry.

When passenger calls for return pick up, Disability In Action will make every effort to pick them up within 1 hour of their call.

When the driver arrives at the pick-up location, he/she is not required to wait more than five (5) minutes for the public transit passenger. Driver will honk, knock, and make a courtesy call if phone number is available. Driver will leave a no-show card at passenger's home if it can be done safely and confidentially. A no-show card will simply notify the passenger that Disability In Action arrived and left the pick-up location.

Service may not be rendered if origin or destination location cannot be accessed by the vehicle or if the location does not provide safe passage for the vehicle or safe access to and/or from the vehicle by the passenger. The driver shall attempt to make reasonable accommodations and if not possible then they shall immediately call the Mobility Manager for further instruction in such a case. Steep driveways, low hanging trees/limbs, deteriorated sidewalks, backing situations, etc. may result in denial of service.

To increase efficiency, Disability In Action is a "shared-ride" service; passengers must often ride while other passengers are picked up and dropped off. Personal items must stay in the custody of the passenger; no items should be left unattended on the Disability In Action vehicle at any time.

- Driver is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.
- Driver is not permitted to lock/unlock passenger's door.
- Driver may provide door-to-door service when requested at time of advanced scheduling, but are not permitted to enter a passenger's home.
- Driver is not permitted to maneuver a mobility device up or down steps or along gravel areas.
- Driver is not permitted to lift passengers.
- Driver is not allowed to exit vehicle to assist or enter upon property (fences or porches) unless animals are restrained to avoid possibility of biting.
- Driver has the discretion to assign seats and determine mobility device placement when necessary for the efficiency and/or safety of the operation.

G. Rules for Passenger Conduct – Rules of conduct on Disability In Action Transit Vehicle is the same as the laws governing conduct in public places.

- The driver and all passengers are required to use seat belts. If a passenger refuses to wear his or her seat belt, the driver should call the Mobility Manager for further instructions.
- Proof of a physician's statement of a passenger's inability to wear a seat belt must be shown to waive this requirement.
- Passengers utilizing mobility devices will be required to have their mobility device properly secured with a six point tie down safety restraint system, including shoulder and lap belts. If the passenger is unable to wear a shoulder or lap belt due to medical reason, then they must provide proof of a physician's statement.

- If a passenger is unable to fit within the seat belt due to size, then an extension will be utilized. If an extension is unavailable at the time of transport, the driver will ask the passenger to sit in the furthest back seat possible for their safety before transporting. They will also notify the Mobility Manager so that a seat belt extension can be ordered.

No person shall, while a passenger on any vehicle that is operated by Disability In Action as a public conveyance, do any of the following acts:

1. Smoke or possess any lighted or smoldering pipe, cigar, or cigarettes
2. Consume any beverages, food, or alcohol (unless medically necessary).
3. Intentionally deface, damage, write upon, or soil any part of the vehicle;
4. Spit, urinate, or defecate in or upon any vehicle;
5. Throw, deposit or place paper, bottles, cans or any other garbage or solid waste in or upon a vehicle;
6. Throw any object of any kind within a vehicle or out any door or window of a vehicle;
7. Play audio or video devices, unless played through headphones so that it is inaudible to other passengers and the driver;
8. Bring any pet or animal on to a vehicle other than a guide dog accompanying a person with a disability, or an animal in a cage or approved standard pet carrier;
9. Stand or walk around in a vehicle while it is in motion;

10. Possess any explosives or carrier any corrosive acid or flammable liquid not in a sealed container;

11. Possess firearms, with the exception of law enforcement officers;

12. Bring any laundry on board unless it is in an enclosed bag;

13. Intentionally interfere or conduct any unnecessary conversation with the driver, so that the driver's attention will not be diverted from the safe operation of the vehicle;

14. Use profane or abusive language toward the driver or other passenger or act in a hostile or threatening manner while on board the vehicle;

15. Board intoxicated;

16. Present a significant risk to the health or safety of others;

17. Bring on board any baggage or articles which, due to their size, would restrict free movement of passengers;

18. Bring on board gasoline or a gasoline container or any type of hazardous material. (Respirators and portable oxygen supplies are permitted to be carried and used on board by a person needing them for health reasons);

19. Permit unauthorized passengers or hitchhikers;

20. Board with unreasonable personal hygiene;

21. Conduct any unnecessary conversations of a personal nature that could be viewed as offensive or harassment.

22. Conduct any unnecessary contact with self, driver and/or a passenger that could be viewed as offensive or harassment.

Disability In Action may refuse to transport or may eject any persons violating the provisions contained above.

H. Monitoring and Surveillance – For our customers’ safety and security, activities on and around Disability In Action vehicle and facilities may be visually and audibly recorded.

Cameras protect passengers and employees from dangers by serving as deterrents, assisting in monitoring and training for employees regarding emergency situations, incidents/accidents, various training components to include customer service, and aiding in investigations as necessary. Driver is to immediately notify Mobility Manager, if unavailable then Director of Programs with any issues related to video surveillance equipment.

I. Special Circumstances

1. Transportation of Children – All children who are under eight years of age are required to be restrained in an approved child passenger safety seat unless the child is at least 4 feet, 9 inches in height as State law mandates. The passenger must provide the car seat. Children under 1 year of age should have child safety restraint rear-facing seat. Passengers traveling with infants, as their escorts will be required to provide their own infant carrier approved for use in vehicle. The passenger will be responsible for placing the infant into the carrier and securing the carrier with a safety belt.

The passenger and escort must both be ready at the door when the vehicle arrives. The infant will not be allowed to ride up the lift with a passenger utilizing a mobility device. The infant’s car seat will be secured by a safety belt to the vehicle seat during transport.

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard Disability In Action is fifteen (15) years of age. Children under the age of fifteen (15) must have an adult (18 years or older) attendant accompany them during transport. The Mobility Manager may grant exceptions. If appointment necessitates that an adult attendant serve as personal care attendant such as medical and dental appointments then the condition will warrant a free ride for attendant.

2. Accommodation of Mobility Devices – Disability In Action will accommodate mobility devices, which do not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length when measured two inches above the ground, and do not weight more than 800 pounds when occupied.

Any passenger who utilizes a mobility device shall ensure the brakes on the device are in working order before transportation can be provided. Disability In Action will make every reasonable effort to accommodate various models available to passengers. However, due to the increasing size and weight of such equipment, some limitations will be necessary in order to ensure the safe transport of the mobility device and passengers.

3. Personal Care Attendants – Disability In Action allows a personal care attendant to accompany a passenger at no additional charge when such an attendant is required to utilize the Disability In Action service. Passengers are required to supply their own attendants at their own expense. Generally, the following conditions would warrant a fare-free attendant:

Immobility – If the passenger is unable to provide self-mobility, or if self-mobility is possible but a great risk of falling or physical

injury exists, and the assistance of an attendant would provide mobility or lessen the danger of injury, then the passenger's attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Disorientation – If the passenger, due to a visual or mental impairment, is unable to properly orient him/herself and navigate to reach a particular destination, and if the assistance of an attendant would overcome the problem, then the passenger's attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Non-Comprehension – If the passenger, due to mental impairment, is unable to adequately perform those mental processes necessary to handle common occurrences or is unable to effectively control his/her own actions, and if the assistance of an attendant would overcome the problem, then the passenger's attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Communication Impairment – If the passenger is unable to effectively transmit or receive communications due to sensory or mental problems and if these problems would prevent the passenger from using the service, then the passenger's attendant may accompany the passenger at no cost.

Other – Other impaired passengers not included in these general guidelines may also be eligible if, in the opinion of a licensed physician, the passenger would be unable to use Disability In Action without the aid of an attendant. The reasons supporting this opinion should be clearly stated in writing by a physician and submitted to the Mobility Manager. The Executive Director has final determination of need for personal care attendants.

Personal care attendants are required to specifically assist the passenger. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Assisting the passenger from his/her door to the bus and back again;
- Opening doors;
- Pushing mobility device to and from the vehicle;
- Transfer assistance from mobility device to a seat;
- Carrying packages; and
- Communicating with the driver (if passenger is unable).

If an attendant does not specifically perform some type of assistance for the passenger, then that individual is not considered an escort and is charged the normal fare. Attendants are not to assist in mobility device boarding or securement; this is the driver's responsibility.

4. Service Animals & Accommodation of Animals – Disability In Action requires all animals to be secured in a pet travel carrier with the exception of service animals as described below. Passenger is responsible for any cleanup of his/her service animal.

It is the policy of Disability In Action to allow service animals to accompany their owner without restraint. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is required to aid the owner and that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a mobility device or retrieving dropped items.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 allows for the imposition of legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for the safe operation of Disability In Action. Disability In Action can generally require use of a secured pet travel carrier for any animal that in the opinion of the Mobility Manager or his/her designee is a health or safety hazard regardless of the training or function the animal serves for its owner. Handler maintains full responsibility of service animal.

5. Carry -On Packages – Passengers shall limit their carry -on packages to not more than the equivalent of five (5) brown paper grocery bags or ten plastic bags per person. An attendant may travel to assist with the loading/unloading of packages. Oversized packages will be refused for transport. Packages must be limited to no larger than a brown paper grocery bag. No one package shall weigh more than 20 pounds. Mobility Manager will make exception on case to case as needed.

Passengers must make other arrangements for delivery of any item larger than specified. Driver may assist with carry-on packages but are not required to.

6. Medical Oxygen for personal use – Oxygen will be transported only when medically necessary. It will be in a cylinder maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The manufacturer's instructions and precautions are usually printed on a label attached to the cylinder. Driver will inspect each cylinder to assure that it is free of cracks or leaks, including around the valve area and pressure relief device. Driver will also listen for leaks. Leaking, dented, gouged, or pitted cylinders will not be transported. Cylinders

will be limited to the extent practicable. Cylinders will be secured to prevent movement and leakage. They will not be placed in aisle or sources of heat or potential sparks. Under no circumstances should smoking or open flames (cigarette lighter or matches) be permitted in the passenger compartment when medical oxygen is present.

7. Backing Policy – Disability In Action Driver is instructed to avoid BACKING UP if at all possible and to report all backing situations for investigation purposes.

J. Service Suspensions and Terminations

1. Cancellations – It is requested that passengers notify the Mobility Manager of any necessary cancellations at least two (2) hours prior to the scheduled trip. This allows the Mobility Manager to reassign that time to another passenger whose service request was previously denied. A cancellation is considered “late” if it is made less than two (2) hours prior to the trip (example: after 7:00 a.m. for those trips scheduled before 9:00 a.m.) To encourage proper and timely cancellations, cancellations will be treated as no shows if not called within the time frame listed above.

2. No Shows – Disability In Action has implemented a No Show Policy for its Public Transit System. A no show is defined as any instance in which a passenger does not keep their scheduled ride and fails to notify the Disability In Action office at least two hours prior to scheduled pick up time. No show trips affect not only the transit system, but also other customers. Our driver will make every effort to pick up all passengers on a timely basis, and when one of our customers is not there the driver is required to spend time seeking out the person. Delays can caused our driver to fall behind their

anticipated daily schedules and can caused unnecessary delay for other passengers attempting to get to their scheduled destinations.

If a passenger no-shows from his/her origin, Disability In Action will not return to complete the trip. If a passenger later determines that they need a return trip, then they must call Disability In Action to attempt to schedule. Disability In Action will attempt to return at the earliest time possible, within service hours, depending upon vehicle availability. No guarantees of return are made. The Mobility Manager reserves the right to authorize a driver to return for a pick up if circumstances warrant. The No-Show Policy for all Public Transportation customers will be as follows:

- a) Two no-shows within a one month period will result in a letter of notification and the passenger being placed on no-show status.
- b) A third no-show within a one month period will result in a review of past services provided and a customer's record on no-shows. This review could result in a letter of notification that riding privileges on Disability In Action has been suspended.
- c) If determined preventable, no-show will result in suspension of services for 1 week.
- d) A second occurrence of three no-shows within a one month period will result in a 2 week suspension.
- e) A third occurrence of three no-shows within a one month period will result in a month suspension.
- f) Suspension periods cannot be split or otherwise divided or altered without approval by the Mobility Manager.
- g) No-shows for billed customers will be submitted to funding source for reporting purposes.

3. Other Suspensions – Passengers who in the judgment of the Mobility Manager, demonstrates tendencies toward violent or destructive behavior through threats, verbal and/or physical behavior, shall have their Disability In Action service eligibility terminated.

4. Appeals of Suspensions and Terminations – Passengers may appeal their suspensions or terminations by written notification as outlined in Section IV Complaint Procedures.

The Disability In Action Board of Directors and the Executive Director shall have the discretion to alter the penalty as dictated by circumstances.

II. Complaint Procedures –Any person who believes they have been denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin by Disability In Action has a right to file a formal complaint. For more information regarding Title VI Civil Rights or to request a Title VI Complaint Form, please call 325-672-5460.

In the event of a Public transportation complaint, the complainant should adhere to the complaint procedure that is listed below:

Complaint Procedure will be as follows: In the event of a complaint, the complainant should contact the Mobility Manager @ 317 N. Willis Abilene TX 79603 phone 325-672-5460. Fax: 325-672-2903

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Disability In Action will request written detail of complaint or take an oral statement from the complainant. The complaint should include details regarding the situation: i.e. date, time, driver, problem, etc. All complaints or statements should be signed or if by telephone the actual complainant

should be the person that calls. Complaints received by telephone will be investigated and resolved prior to ending the call. A written response will not be required if complainant is satisfied with the resolution. The Mobility Manager will be notified upon receipt of all complaints, and the Title VI Investigator Officer or an assigned staff member will conduct an investigation into written complaints. Upon completion of the investigation, a decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and a written response issued to the complainant no later than ten days after receipt of the complaint. A copy of the complaint and action taken will be forwarded to the funding source offices as required, and a copy will be kept on file at the Disability In Action Administrative office.

In the event the complainant is not satisfied with the decision and action taken by the Mobility Manager, the complainant should notify the Title VI Investigator Officer in writing at the below listed address. Leah Beltran, Title VI Investigator Officer.

Disability In Action 317 N Willis Abilene, TX 79603 phone
325-672-5460 or Email: Leah. Beltran@disabilityinaction.org

The Title VI Investigator Officer will review all information regarding the complaint and shall have the discretion to form an impartial panel of reviewers to assist him – comprised of: Disability In Action Board members, or public and private social service representatives. Following a review of the complaint, the Title VI Investigator Officer shall inform the complainant of the findings of the review panel or his decision and action to be taken regarding complaint. A decision regarding the complaint will be rendered and

a written response issued to the complaint no later than ten days after the Title VI Investigator Officer receives the complaint.

Upon receipt, the Title VI Investigator Officer investigates the complaint by speaking with appropriate personnel involved in the incident. A copy is forwarded to the Mobility Manager.

Upon completion, the Title VI Investigator Officer documents the response via electronic mail within the specified time frame following receipt of complaint. A hard copy of the complaint (including response) is kept by the Mobility Manager.

Disability In Action personnel will at no time, follow up on a complaint directly with the complainant.

Disability In Action shall ensure that its staff shall not retaliate or give the appearance of retaliation against an individual who has submitted a complaint against Disability In Action or submitted a negative comment on the recipient survey.

III. Deaf and Hard and Hearing— The agency utilizes Relay Texas to ensure access to a telecommunications system for the deaf (TDD/TTY) to facilitate communication with hard of hearing, hearing impaired and deaf recipients. “Relay Texas”, a telecommunication service established for the sensory impaired by the 71st Texas Legislature in 1989, allows an individual to make and receive calls from anywhere in the United States.

The toll free number will be printed on agency pamphlets/literature.

What is Relay Texas and How Does it Work?

Relay Texas – Relay Texas provides telephone interpreting service between people who can hear and those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled. Relay Texas agents have computers

that enable them to hear the voice user as well as read the signals from the TTY user. The service is available for Texans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are no restrictions imposed on Relay Texas calls. Confidentiality for relay users and operators is assured by Texas Law.

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TTY) – A TTY is a typewriter like device with a small display which attaches easily to a standard telephone or can be plugged directly into a telephone jack. Using a TTY, a person who is deaf is able to call another person with a TTY. Deaf persons use a TTY to call Relay Texas to make a call to a hearing person who does not have a TTY.

Procedure of TRS – The Relay Texas Center has over 250 relay agents that can accept calls from both TTY users and non-TTY users (hearing persons who do not have TTY machines) at the same time. Example: you (voice user) call 1-800-735-2988 on your telephone and a relay agent will answer. Give the agent the phone number of the deaf person, and the agent will dial the number. The agent will act as a translator between you and the deaf person. Talk directly to the deaf person and pretend the relay agent is not there. The relay communication is thus Disability In Action out by both parties.

Cost of the Relay User – Relay Texas allows you to place local calls at no charge. Long distance calls within Texas are priced at rates lower than the usual rate, if the contracted Disability In Action is used for billing. **Relay Texas Telephone Numbers:** To use Relay Texas:

Non-TTY Users (hearing persons) 1-800-735-2988

TTY Users (deaf, or speech-impaired) 1-800-735-2989

ASCII Users (deaf, or speech-impaired) 1-800-735-2991

VCO users (hard of hearing), use your own voice 1-877-VCO1RTX

IV. Blind or Sight Impaired – The District has its Disability In Action Policies and Procedures available in Braille, and tape cassettes with Disability In Action brochure information detailed. This information is available upon request by blind or sight impaired passengers.

V. Other Useful Contact Information

- Texas Commission for the Deaf
Commission and Hard of Hearing
P.O. Box 12904
Austin, Texas 78711
(512)407-3250 – Voice
(512)407-3251 – TTY
- Texas Commission for the Blind
4800 N. Lamar Blvd., Suite #340
Austin, Texas 78756-3178
1(800)252-5204
- Texas Rehabilitation
6400 Hwy 290 E, #201
Austin, Texas 78723
(512)451-9579
1 (800)687-2676