



THE METROWEST RIDE GUIDE



The MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) has created the MW RIDE Guide for our passengers. This publication is designed to assist you in using services provided by the MW RIDE. To request this guide in accessible format such as Braille, audio cassette, electronic version etc. or if you have any questions about this guide, please contact the MW Call Center.

**MetroWest Call Center
(508) 820-4650**

TTY: (508) 935-2242
Fax: (508) 935-2940
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www.mwrta.com



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1 Welcome to the MetroWest RIDE, an origin to destination, shared-ride service.

Please take the time to read this Guide, as it provides valuable information on how to use the MW RIDE.

The MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) is committed to providing quality public transportation to all travelers with disabilities. The current service area of the MW RIDE includes Framingham and Natick. The MW RIDE service is provided by the MWRTA and is operated in compliance with Federal Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

2 GPS and Mapping Technology at the MWRTA

All MW RIDE vehicles are equipped with GPS devices that provide multiple benefits to passengers and the MWRTA.

- The GPS devices make sure that the driver will always be able to find your address.
- The GPS devices allow the MWRTA to know where the vehicles are at all times.
- This vehicle information is available to anyone who has access to the internet. On the front page of the MWRTA's website, www.mwrta.com, there is a link halfway down the page labeled "MWRTA Bus Tracking Provided by GeoGraphics Lab". Clicking on this link will bring up a map of the MetroWest area, and it will show all of the MWRTA vehicles as they travel. You will be able to see your vehicle as it approaches. *The MW Ride vehicles are colored in yellow.*
- This GPS information is for the protection of our passengers and drivers as well as serving as a verification system in the complaint resolution process.

The MWRTA encourages it's passengers to take advantage of this new technology.



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3 The MW Call Center

All trips are reserved through the MW Call Center. The MW Call Center is open for booking trips 7 days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., including holidays.

4 MW RIDE ID #

Once certified for MW RIDE service, you will be issued a MW RIDE ID #. This number will be used when making payments to your fare account.

5 Hours of Service

MW RIDE passengers who were certified for service after July 1, 2009

Service hours will be provided as regulated by ADA requirements. Trip service for these passengers will be the same as the MWRTA fixed route bus service; Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.; Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There is no service on Sundays or the following holidays: New Year's Day, Patriots Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

MW RIDE passengers who were certified for service prior to July 1, 2009

All passengers who were certified for service prior to July 1, 2009 are grandfathered and will continue to receive the following service hours: Monday through Sunday, 5:30 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., including Holidays.

6 Fares

The local **one-way fare** for each certified passenger and each companion is **\$2.00**. Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) ride for free.

MW RIDE passengers must maintain a positive balance of funds in their fare account in order to book a trip. The reservationist will inform you of your fare account balance when you call to book your trip.



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There are three ways to add money to your fare account:

a. **By credit card through the MW Call Center**

Contact the MW Call Center at (508) 820-4650, Monday– Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Master Card, Visa and Discover credit cards or a debit card supported by Master Card or Visa are accepted. Have your credit/debit card ready. Allow 2 business days for posting.

b. **By credit card online**

You can access the online credit card payment system at <https://mwride.mwrta.com>. You will need to have your MW RIDE ID #. All major credit/debit cards as noted above are accepted. Allow 2 business days for posting. *You will not be denied service while your payment is pending.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before using the on-line payment system, you must first contact the MW Call Center to receive your MW RIDE ID # and a temporary password.

When making a payment by credit card a minimum of \$10.00 is recommended.

c. **By check or money order**

*Checks & Money orders made payable to MW RIDE should be sent to: **MW RIDE, 37 Waverly Street, Framingham, MA 01702.** Allow 5 business days for posting.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: Sufficient funds must be maintained at all times to complete a desired trip. You are responsible for your fare account balance, which can be determined at any time via the Internet at <https://mwride.mwrta.com> or by contacting the MW Call Center.

The maximum amount accepted in any form is \$500.00.



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The MW RIDE fares are debited from your account the same day your trip is completed. The MW RIDE **is not** required to transport any persons who do not maintain adequate funds in their MW RIDE fare account.

7 Keep your MW RIDE information current

If you have a change in your mobility status, i.e. walker to wheelchair, acquired a service animal, or you have moved, changed your phone number, have a new emergency contact, or legally changed your name, etc., we ask that you contact the MW Call Center and provide the updated information to them. Family members are also urged to contact the MW Call Center when a passenger is deceased so we may inactivate the passenger profile and arrange for any fare refunds from their MW RIDE fare account. Legal documentation may be required in some cases.

8 Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) and Companions

Passengers who cannot safely and independently use the MW RIDE service, beyond basic assistance from the driver, will be required to bring a PCA on the trip. The MWRTA classifies a PCA as anyone over the age of 6 who assists the certified passenger while using the MW RIDE service. The MWRTA classifies companions as anyone who accompanies a certified passenger who does not require more than basic assistance. PCAs and companions must travel to and from the same destination at the same time as the certified passenger. If you require a PCA, your attendant can accompany you on each trip free of charge. A companion is charged the same fare of \$2.00 each way. *The MWRTA limits the number of companions, per certified passenger, based on availability.*

When making a reservation you must inform the MW Call Center if you will be traveling with a PCA, a companion, a minor or a service animal.

Minors who are 5 years and younger and minors weighing fewer than 40 lbs. require the use of a child safety seat. Minors who weigh more than 40 lbs. but are under 5 years old must ride in a booster seat. Minors who are 5 years or older, and weigh more than 40 lbs., require the use of a safety belt or booster seat. (MGL C90 S7AA) Car seats and booster seats are not provided by the MWRTA. It is the responsibility of the passenger to



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provide a properly functioning child safety seat. School transportation of minors (Grades K-12) is NOT provided.

Minors under the age of 12 are required to be accompanied by an adult. Minors under the age of 6 ride for free.

9 How to Book a Trip

The MW RIDE is a shared-ride service. This means you should expect to be traveling with other passengers who are going in the same general direction. A trip's duration is based on distance and others who are traveling within the system. Occasionally drivers may be diverted because another passenger missed her/his return pick-up. These unforeseeable events and others, such as inclement weather and traffic congestion, may increase your travel time.

- To book a trip, call the MW RIDE Call Center at **(508) 820-4650**. Reservation hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 7 days a week, including Holidays.
- If your trip includes a transfer, you are *urged* to book the reservation by 3:00 p.m. the day before the trip. Transfers are complex and require added time to coordinate with other ADA providers.
- Trips must be booked no later than 4:00pm the day prior to the trip request and may be booked up to 14 days in advance. The MW Call Center reservationist will guide you through the process. You will be asked for all necessary information to schedule your trip. This will include the **exact** address of the location you are travelling to.
- Trips to appointments are scheduled by arrival time. This is to ensure that you are scheduled to arrive before your appointment time.
- Return trips are scheduled by departure time to ensure that we allow time for you to conclude your appointment. *Please take into consideration when scheduling your return trip that some appointments may run late.*



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- Requested arrival and return times must be at least one hour apart.
- Once a trip is booked, you may review or change it up to 4:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled trip by contacting the MW Call Center.

After the MW Call Center closes for the day, schedulers prepare the trip schedule for the following day. Schedules are created to share rides for passengers traveling similar routes. Request times may be adjusted to allow passengers to share the ride. When scheduling is complete, an automated call will be placed the evening before your scheduled trip (prior to 9:00 p.m.) with your times for the next days' trips.

Note: If you do not receive a call by 9:00 p.m., contact the MW Call Center, **press option 2**, and you will be connected to the dispatcher who can ensure that the trip has been scheduled.

The goal of scheduling is to make the most efficient use of vehicles to ensure the service is available to all who need it. At the same time each passenger should experience service that is sensible and appropriate to his or her needs. The number of people using the service and the time of day affect the total time needed for your trip.

- Travel time for trips that require less than 30 minutes, given traffic conditions, should not exceed one hour.
- Travel for longer trips should not exceed twice the normal expected travel time.
- The following types of trips cannot be guaranteed but may be accommodated when possible:
 - ~ Changes made on the day of the trip, prior to the trip being taken. A customer may **not** request a time or location change while on the trip, unless it is a medical emergency.
 - ~ Calling to request a trip on the day that you want the trip.



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10 Transfers

If your trip is going into the MBTA RIDE service area it will require a transfer. The MW RIDE Call Center will coordinate the transportation for you with the MBTA. If you are a Framingham/Natick MW RIDE passenger and you have an issue while on an out of area transfer trip, please contact the MW Call Center and a reservationist will assist you.

IMPORTANT NOTE: To travel outside Framingham and Natick you **must** have 2 fare accounts; one with the MW RIDE and one with the MBTA RIDE. You must maintain a positive balance in both of these accounts in order to schedule this type of trip. There will be a \$2.00 *each way* fare for the MW RIDE. Fares vary for the MBTA RIDE. Currently, the MBTA fare cost, from the transfer location, is a premium fare charge of \$5.00 *each way*.

For trips requiring a transfer, it is requested that these trips be scheduled as soon as possible to accommodate the added complexity of scheduling.

11 How to Cancel a Trip

To cancel a scheduled trip, contact the MW Call Center. At least one hour's notice to the MW Call Center is required to avoid the trip being recorded as a *No Show*.

Trips should be canceled **as far in advance** as possible so that The MW RIDE can accommodate others. Your cooperation in this matter significantly impacts the MW RIDE's ability to serve other passengers.

If inclement weather has been forecasted please plan accordingly. If you are going to cancel a trip please do so as early as possible; i.e. if a weather event is forecasted for Thursday please cancel Wednesday.



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12 Who is Considered a No Show

You will be considered a *No Show* when you request a trip, receive confirmation, and then fail to cancel with at least one hour's notice to the MW Call Center *or* if you fail to appear within 5 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. See complete *No Show /Cancellation Policy* in *section 19*.

13 On the Day of Your Trip

- Please be ready to travel 5 minutes before your scheduled pick-up and be prepared to wait up to 15 minutes after that time. The driver must wait for you for 5 minutes from the time of the scheduled pick-up. Please be ready at the main entrance (street level). Your being late causes the driver to be late for trips scheduled after yours.
- The driver will wait for you for 5 minutes from the time of the scheduled pick-up. If you are not ready after the 5 minutes, the driver will obtain clearance from dispatch to leave. If the driver leaves, please contact the MW Call Center to reschedule your trip. This trip will be provided on a time availability basis.
- If you are at an appointment and you learn that you will be later than your scheduled pickup time, contact the MW Call Center. Then, when you are ready, contact the MW Call Center again and they will arrange a new pick-up time for you. If you are out of the area, ***you still need to contact the MW Call Center***. Rescheduled pick up times will be based on availability.
- If the MW RIDE vehicle does not arrive within 15 minutes of your pick up time, please contact the MW Call Center. They will assist you in locating the vehicle and giving you its estimated time of arrival (ETA).
- There are many changes to schedules due to traffic problems, passenger delays, and weather. Dispatch monitors and adjusts the activities of their vehicles to try to keep schedules running on time. If you require any changes, please notify the MW Call Center as soon



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as possible. The MW RIDE Call Center will do what is possible to accommodate your needs.

14 What is Subscription Service

Paratransit Subscription service is for MW RIDE passengers who make a trip reservation which starts at the same place and ends at the same destination at the same time, three or more days a week. You may request to have these trips automatically scheduled, which eliminates the need to call in advance for each trip. Contact the MW Call Center to inquire about this service option.

- Subscription service is subject to availability.
- On the following holidays, all subscription trips will be automatically cancelled: New Year's Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is the passengers' responsibility to inform the MW Call Center, prior to 4:00pm the day before these holidays, if service is needed.

15 Driver Assistance

In order to properly serve our MW RIDE passengers, all drivers have received sensitivity and safety training. If you are a wheelchair or scooter passenger, the driver will apply the MW RIDE supplied body belt prior to boarding the vehicle. Your driver will assist you to and from the vehicle by providing door-to-door service, if necessary. However, a driver is not allowed to enter any buildings beyond the main door or lobby area.

She or he will assist individuals in manual wheelchairs over one curb and/or step. They are not permitted to carry an individual or their mobility devices. A driver will fold and securely store any manual wheelchair, walker or other mobility device on the vehicle. The driver will assist you to board the vehicle.

Even when you are accompanied by a PCA, the driver will assist you with boarding and disembarking the vehicle. The driver will also fasten and unfasten seatbelt/shoulder harnesses. All passengers in the vehicle must wear a seatbelt. Passengers must remain belted at all times while drivers



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are assisting others. Wheelchair and scooter passengers have the option of staying in their mobility device or transferring to a seat. The driver may provide assistance if needed, but are not permitted to lift a passenger from their mobility device to the seat.

If you or your companion have packages, the driver will assist with a manageable number of shopping bags (up to 4 shopping bags total), to the door of your destination. Assistance with 3 pieces of luggage total, not to exceed 40 lbs. each, will be provided for you. If a customer travels with a companion, the companion is allowed a total of 4 manageable packages. The companion must carry their own packages. ***A PCA is not allowed to carry additional packages.*** Keep in mind that you are using a shared-ride service and space is limited.

For the safety of all our passengers, drivers are prohibited from using personal cell phones or any other personal electronic devices that may be hands-free or not, while providing MW RIDE service.

MWRTA Paratransit Ambulatory Lift Use Policy

In an effort to provide the most safe and effective service to our ambulatory customers, the MWRTA has instituted a new lift use policy. The following policy will be applicable to any ambulatory customer who uses the vehicle lift for boarding/disembarking. Upon entering or exiting the vehicle, a customer will be provided a MWRTA transport chair, equipped with a safety belt. The driver will secure the belt, secure the brakes and then engage the lift. If boarding, the customer will be required, with the assistance of the driver, to transfer to a vehicle seat. At no time will customers be permitted to stay in a transfer chair while the vehicle is in motion. The chair is also not to be used to transport the customer to the door of their destination. **The chairs are only intended for riding the lift.**

16 Safety and Behavior on The MW RIDE

- Transport of all wheelchairs, regardless of size or weight will be allowed, as long as the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them



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- Be advised that all MW RIDE vehicles are equipped with audio and visual camera devices. This is to ensure the safety of our passengers and drivers.
- In the interest of passenger and driver safety there must be a clear and safe path to and from the vehicle (i.e. debris, snow & ice). The scheduled trip will not be provided if the driver reports unsafe access.
- All passengers, ambulatory or wheelchair/scooter passengers, must wear a seatbelt.
- You may not stand while the vehicle is in motion.
- Wheelchair/scooter passengers will be asked if they would like to utilize a body belt throughout the trip, however this is not mandatory.
- Smoking is not allowed
- Animals (i.e. pets may cause allergic reactions to others) are not allowed, with the exception of Service Animals.
- Consumption of food and/or beverages is prohibited, unless required for dietary and/or medical purposes and you have advised the driver.
- No tipping or other gratuities are allowed.
- Personal audio devices, i.e. radios may only be used with headphones.
- Passengers may ask that the AM/FM radios installed on MW RIDE vehicles be turned off, on, or volume adjusted, as they prefer.
- Please note that poor personal hygiene and the use of perfumes or cologne can be objectionable to others or cause allergic reactions.
- Passengers should be courteous to other passengers, drivers and reservationists as well as all MWRTA employees and their contractors associated with providing MW RIDE service. Harassing,



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using abusive language or treatment toward any of the above will not be tolerated.

- If the MWRTA concludes that a passenger has engaged in unsafe or inappropriate behavior they may be refused service immediately. In certain cases the Administrator, or his or her designee, may determine that service can still be provided safely, if certain conditions are met. A passenger will receive, in writing within 3 business days, a full accounting of the incident, consequences and/or recommendations as well as the MWRTA Appeals Process if suspension of service will occur.
- *Passengers have the right to appeal any denial of service and have 7 days to submit their appeal in writing to the MWRTA Administrator.*

17 **No Show Policy** (effective April 1, 2014)

Overview

Missing a scheduled trip without sufficient cancellation time is called a "no show". A pattern or practice of no shows disrupts the service in many ways. It is not only costly, but also effects the scheduling of all passengers. Passengers who do this risk losing their transportation privileges.

No shows have a detrimental impact on the performance of the MW RIDE service.

Terms

No Show: Passengers will be considered a no show when a trip is requested, confirmation is received, and then the trip is cancelled with less than one hour's notice to the MW Call Center or if the passenger fails to appear at the pickup location within 5 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

No shows deemed by the MWRTA as beyond an individual's control or service related problems will not be considered an infraction.

No Show Pattern/Practice: A No Show pattern or practice is determined by the amount of trips scheduled compared to the number of trips no



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showed. No showing 50% or more of booked trips, within a 30 day rolling period, is considered a pattern.

Cancel at the Door: A cancel at the door is defined as any trip cancellation at the time the vehicle arrives at the location and the passenger informs the driver that they will not be taking the trip. This will be considered a no show.

No shows deemed by the MWRTA as beyond an individual's control or service related problems will not be considered an infraction.

Missed Trips: A missed trip is when the vehicle arrives more than 15 minutes past the scheduled pick up time and the passenger is no longer at the location. This will not count as a no show. Passengers are encouraged to contact the call center if their vehicle is more than 5 minutes later than their scheduled pick up time.

No Strand: The no strand policy is when a passenger no shows at their destination pick up and then calls back still needing a return trip from that location. The MW RIDE will return to pick the passenger up; however, this trip will be based on vehicle availability. The passenger will be assessed a no show for the original trip.

No shows deemed by the MWRTA as beyond an individual's control or service related problems will not be considered an infraction.

Please note: If a passenger no-shows on a trip and has other trips scheduled for that day, all of those trips will be automatically cancelled, this includes any scheduled return where a passenger no showed for the original pick up of that same trip. The passenger may contact the MW Call Center with a same day trip request; however, these trips will be based on vehicle availability and are not guaranteed.

Suspension Procedures

First No-Show Infraction: Upon recording the first no-show, the passenger will receive a verbal advisement by phone and be mailed a copy of the no-show policy.

Potential Pattern Determination: Upon determining the possibility of a no-show pattern within a rolling 30 day period, the MW RIDE will contact the



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passenger by phone and by letter. The passenger will be advised that if the pattern of no shows continues, it will result in suspension of their MW RIDE service. A copy of the letter will be sent to any appropriate third parties if the individual has a disability or impairment that prevents them from comprehending the contents and implications of the letter.

Suspension: If the passenger continues to exhibit the pattern or practice of no shows, the passenger will then be suspended for 2 (two) days. After the initial suspension, if the pattern of no shows still continues, the passenger could face subsequent suspensions of up to 7 (seven) days and 14 (fourteen) days

The passenger may appeal any suspension of services.

Appealing the Suspension

The passenger may file an appeal, in writing, within 10 calendar days from the date on the notification letter of suspension.

The appeals process/form will be included with all suspension letters.

A suspension will not begin until the appeal process is complete.

18 More Travel Options for MW RIDE Passengers

As a certified passenger of The MW RIDE you are also eligible to avail yourself of any other transportation agency's ADA Paratransit services in and out of Massachusetts. Likewise, visitors to the MW RIDE area who are ADA certified are eligible to use the MW RIDE services with prior arrangement.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allows for travel on visitor status for a maximum of 21 days within a 12-month period. You may be required to provide proof of eligibility to the agency in the area you are visiting. The MWRTA can provide you proof of your MW RIDE ADA Paratransit eligibility, if requested.

If you expect your travel to exceed 21 days in a particular area you may need to apply for certification through that agency. For services in other



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Regional Transit Authorities within Massachusetts, please call (617) 973-7000 (V), (617) 973-7306 (TTY) or visit www.massdot.state.ma.us and navigate to Regional Transit links. Service availability, hours of service, fares and policies vary within each transit authority.

19 Consumer Advisory Committee to the MWRTA

The Consumer Advisory Committee to the MWRTA is a consumer body composed of MW RIDE passengers, MWRTA fixed route passengers and other individuals interested in public transportation. The Committee advises and makes recommendations to the MWRTA Advisory Board and the Administrator regarding transportation for both fixed route services (buses) as well as paratransit services (MW RIDE). Committee members and other interested persons meet publicly each quarter. For more information or meeting schedules contact the MWRTA Customer Service at 508-935-2222. Meeting schedules are also posted on the website at www.mwrta.com.

20 Compliments and Complaints

The MWRTA welcomes both compliments and complaints. Passengers rely on The MW RIDE for critical transportation services and we want you to have a good experience. Your input is invaluable to helping us improve our service. All complaints will be investigated and responded to within 10 calendar days.

To file a compliment or complaint, use the form attached at the end of this guide. The contact information is at the bottom of the form and on the front page of this guide.

Note: The MWRTA will not tolerate any retaliation or intimidation to a passenger for filing a complaint or concern. If you feel you have been subjected to these actions by anyone connected to The MW RIDE, we urge you to contact the MWRTA Administrator immediately at 508-935-2222.

