

► What is Access-a-Ride (AAR)?

AAR is a “paratransit” transportation service run by New York City Transit (NYCT). It is for people with disabilities in New York City who are unable to use the subway or bus because of their disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires any city that operates a “fixed route” system (e.g., subway or bus) to either make that system fully accessible or create a separate “paratransit” system for people with disabilities. AAR operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in all five boroughs of New York City, as well as in limited parts of Westchester County and Nassau County.



Depending on their disabilities, some AAR riders have door-to-door service and others have “feeder service” (in which AAR only drops them off at the nearest accessible bus stop). The total fare for each trip is the same as the full fare for one ride on the subway or bus (exact change only). Although passengers using feeder service use both AAR and bus for the same trip, they do not have to pay double fare; rather, they must pay fare only once per trip, either on AAR *or* on the bus.

For information about who is eligible for AAR and how you can apply, see NYLPI’s fact sheet entitled: APPLYING FOR ACCESS-A-RIDE.

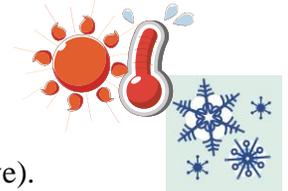
► Are There Any Restrictions on What I Can Use AAR For?

No. You can use AAR for anything, including personal trips, just like if you used subway or bus.

PLEASE NOTE:
 AAR is not limited to rides for medical appointments. You can use AAR for any purpose.



Conditional Eligibility & Feeder Service: While AAR cannot refuse a ride based on the purpose of your trip, AAR might limit when you can use it by giving you “conditional eligibility.” For example, depending on your disabilities, AAR might say you can use its services only in certain weather conditions, for certain distances, or where a particular subway/bus trip would be inaccessible to you. People with conditional eligibility might get “feeder service” (described above).



► How Do I Use AAR?



Setting Up an AAR Ride: You must call “AAR Reservations” (877-337-2017, option 2) 1-2 days in advance to schedule your ride; you cannot hail an AAR van on the street as you would a taxicab. Another option is to sign up for “subscription service” for rides that you know will take place on a regular basis at least once a week, e.g., if you go to work at the same time every morning; this way, you don’t have to call AAR every time to set up that particular ride.

AAR is required to wait only five (5) minutes after your scheduled pick-up time for you to arrive; if you don’t arrive at the pick-up location by then, AAR can leave and count you as a “no show.” However, AAR can arrive up to 30 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time and still be considered “on time.”

Canceling an AAR Ride: You must call AAR at least three (3) hours in advance if you decide to cancel a trip. If you cancel too late (“late-cancel”), AAR counts it as a violation. If you have more than a certain number of violations in a month, your AAR services may be suspended (see below). For same-day cancellations, call “AAR Transit Control” at 877-337-2017 (option 5). For cancellations further in advance, call AAR Reservations (option 2).





Late Pick-Up: If AAR is more than 30 minutes late to pick you up, you should call AAR Transit Control to find out the status of your ride. If AAR finds out your van will not arrive in a reasonable amount of time, it may send a different van to get you, or authorize a car service for you.

If you get a car service authorization, you must pay for the car service on your own, and then you can request reimbursement from AAR by mail within three (3) months. You must send certain detailed information/documents to get the reimbursement. Note also that some conditions apply—for example, if AAR decides that you were responsible for the problem with the ride, it will not reimburse you.

► Can I Bring Someone to Ride With Me?



AAR must allow you to bring one guest and/or one personal care attendant/aide (PCA) to ride with you; just tell AAR when you schedule your ride, so that AAR can reserve enough seats. If the person riding with you is a guest, then s/he must pay. However, if the person is your PCA, then s/he can ride for free, because s/he is there to help you. In order for you to bring a PCA, your AAR card must say that you may travel with a PCA. If you want to bring more people beyond one guest and one PCA, AAR will allow them to come *only* if there is space for them in the van for the particular trip you requested.

NOTE: AAR cannot *require* you to bring a PCA. You choose whether to bring your PCA on a particular trip.

► What If I Need Help Getting to or onto an AAR Vehicle?



When you are traveling alone: If you need help to travel to and from the van, to board or get off of the van, or to carry up to two (2) packages weighing a total of 40 lbs or less, the AAR driver can help you as long as s/he can remain within 100 feet of the van and does not lose sight of the vehicle. The driver will not enter into any buildings.



When you travel with a PCA: The AAR driver is required only to assist you in getting onto the vehicle and to secure your wheelchair/scooter/seatbelt.

► What if AAR Suspends My Service?

AAR may suspend your service if you miss too many trips. This might happen if you schedule at least seven (7) trips in a given month and either “no-show” or “late-cancel” 30% of them. You are not allowed to miss more than 7 trips within a month. Note that subscription service has separate guidelines for suspension.

If AAR suspends your service, it must mail you a letter to tell you that you’ve been suspended, list your specific violations, and tell you about your right to appeal. You may appeal the suspension by explaining why the violations cited are wrong or should be excused. You can appeal on paper (by mail) or in person (at a hearing). You should give AAR any documents that support your reasons. If there are any witnesses who can support your appeal, they can testify at the in-person hearing, or they can write a statement on paper. If you appeal, your AAR service will continue until the appeal is decided.

APPEALING A SUSPENSION:
 If appealing by mail, postmark your Notice of Intention to Appeal Suspension, along with your Statement of Appeal form/letter no later than 14 days from the date of notice.

 If appealing in person, postmark your Notice of Intention to Appeal Suspension no later than 14 days from the date of notice. AAR will then schedule an in-person hearing.

► Where Can I Find More Information About Access-A-Ride’s Policies and Rules?

Access-A-Ride’s “**Guide to Access-A-Ride Service**” is available at: <http://www.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm>. To request a hard copy, call AAR’s Eligibility unit at 877-337-2017 (option 1). Access-A-Ride also has a newsletter called “**On the Move**,” available at: <http://www.mta.info/nyct/paratran/onthemove.htm>. To request an audio or Braille version of the guide or newsletter, call 718-393-4133.



► What if I Have a Language Barrier or Need AAR Materials in an Alternative Format?

AAR must give you all information/materials regarding eligibility and appeals in an accessible format, as needed. You also have the right to receive translated documents and/or an interpreter if you do not speak English well. For example, if you need an interpreter at your suspension hearing, AAR should provide one for you. AAR is not allowed to require you to bring your own interpreter, but you may bring your own if you prefer. AAR should also provide language services, e.g., interpreter, for your phone calls with AAR, such as when you call to schedule your rides. If AAR refuses to provide you with an interpreter/translation, please call New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (212-244-4664), as we are addressing this problem.

NOTE: You do not need to be a U.S. citizen or provide any information about your immigration status to use AAR.

► What if I Want to Complain About Poor AAR Service or Discrimination?

There are several places you can consider complaining, depending on the nature of your complaint.

<i>New York City Transit (“NYCT”)</i>	<p>If you want to complain about AAR’s poor service such as rude drivers or dangerous driving you can file a complaint with NYCT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Call:</u> MTA New York City Transit Customer Assistance line at 511, OR • <u>Send a letter:</u> MTA New York City Transit, Paratransit Division, Customer Relations, 130 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, OR • <u>E-mail:</u> www.mta.info and click on <u>Contact Us</u>.
<i>Federal Transit Administration’s (“FTA”) Office of Civil Rights (“OCR”)</i>	<p>Problems in AAR’s service:</p> <p>FTA investigates claims that paratransit providers are in violation of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. FTA does not reevaluate eligibility; it only investigates whether the paratransit provider has followed the law in operating its system. For information on how to complain: http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3889.html.</p> <p>Discrimination based on race, color, or national origin:</p> <p>FTA investigates claims under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 discrimination based on race, color or national origin (including limited English proficiency). For information on how to complain: http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3889.html.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The deadline for filing a complaint with FTA is 180 days.</p>
<i>Lawsuit</i>	<p>Please keep in mind that all legal claims have certain deadlines for filing, so you should act quickly to contact a lawyer and/or otherwise take action to sue.</p>

<p><u>Any questions?</u></p> 	<p>Call NEW YORK LAWYERS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST (212) 244-4664 (Voice) or (212) 244-3692 (TTY).</p> <p>Our intake line is open Mondays & Fridays (9:30am-1:30pm), and Wednesdays (1:30pm-5:30pm).</p> <p>www.nympi.org</p>
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