

Policies on paratransit vehicles backing up

Information compiled on July 31, 2009

The Question: Do you allow your paratransit/dial-a-ride operators to back up? If so, do you have restrictions on how far and in what conditions (including backing up and down hills)?

Grays Harbor Transit says...Yes we allow the paratransit drivers to back up. We provide a door to door service if they couldn't back up service we could provide in our rural setting would be limited.

Island Transit says...We could not do paratransit unless we did back up. We have no choice as we live in rural places. Driveways, dirt roads, hills, valleys, ditches, cow gates, whatever. When a person applies for paratransit we go to their house and do an assessment there. We interview them and see if they can get to and from their driveway. If the bus is unable to get to their house then we have them have a PCA to get them to a point where the bus can get there, or have them trim trees, fill in potholes, or whatever to have their driveway accessible. We even call people to help them if needed. When we train all operators we take them to a parking lot and set cones up and have them drive through a serpentine then back through the serpentines. We take them to various places and have them back up. If they have a back up incident then we put them through a refresher training program. If the Operator feels it is too dangerous to maneuver then they call us and a road support person goes to the scene to re-assess the driveway.

Jefferson Transit says....We do now! We recently attended training through CTAA 'Passenger Service and Safety Certification'. This was one of the specific questions asked and the reply from the instructor was that under the ADA regulations, if backing is required, the professional driver is to do so. From the example given by the instructor there are very few exceptions (i.e. going over a cliff) that would prevent our being required to back our vehicle in order to pick up an ADA qualified passenger.

Kitsap Transit says...We do allow paratransit operators to back up. Our trainer is on vacation, so I don't have more specific information at this time but will ask him to provide additional information when he returns.

Link Transit says... We highly discourage backing movements, but are permitted if there are no alternatives. The discretion is left up to the operator to determine if the movement can be performed safely. We have no other dimensional or physical policy limitations in effect.

Mason Transit says...Mason Transit stresses "Avoid backing at all times" during training, re-training, observations and evaluations. If operators have to, they are responsible for being aware of and confirming their surroundings and clearances before doing so.

Pierce Transit says...We allow backing. Drivers are allowed discretion.

Skagit Transit says...Our policy is to avoid situations requiring the operator to back out. Whenever backing is necessary, the operator must get out of the vehicle and assess the area around the coach, use a spotter whenever possible, and then back out only as far as necessary. In icy road conditions, we normally require the operator to stand by until either a supervisor or someone from emergency services (i.e. police or fire department) have arrived and can provide safe assistance.

Spokane Transit says...We do allow backing in paratransit at Spokane Transit Authority. Attached is the guideline that we give to our van operators.

Twin Transit says...Twin Transit does allow paratransit drivers to back up, however they are encouraged to avoid getting into situations where they need to back up whenever possible, and to get out of the bus and look first before backing up. They are prohibited from backing up and down hills, and from deploying the lift on slopes.

Valley Transit says...Valley Transit does allow our paratransit operators to back-up. There are no restrictions on backing other than minimizing the need when possible.

Whatcom Transit says...We do permit drivers to back up in the course of doing paratransit service. We do not have specific restrictions based on distance or grade. We emphasize these principles about backing: minimize backing as much as possible; assess the situation first and do a walk-around or check from the back window; get assistance if possible, from someone at the location or ask a rider to watch; use flashers and honk, and; use the maneuvering techniques in which you were originally trained.

10.2 BACKING PROCEDURES

Backing is one of the most frequent causes of accidents in the department. Whenever possible, position your vehicle upon your arrival to avoid a backing situation.

Operators must take extra measures to ensure the area behind the vehicle is safe to back. If you have been away from the van (assisting a customer to or from a building), walk around the van to ensure that other vehicles have not moved into your area after you parked. You must also observe any fixed objects that may affect your ability to back up safely. If you do need to back up:

- Do not violate traffic laws
- Use extreme caution
- Inform customers of your intent to back up
- Turn on your turn signal/flashers
- Keep your speed down
- Seek the assistance of a spotter
- Always sound the horn before beginning to back up
- Do not back up if your visibility or space is restricted.