

# CATS ADA-PARATRANSIT POLICY MANUAL



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*Connecting you to what Matters*

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## **I. Introduction**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) and other public transit agencies throughout the country to provide complementary paratransit service or equivalent public transportation to rider's who do not have the functional ability to ride public transit and/or who cannot board, ride, or get to an accessible fixed route bus because of their disability. This service must be comparable to the level of service that is provided to riders without disabilities who utilize an agency's fixed route service.

The ADA is a civil rights law, not a transportation law, or a social program. The ADA clearly requires non-discriminatory access to fixed-route service, with complementary paratransit service acting as a "safety net" for people who cannot use the fixed route service. Under the ADA, complementary paratransit service is not intended to be a comprehensive transportation system for individuals with disabilities. In other words, the ADA does not attempt to meet all the transportation needs of people with disabilities. Instead, the ADA is intended simply to provide individuals with the same public transit opportunities as persons who can access the fixed route system. A rider is eligible if they have a permanent, temporary, or intermittent disability.

The Capital Area Transit System (CATS) ADA Paratransit Policy and Procedures Manual is designed to inform Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Paratransit eligible consumers about CATS special transportation service called "CATS on Demand". This manual includes policies and procedures, rules and regulations, and guidelines for use of the CATS on Demand system. All CATS' paratransit riders should review this manual carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise. For additional information, please contact the CATS ADA Department at 225-366-6945, during the hours of 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

## **II. Accessible Formats**

The Policy and Procedures Manual is available in large print, Braille, or Audiotape format upon request by persons with visual or other disabilities by calling (225) 366-6945.

## **III. CATS Paratransit Service (CATS on Demand)**

The CATS on Demand paratransit service is a demand-response, space available, origin to destination transportation system. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Persons who are deemed ADA eligible are provided non-emergency transportation for travel beginning and ending within the ¾ mile corridor of the CATS bus routes. (Refer to section 18.1.2 Appendix B).

The paratransit service is designed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. CATS on Demand use vehicles that are specially equipped with wheelchair lifts and other accessibility features that allow for maximum mobility for riders with disabilities whose functional limitations prevent them from using the fixed-route service.

The following two types of services are offered by CATS on Demand Paratransit Service: advanced reservation service and subscription service.

### **3.1.1 Advanced Reservation Service**

Advanced Reservation service allows the rider to schedule a reservation for a trip anywhere within the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile corridor for no more than Seven (7) days in advance. There is not a limit on the number of trips you may request in one day within the Seven (7) day period.

There are no restrictions on trip purposes and all requests for trips are accepted and handled on an equal basis. Changes to the destination must be made at least one (1) day before the scheduled trip.

Scheduling requests for service can be made the day before the trip is to be taken or up to Seven (7) days in advance. Since service is provided on a first come first served basis, riders should make reservations as early as possible and give the scheduler specific times to be picked up and for return trips. CATS on Demand cannot provide same day service or same day changes.

CATS on Demand will attempt to schedule your service for the time requested. However, the scheduler may alter your time, (with a variation of one hour before or after), to allow for other passengers traveling to a similar area to be transported. This allows for cost and organizational efficiency.

### **3.1.2 Subscription Service**

The ADA limits the amount of subscription service that can be offered by the CATS on Demand. Subscription service is the practice of providing repetitive trips over an extended period without requiring the rider to call and request each trip. Requests for subscription service may be limited to specific trip purposes and for no more than Seven (7) days in advance. Subscription service is offered on a limited basis for trips that recur weekly at the same time to and from the same addresses. Rider's, who have frequent schedule changes, are not eligible for subscription service. Once a subscription schedule is confirmed by CATS on Demand, the rider does not have to make any further reservation calls except to cancel any pre-scheduled trips. Long-term permanent changes to a rider's subscription service must be submitted to the CATS on Demand scheduler at least two weeks prior to the date when the change will take effect. CATS on Demand cannot guarantee that changes in subscription service can be accommodated.

### **3.1.3 Service Area**

ADA paratransit service is provided to all residents of the Baton Rouge Metro Area who are deemed ADA eligible by the CATS on Demand Coordinator in accordance with the ADA eligibility regulations. Our service area includes the origin and destination of each trip within the  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile corridor which surrounds the CATS regular fixed-route bus service. **Appendix B, 18.1.2, provides a map of East Baton Rouge Parish with an outline of the CATS on Demand corridor.**

If a rider lives outside of the service area, they may use CATS on Demand if:

- The rider applies and is determined eligible for paratransit services.
- The rider can get to a location within the service area to be picked up and dropped off.
- The rider is traveling to a location within the service area.

#### **IV. Paratransit Eligibility Criteria**

The ADA defines eligibility for complementary paratransit service in 49 CFR Section 37.123 of the federal regulations. Eligibility is limited to people who fall within one of the following three categories into which eligible persons are placed according to their degree of disability.

##### **4.1.1 Inability to Navigate System Independently (Category I).**

**Category 1** consists of riders with a disability, who are not independently able to board, ride, or disembark any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by riders with disabilities. Even with assistance provided by the bus operator and the vehicle's accessibility equipment, this rider would not be able to utilize the regular fixed route system. Examples of persons included in this category may be those with mental and physical impairments, including a vision impairment, who cannot navigate (recognize destinations or understand transfers) the bus system. {49 CFR Section 37.123 (e) (1)}

##### **4.1.2 Lack of Accessible Vehicles, Stations, or Bus Stops (Category II)**

**Category 2** consists of any rider with a disability, who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance, to board, ride, or disembark from a designated vehicle which is usable by riders with disabilities. Cognitive impairments, who cannot navigate the system, are included under this category. Additionally, riders who cannot reach the bus stop, due to lack of curb cuts or sidewalks are eligible under this category. {49 CFR Section 37.123(e) (2)}

##### **4.1.3 Specific Impairment-Related Condition. (Category III)**

**Category 3** consists of riders with a disability, who have a specific impairment-related condition, which prevents such riders from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location. {49 CFR Section 37.123(e) (3)}

#### **V. Application Procedures**

To apply for the CATS on Demand program, the rider must complete an application identifying their mobility impairment.

##### **Application procedures**

- Phone the Paratransit ADA Office at (225) 366-6945 Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm to obtain an application form.
- Applications can be picked up from the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) main office located at 2250 Florida Blvd. (next to the terminal at Florida and North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street), Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802. Applications may also be obtained via CATS' website, [www.brcats.com](http://www.brcats.com) or riders can request to have a paper copy of the application mailed to their home.
- When you receive the application or go on-line to print the application, please read the instructions, and fill out every question completely. The application includes **Section 2** which is a Physician Verification Section that must be completed and signed by a qualified and licensed professional. If this section is not completed, the application will be returned.

- The application packet includes an application, eligibility requirements and the certification process. The Paratransit ADA Manager will review each application and certify new riders or re-certify current riders according to the ADA requirements. Only those persons who qualify as ADA paratransit-eligible will be able to use the CATS on Demand.
- Upon receipt of your completed application, the Paratransit ADA Manager will have **21** calendar days after the application is complete to decide your eligibility. A determination letter will be mailed informing you if and under what circumstances you will be eligible to utilize the CATS on Demand Services.
- Send the completed application to: Capital Area Transit System (CATS)  
**Attention: Paratransit ADA Manager**  
**2250 Florida Boulevard**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70802**  
**Email: [OnDemand@brcats.com](mailto:OnDemand@brcats.com).**

### **5.1.1 Eligibility Determinations**

**There are three (3) basic ADA eligibility determinations:**

- 5.1.2 Unconditional eligibility (Permanent disability) is assigned to persons who are eligible for all trips on CATS on Demand and It has been determined persons are unable to independently utilize CATS' fixed route buses, even with training.
- 5.1.3 Transitional Status (Temporary disability) is assigned to persons who are determined capable of using accessible CATS buses but cannot because of a temporary disability and/or condition.  
**\*\*\*Temporary eligibility will be given if the eligibility determination process exceeds 21 calendar days.**
- 5.1.4 Conditional eligibility (Intermittent disability) is assigned to riders who can use CATS buses most of the time, but under certain circumstances are prevented from independently using CATS buses.
- 5.1.5 Determination Notification: Each applicant is sent a letter of notification concerning eligibility determination within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of a completed application. If a determination of eligibility has not been made within twenty-one (21) days following the submission of a completed application, the applicant will be treated as eligible and provided service until the rider is determined ineligible for services. In case of a denial, the notification will specify the reasons for denial and explain the appeals process.

## **VI. CATS on Demand Identification Card**

Persons who are certified as eligible for CATS on Demand service will receive a photo-identification card to be used when boarding the CATS on Demand vehicles. The card may also be used as identification for service on other transit systems in other cities.

The identification card includes the following: CATS logo, rider's name, the issue date and expiration date of the rider's eligibility, and the requirement for a personal care attendant (PCA), if applicable.

### **6.1.1 Lost ADA Photo ID Cards**

If you misplace your photo ID card, a replacement card can be obtained by calling the Paratransit ADA Manager at (225) 366-6945. A trip on CATS on Demand will be scheduled for the replacement ID to be processed. The rider must pay the round-trip fare as well as a replacement cost of \$10.00 for the new identification card.

## **VII. Appeal Process**

### **7.1.1 Appeal Process for Determination of Non-Eligibility**

The CATS on Demand office will review and determine the eligibility of applicants. CATS on Demand will notify applicants of their status by letter. Those who are denied eligibility will be provided with the reasons why eligibility was denied and the procedures to appeal the decision.

1. Any person who is determined to be ineligible or who is denied eligibility for ADA paratransit service will be allowed to appeal, in writing, within 60 days of the date of the ineligibility letter.  
{49 CFR 37.125 (g) (1)}

**CATS on Demand Paratransit Eligibility Appeal**  
**Capital Area Transit System (CATS)**  
**Attention: Thomas Cating, Compliance Officer**  
**350 N. Donmoor**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

**By Email: [TCating@brcats.com](mailto:TCating@brcats.com)**  
**By Telephone:(225) 346-3267**  
**By Fax:(225) 926-3601**

2. The date for the appeal hearing will be no later than 21 days from the postmark date on the letter requesting an appeal.
3. The rider making the appeal has the right to be heard in person and may be represented by an individual of their choice. Additional documentation can be submitted prior to or at an appeal hearing.
4. Appeals will be heard by Capital Area Transit System (CATS). The appeal will be elevated to a different reviewer than the initial reviewer, who made the initial determination of eligibility/ineligibility. The original review of the application will not have any influence on the appeals process. {49 CFR 37.125 (g)(2)}
5. Capital Area Transit System (CATS) will investigate the reason for denial then the rider will be notified in writing of the determination within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the appeal. If after (30) days there has been no decision on the appeal, the rider shall receive eligibility and may use ADA paratransit service until the resolution of the appeal. {49 CFR 37.125 (g)(3)}
6. Appeal determinations will be made in writing and be retained by CATS.

7. Appeals can be made in person or in writing.

### **7.1.2 Appeal Process for Suspension of Service**

The appeal process is the same as the process used for eligibility denials, see **VIII section 8.1.1**. Riders can dispute the decision to suspend services by filing an appeal within sixty (60) calendar days with CATS. The rider requesting an appeal can be heard in person and/or may provide a written letter designating a representative to represent them if unable to attend the hearing.

CATS will investigate the reasons for the suspension. Then CATS will provide the decision in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the appeal or after the in-person hearing. The written notification will include the procedures which may be utilized to appeal the decision.

CATS will decide within ten (10) business days after the hearing date and inform the rider of the decision in writing. Those who are denied service will be provided with the reasons for the final decision.

- **Category 1 violations**, service **will not** continue while the appeal is being heard.
- **Category 2 violations**, service **will** continue if an appeal is filed.

### **7.1.3 Passenger Comment and Complaint Procedures**

The CATS on Demand solicits and welcomes input from passengers regarding the quality of our transportation, including Service Delivery, Driver Conduct, Condition of Vehicles, and Suggestions for Improvement of Service.

If you have a complaint regarding CATS on Demand paratransit service, **you must send your complaint in writing**, unless your disability prevents the use of U.S. Mail or email, to Paratransit ADA Manager, as follows:

By mail addressed to:

**CATS Complaint Hotline**  
**Attention: Thomas Cating**  
**Compliance Officer**  
**350 N. Donmoor**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

**Or by email to: [Tcating@brcats.com](mailto:Tcating@brcats.com)**

If your disability prevents the use of the U.S. Mail or email, you may report your complaint by calling **(225) 389-7705**.

All complaints will be investigated by CATS, and you will receive a response in writing, either by e-mail, U.S. Mail, or both, within Seven (7) days of the receipt by CATS of your complaint, as prescribed in FTA Circular 4710.1 Section 12.7. CATS will review general comments will be reviewed and documented by CATS.

## **VIII. Recertification**

All CATS on Demand riders are subject to recertification at a minimum of every three years or sooner if the qualifying condition is temporary. The eligibility expiration date appears on the CATS on Demand Identification Card. To avoid delays in service, each rider has the responsibility of reapplying for service prior to the expiration date. It is recommended that a recertification form is requested no later than one month before the expiration date. A recertification form can be obtained by calling (225) 366-6945 or via the website at www.brcats.com. **No Exceptions: All passengers are subject to recertification.**

### **8.1.1 Contact Information**

CATS will send information to its Paratransit riders, including recertification requests. CATS may need to call riders for more information on trips or to inform them of delays. It is your responsibility to keep your phone number and mailing address up to date for our records. If your address or phone number changes, inform the scheduling agent that you are making a permanent contact information change. **\*Note: Rider's contact information needs to be updated when any of the following changes: Name, Address, and Phone Number. Optional email address.**

## **IX. Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges**

The CATS on Demand will honor ADA certifications and provide complementary paratransit service for visitors. {49 CFR 37:127}

**Eligibility will be granted based on one of the two conditions—jurisdiction and/or proof of residency.**

### **9.1.1 Jurisdiction**

The visitor presents documentation that they are ADA paratransit eligible in the jurisdiction in which they reside. {49 CFR 37.127 (c)}. A determination letter or a valid ADA paratransit identification card from their regular provider will suffice. If a disability is hidden, the CATS on Demand Coordinator will request medical documentation.

### **9.1.2 Proof of Residency**

The visitor provides proof of residency in another jurisdiction; documentation indicating a disability that prevents them from using the fixed route system, and certification that the rider is unable to use CATS fixed route system. {49 CFR 37.127 (d)}

CATS will ensure that the paratransit service is available to the visitor for 21 calendar days of service within a 365-day period. The service days do not have to be consecutive. If visitors need CATS on Demand service more than 21 calendar days in a one-year period, they are required to complete a full application for CATS on Demand paratransit service for any stay beyond 21 days. {49 CFR 37.127(e)}

## **X. CATS On Demand Service and Fares**

According to the American with Disabilities Act, a fare of up to two times the fixed route rate may be charged. The fare to ride CATS on Demand is \$1.75 per one way trip.

All passengers must pay the exact fare when boarding the vehicle or with tickets. Drivers do not carry change. Your companion/guest is **(permitted only if scheduled in advance)** and must also pay the \$1.75 fare. Additional guests can accompany the rider at \$1.75 fare each if space is available. This determination will be made on a trip-by-trip basis.

If your ADA eligibility card shows that you require a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), your PCA will not be charged a fare. Additionally, children under the age of five are free. CATS on Demand tickets can be purchased individually at MV Transportation at 3968 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

**Tickets can be purchased over the phone by calling (225) 239.2550. Tickets are available for purchase at 350 N. Donmoor, for this location please call-in advance to make an appointment to purchase tickets by calling (225) 366.6945.**

**All children under the age of fifteen (15) must be accompanied by an adult. The adult will be charged the fare of \$1.75, unless serving as a PCA (will not be charged) for accompanying the certified child.**

**10.1.1 Capital Area Transit System Fixed Route**

CATS' fixed route system consists of transit service that operates on a fixed schedule times, routes, and days within the CATS' service area. CATS' buses are wheelchair accessible, and do not require advanced scheduling. Paratransit eligible riders can receive the half-fare discount on the fixed route service with their Paratransit ID card. Riders not eligible for Paratransit service may also receive a half-fare discount if they are age 62 or older, who possess a Medicare Card pursuant to Title II/XVII of the Social Security Act or are disabled (as determined through a brief application process).

**10.1.2 Capital Area Transit System, (CATS On Demand Paratransit)**

Office Hours/CATS on Demand Scheduling Hours	Cancellation Requests Accepted	Holiday Service
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. 225.239.2550	24/7  225.239.2550	Thanksgiving-No Service Christmas - No Service

CATS on Demand service hours are seven days a week and the service hours are the same as CATS' fixed route service. Monday through Saturday; 4:00am to 11:30pm, and Sunday; 4:30am to 8:30pm. [These hours may change periodically; therefore, please visit our website at http://www.brcats.com](http://www.brcats.com) or call CATS office (225) 389-8920.

**10.1.3 Reservations**

To reserve a trip, simply call **(225) 239-2550, Press 1 for reservations, or to cancel a reservation Press 2**, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. When scheduling a reservation on the weekend Saturday and Sunday, please call and leave a message between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM and a scheduler will return your call.

Hearing-impaired or speech-impaired riders can utilize the Louisiana Relay System, 711, TTY, "**Press 1 to schedule or update reservations, or to cancel a reservation Press 2 for dispatch**" with CATS on Demand.

\*\*\*\*On Saturday's and Sunday's, a message for trip requests can be requested by leaving a message on a recorded line when dispatch and administrative offices are closed. Messages are checked throughout the day.

## **Reservation Procedures**

When you call to schedule your trip, please be prepared to give the reservationist the following information:

- Your first and last name.
- Your daytime telephone number and telephone number where you can be reached at least 60 minutes prior to travel time.
- The date of your requested trip and any additional information the driver may need to help you travel.
- Your preferred pick-up and return times.
- Your origin and destination addresses (**including entrance code, building and Apartment number or letter, specific drop off and pick up information**). **Also, give specific directions for your location pick-up. Drivers are not responsible for correcting inaccuracies. If the address cannot be found your trip will be cancelled.**
- **It is important to schedule your trips in advance to ensure there is space available.**
- If you will be traveling with a PCA, guest (including children), or a service animal. **Reminder Children over 5 is \$1.75 and Guests \$1.75.**

Riders are required to be at their designated location ten (10) minutes prior to their pick-up time. The van may arrive in a time window of up to **ten (10) minutes prior to and/or up to twenty (20) minutes after the time scheduled for the pick-up**. Drivers will **wait five (5) minutes** from the time the van arrives within the allowed window. If the rider is not at the spot when the driver arrives, the driver will notify dispatch. Then dispatch will give the driver permission to continue their route. The driver must continue their schedule. The missed trip will be recorded in your file. Please remember that you are responsible for planning for CATS on Demand vehicles to gain access to gated communities or secured complexes. A driver cannot be delayed trying to locate personnel to provide access to a complex.

Please try to limit your calls to when the vehicle is late beyond the 30-minute window (**10 minutes prior to and/or up to 20 minutes**), because excessive calls for your CATS on Demand will overwhelm the phone system and the Reservationist.

As a shared ride service, the driver may make other stops on the way to your drop-off point, therefore, passengers should allow plenty of time for the trip to and from your destination. Please coordinate with the scheduler and inform them of the exact pick-up and drop off locations and for suggestions when scheduling your pickup to ensure there is adequate time to complete the scheduled trip on time.

## **XI. Eligible Passengers Accommodations**

### **11.1.1 Personal Care Attendant (PCA)**

A Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is someone designated or employed specifically to assist the paratransit eligible rider in meeting their needs. CATS recognizes that a PCA is a mobility aid to the rider. For this reason, no fare is charged for a PCA. CATS requires that riders needing the assistance of a PCA need to indicate this on their ADA paratransit eligibility application. Also, the rider must inform the Reservationist at the time of the reservation that they will be accompanied by a PCA. This will allow for an accurate count of riders traveling in the vehicle.

Passengers must provide their own PCA. CATS on Demand will not provide PCA for riders and transportation cannot be provided to riders who neglect to obtain a PCA.

If a rider uses a device that does not meet the wheelchair definition in this manual and the mobility device cannot be properly secured, the rider must be able to transfer into a passenger seat on the van and be buckled in. If the rider cannot transfer into the seat, then that passenger must have a PCA to assist.

### **11.1.2 Guests/Companions**

One guest (companion), such as a friend or relative can accompany the rider and the PCA (if needed). The fare for the guest/companion will be the same as the fare for the ADA paratransit eligible rider. Guests are subject to the regular paratransit fare of \$1.75 and must have the exact same travel arrangements as the rider. Additional guests accompanying the rider will be allowed on a space-available basis only.

### **11.1.3 Service Animals**

Riders may travel with service animals trained to assist them. Service animals include guide dogs used by persons with vision or hearing impairments, as well as dogs or other animals that provide aid to riders with mobility impairments. The rider must inform the reservationist that they are traveling with a service animal when they schedule their reservation.

## **XII. Cancellations**

Cancellations should be made 24 hours in advance; however, a cancellation can be done up to 2 hours before the scheduled pickup time not to be considered late.

A late cancellation is a trip not canceled at least two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time. This includes trips canceled at the door. Cancellations made less than 2 hours prior to pick up will be regarded as a missed trip.

Drivers cannot cancel your reservations. To cancel your reservation, you must contact the CATS on Demand Reservationist. [The cancellation request line is operational 24/7 at \(225\) 239-2550.](tel:225-239-2550)

## **XIII. Reasonable Modification Requests**

Capital Area Transit System (CATS) is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to eligible riders with disabilities to all programs. CATS recognizes the importance of access to equal opportunities and benefits for individuals with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to be included in policies and procedures. CATS full Reasonable Modification Policy can be found at [www.brcats.com](http://www.brcats.com).

Requests for reasonable modifications can be submitted in writing by mail or fax:

**Attention Paratransit Department**  
**Mail: 2250 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70802**  
**Fax: (225) 389-8983**

Alternative methods of filing a reasonable modification request can be used for individuals with disabilities, who are unable to communicate in writing. Some of the alternative methods that can be done are through a personal interview, or by phone call.

## **XIV. Drivers and Vehicles**

CATS on Demand service is provided by using a variety of vehicles. A rider must ride in the vehicle that is sent to pick up the passenger. Special requests by passengers for specific vehicles and drivers will not be approved.

### **14.1.1 Passenger Assistance**

Drivers will assist the rider on or off the vehicle. The driver will verbally indicate to visually impaired riders waiting at the curb that the paratransit vehicle has arrived.

CATS on Demand drivers will provide origin to destination service for eligible riders. Drivers will not perform any task which may cause injury to themselves or the passenger.

### **14.1.2 Packages**

Riders are responsible for all packages brought onto the vehicle. The vehicle is shared, so riders must limit their packages to what can be carried in one load. Riders are not allowed to get on and off the vehicle to load and unload packages.

## **XV. Code of Conduct, Responsibilities and Violations**

### **15.1.1 Code of Conduct for CATS on Demand Transit System and/or Passenger Responsibilities** **Passengers shall:**

- **CATS on Demand drivers are properly licensed and receive regular training.**
- **CATS on Demand provides wheelchair securement and safety restraints on its vehicles.**
- **Passengers are to be seated and wear seat belts when the vehicle is in motion.**
- **All passengers in wheelchairs shall be safely secured when the vehicle is in motion.**
- **Drivers will perform daily pre-trip inspection on vehicles to ensure that both the vehicle and safety equipment are in working order.**
- **CATS on Demand is committed to the safe operation of its vehicles, including the safe boarding and de-boarding of passengers.**
- **Buckle up or be buckled up if in a wheelchair.**
- **Be ready for scheduled pick up ten (10) minutes prior to and/or up to twenty (20) minutes after the time scheduled for the pickup.**
- **Inform the Driver of Special Health Problems if Applicable.**
- **Comply with Fare Policy**
- **Secure Carry-on Items and Packages**
- **Remain Seated Until Vehicle Stops**
- **Allow Driver to Open and Close Doors**
- **Abide by Driver's Instructions**

### **The Driver:**

- **WILL assist a rider into, and out of the van (Origin to Destination) without lifting the passenger and devices.**

- **WILL NOT wait longer than five (5) minutes for any rider to appear for their scheduled pick-up.**
- **WILL NOT take belongings into a rider's residence.**
- **WILL NOT leave the van unattended, out of sight.**
- **WILL NOT transport any rider who is too ill to sit up and be secured in their seat, vomiting, or bleeding.**
- **WILL first notify the dispatcher of the rider's condition, if necessary, advise medical authorities whether the rider needs medical attention or advise the rider to remain at the medical unit until rider is well enough to travel on the CATS on Demand vehicle.**

Riders who use CATS' transit system must be respectful to drivers and other passengers. Drivers are responsible for the safety of all passengers while on board the agency's vehicles. The passengers are expected to follow the driver's instructions.

#### **15.1.2 Violations (verbal warning followed by written warning)**

The following behavior is inappropriate and will not be tolerated on agency vehicles.

##### **Category 1**

- Drinking and/or eating (unless medically required)
- Use of Tobacco Products
- Foul and/or Unacceptable Language
- Horseplay
- Bothering Other Passengers
- Listening to Electronic Devices without Headphones
- Prioritize proper hygiene by maintaining a clean and neat appearance

#### **15.1.3 Violations (grounds for suspension)**

##### **Category 2**

- Carrying of Weapons
- Fighting
- Possession of Illegal Drugs
- Having Open Containers of Alcohol on Vehicle
- Aggressive behavior, Yelling, Verbal Abuse and/or Threatening Behavior will not be tolerated.

CATS on Demand will not tolerate a rider who violates any of the above violations.

**A. Category 1** violations will result in a verbal/written warning. Three warnings will result in the suspension of that rider. The rider may contest this refusal of service and may appeal in accordance with the guidelines outlined below. In either instance, the rider will receive written notification from the CATS on Demand ADA Coordinator of the suspension and if the rider's appeal fails, they will be refused service.

**B. Category 2** violations will result in immediate and a potential recommendation for permanent suspension. The rider may contest this refusal of service and may appeal in accordance with

the guidelines outlined below. In the interim, the rider will be suspended from utilizing the CATS on Demand until the decision of the appeal process.

**15.1.4 Appealing Violations** - Passengers have the right to appeal violations that they believe were documented in error by contacting **Karen Denman** via email at [kdenman@brcats.com](mailto:kdenman@brcats.com), or by calling her at **225.366.6945**.

If the appeal is denied, the rider can request an in-person hearing to appeal the determination made by CATS. Riders making appeals in person will have 15 minutes to present oral and/or written arguments concerning the violation(s) they believe were recorded in error and not removed by CATS during the initial appeal. The second appeal will be heard by someone who was not involved in the initial decision. The decision of the hearing officer will be in writing. The decision will be final, and no further appeals will be accepted by CATS.

**15.1.5 Appealing a Violation Warning or Suspension** - Riders who believe one or more of their violations were documented in error may appeal in writing within 60 days either by completing the form and returning it via mail or faxing it to 225.389.8923. The appeal must include details regarding why the rider believes the violation was documented in error.

CATS will review the information provided with the appeal. After review, a decision will be made, and a notification letter will be sent by mail within seven (7) calendar days after the request for appeal has been received.

Should a rider be suspended temporarily from CATS on Demand, it will be necessary for the rider to request subscription trips be reinstated at the end of the suspension period. Subscriptions are suspended when service is suspended.

## **XVI. Safety**

### **16.1.1 Oxygen and Medical Equipment**

Riders may also travel with portable oxygen or other equipment, provided that the equipment does not violate rules concerning transportation of hazardous materials.

### **16.1.2 Securement/ Seat Belt Use**

CATS on Demand riders are required to always use securement devices when a mobility device is utilized.

### **16.1.3 Wheelchairs**

A ***wheelchair*** means a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by riders with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

In accordance with FTA C 4710.1, Section 2.4.1, if a wheelchair/occupant combined weight exceeds that of the lift specifications or if the carriage of the wheelchair is inconsistent with safety requirements, the passenger may be declined.

Riders who use wheelchairs must ride in designated securement areas if wheelchairs fit in these compliant areas. The driver will aid in securing the wheelchair/mobility aid. Wheelchairs that cannot be properly secured (i.e., three-wheeled scooters) will be accommodated if they meet the size and weight restrictions and fit within the securement area (not blocking the aisle nor interfering with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency).

### Boarding Separately from a Wheelchair

A rider using a wheelchair may transfer to a regular seat on the vehicle if they are able to accomplish the transfer independently or with the assistance of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

Drivers will not lift passengers. Drivers will not assume the control of power wheelchairs to assist riders with boarding or disembarking the vehicle.

The provision of mobility aids is solely the responsibility of the passenger. The transit system will not provide any mobility aids.

### 16.1.4 Inclement Weather

Inclement weather (including but not limited to ice, sleet, hurricane, rain, and high winds) may result in CATS on Demand system operating behind schedule. CATS On Demand complies with the Mayor and GOSEP's recommendations.

### 16.1.5 Weapons & Contraband

Unauthorized weapons and contraband concealed or otherwise are prohibited on CATS on Demand vehicles. Those caught with weapons or contraband will be fully prosecuted under the law.

### 16.1.6 Emergency Procedures

CATS on Demand will not provide service on days when the agency is closed due to weather or other disaster-related events.

If an accident or on-vehicle emergency occurs, the **driver** will.

- Come to a Complete Stop in a Safe Location
- Manage the situation in a safe manner. Notify dispatch who will contact EMS for further directives.
- Orderly Evacuate the Vehicle if Warranted, Assisting Passengers who are Mobility Limited
- Call for Emergency Response Assistance when Necessary
- Request Dispatcher to Notify CATS ADA Coordinator of situation

Emergency Procedures the **passengers** will.

- Remain Calm
- Follow the Driver's Instructions
- Maintain Proper Vehicle Conduct During the incident and/or emergency to maintain safety
- Inform the driver if they or another passenger becomes ill, is injured or is in distress while in the vehicle

**\*\*\*Note:** CATS operators cannot be held responsible for the administration of medications. The administration of medication when in a CAT'S vehicle is the rider's responsibility. Any rider requiring assistance in the administration of medication or oxygen must travel with a PCA or companion. Should the administration of medications or oxygen become necessary while on the vehicle, CATS will contact emergency medical assistance to administer the required medication at the rider's expense.

## **XVII. Important Points to Remember**

### **17.1.1 Lost and Found**

Any article left on the vehicles will be stored at the MV Transportation Lost & Found Department located at 3968 North Boulevard. Articles will be held for 10 days. To claim a lost article, please call **(225) 239-2550**. Riders are responsible for claiming lost articles.

- CATS on Demand is a limited, special transportation service for persons with disabilities who, because of a physical or mental disability, find it impossible to use regular public transit.
- CATS on Demand eligibility does not include riders who find it uncomfortable or difficult to get to or from bus stops.
- Only those persons who qualify as ADA paratransit-eligible will be able to use CATS on Demand.
- The physician who verifies the applicant's disability should consider the presence of a disabling condition, not the applicant's age or economic status.
- Paratransit eligibility is a transportation decision, not a medical one. A doctor's letter certifying disability will no longer be the sole criteria for riding CATS on Demand. CATS will determine paratransit eligibility in conjunction with documentation from doctors, physical therapist evaluations, and the CATS on Demand Paratransit Application.

### **17.1.2 Non-Discrimination**

CATS on Demand will not directly or through contractual or other arrangements, discriminate according to race, color, creed, gender, national origin, or disability in the provision of services, program benefits, or employment. The system provides fully accessible transportation for persons with disabilities.

### **17.1.3 Closing Statement**

CATS on Demand strives to provide the most efficient and comfortable service possible. We value our riders and hope that their positive experiences with CATS on Demand will attract additional riders.

As a part of CATS' mission, ensuring comparable transportation service to those who are deemed ADA eligible is a priority. Because this is a great task, community involvement and support are important. CATS has joined forces with various social service agencies to provide a higher standard of service for East Baton Rouge Parish, and we welcome any additional assistance that could be provided. For additional information on how to get more involved with the CATS on Demand please call or write:

**Capital Area Transit System**  
**Attention: Paratransit ADA Manager**  
**2250 Florida Boulevard**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70802**

(225) 346-5557

## **XVIII. Appendices**

### **18.1.1 Appendix A: Definitions**

**Cats on Demand:** East Baton Rouge Parish demand-response service (paratransit service) within a specific geographical corridor.

**Companion:** A companion is someone without an ID card who rides with a registered passenger, but not as a personal attendant. You may arrange to bring one companion along on each ride, in addition to a personal attendant. Companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same address. Additional companions may be scheduled if space is available. Companions pay the same fare as the registered passenger.

**Denial:** A trip that cannot be accommodated because of inadequate system capacity.

**Destination:** Where the CATS on Demand rider is traveling to when picked up by the CATS on Demand vehicle.

**Excessively Long Trips:** A trip may require more than one-half hour from origin to destination due to the size of CATS service area. We are committed to trips that are not excessive in length and have adopted the standard that no trips will be more than twice the length of comparable fixed route service. To get more information regarding the CATS service area, please call us at (225) 389-8282 and speak with one of our representatives.

**Guest:** An ADA ineligible person who rides with an eligible person to the same location. The guest will pay the regular fare.

**Intermittent Disability:** An intermittent disability that affects the rider differently each day. Weather, health conditions, etc. cause the rider's disability to increase or decrease in severity daily. Some days the rider may be able to ride the fixed-route bus, while on other days, they may require paratransit services.

**Missed Trips:** if the vehicle arrived outside the pickup window and the rider did not take it.

**Medically Necessary Trip:** A medically necessary trip is defined as a trip for those riders who are suffering from an illness that requires them to travel for treatment several times a week. An example of this would be a rider who is on kidney dialysis.

**Mobility Device/Wheelchair:** Three or more wheeled devices – The mobility device parameters are no wider than 30" and no longer than 48" or have a combined hardware and passenger weight of 600 pounds.

**On-Time Performance:** The on-time pickup window is -10/+20 minutes relative to the negotiated pickup time.

**Origin:** Riders pick up points for the CATS on Demand vehicle.

**Permanent Disability:** A permanent disability is when a rider has long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which may hinder the ability to fully participate in society on an equal basis with others. Also, prevents the rider from riding the fixed route bus.

**Personal Care Attendant (PCA):** A person who is needed to assist the rider while they are in transit. This person may provide mobility assistance, cognitive assistance, or similar types of assistance. This person may be a friend, family, or a paid attendant. Each rider is allowed one (1) PCA. CATS on Demand should be informed of the need for a PCA at the time of application or when the need occurs. There is no charge for a required personal care attendant.

**Refusal:** This occurs when a rider refuses a trip that is offered and is considered responsive to the original request.

**Subscription Service:** Subscription service is the practice of providing repetitive trips over an extended period without requiring that rider to call and request each trip. Requests for subscription service may be limited to specific trip purposes and for no more than Seven (7) days in advance.

**Temporary Disability:** A temporary disability is one that is limited in the length of time it will affect the rider. Examples of this type of disability would be a broken leg or other injuries or illnesses deemed by their doctor to be limited to a specific amount of time.

**Trip:** A trip on the CATS on Demand is from point of origin to a destination. This is considered one trip when a route takes a rider from their home to the doctor. It is two trips when a rider goes from their home to the Doctor's office and back home again.

**Visitor:** A visitor is an ADA paratransit eligible individual who resides outside of the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area.

\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS BASED UPON THE 1990 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, AS AMENDED, AND GUIDANCE BY FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES. ALL RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

### **18.1.2 (Appendix B) Map of EBR Parish (2015 ADA Corridor Map)**

