

## Chapter 10

# TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is frequently essential to working or going to school and is a necessity in maintaining contact with the community. A key to the rehabilitation of any person with a spinal cord injury is the development of transportation options that satisfy the needs of the person.

## BACKGROUND

### **What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a comprehensive civil rights law guaranteeing equal opportunity for people with disabilities in employment; public transportation; and public accommodations. Under the ADA, all programs, activities, and services provided by state and local government, including public transportation, are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of disability; regardless of whether the entities receive federal financial assistance. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) maintains a website with up to date information on all aspects of the ADA.

The Act has five titles covering employment, public entities (including public transportation), public accommodations and commercial facilities, telecommunications, and miscellaneous provisions. The U.S. DOJ, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have primary federal enforcement responsibilities as the law applies respectively to private employers, state and local governments, all facilities and programs open to the public, and providers of telecommunications equipment and services. Other federal agencies with ADA responsibilities include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Interior, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Public transportation is covered under Title II Part B of the ADA and private transportation under Title III. The U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration

releases information, guidance and regulations on public transportation and the ADA. Design standards for vehicles and facilities are produced by the U.S. Access Board which becomes regulatory standards when adopted into law by the U.S. DOT.

## EASTER SEALS PROJECT ACTION



<http://www.projectaction.org/AboutESPA/Whoweare.aspx>

America is home to more than 54 million people with disabilities who work, play, shop, vote, pursue an education, raise families, and volunteer in their communities. Congress originally commissioned Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA) in 1988 as a research and demonstration project administered by Easter Seals to improve access to public transportation for people with disabilities. Funding for Easter Project ACTION is derived through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration.

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and made changes through the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), which became effective on January 1, 2009. This civil rights law ensures individuals with disabilities have access to employment, education, state and local government programs and services, businesses, telecommunications, and public transportation. With the passage of the ADA, Easter Seals Project ACTION's goal was expanded to assist the disability community and the transportation industry to achieve one goal – ensure accessible community transportation in our nation.

The mission of Project Action is to promote universal access to transportation for people with disabilities under federal law and beyond by partnering with transportation providers, the disability community and others through the provision of training, technical assistance, applied research, outreach and communication. The primary values of are partnership, coalition building, coordination, inclusion, independence and the importance of access to transportation choices for people with disabilities. The core of all of our programs and activities, include:

- Training online or in-person, where individuals can learn how to strengthen accessible transportation within their own community.

- Outreach that includes resources and publications available on a variety of topics on accessible transportation and staff presentations and participation at conferences, on advisory committees and events.
- Technical assistance activities through their toll-free hotline (800) 659-6428 allow customers to connect with us Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm ET. Easter Seals Project ACTION staff also provides in-depth support to individuals or communities who are interested in making positive, long-term changes in their community's transportation system.
- Research on various key topics helps fill research gaps, develops useful materials, engages with scholars and partner to increase greater understanding of issues and best practices associated with accessible transportation across various modes both public and private.

## **THE NATIONAL CENTER ON SENIOR TRANSPORTATION**

### **The National Center on Senior Transportation**

<http://seniortransportation.net/> (NCST) was established to increase transportation options for older adults to support their ability to live independently in their homes and communities throughout the United States.

Their latest eNews includes the following: [NCST Modes and Services Information Brief: Volunteer Transportation](#): This resource provides an overview of volunteer transportation, program examples, an interview with a service provider, and recommendations to enhance volunteer transportation services. Examples of topics included in a recent web series included: Assisted Transportation, Best Practices, Caregivers, Coordination, Diversity, Funding, Human Service Transportation, Livability, Mobility Management, NCST Modes and Services Information Brief Series, Older Driver Safety and Transition, Public Transportation, Volunteer Transportation, Taxis, Travel Training and Transportation and Health.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Federal law requires that providers of mass transit services who receive federal financial must have Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transit or para transit programs for individuals with mental or physical disabilities that prevent them from being able to use the regular public transportation system. The

person's disability can be permanent, temporary, or conditional. (A "conditional" disability is one that exists under specified conditions; for example, at night, or when the temperature is very high or very low.) Fares must be the same and routes and schedules must closely follow the public bus route. There is no age restriction, no income/asset restriction, and it is not necessary to be on SSI or SSD. The CT Dept. of Transportation manages the ADA Para transit system in Connecticut.

Anyone who would like to use the ADA Paratransit service must be certified ADA Paratransit eligible. Information and/or an application can be obtained by contacting. If your transit provider discriminates against you, ask your operator for a copy of the UMTA certification. Check the UMTA certification with the **State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Person with Disabilities** at 1-800-842-7303.

Public transportation assistance must certify that they provide people with disabilities full and equal access to the same services and accommodations as persons without disabilities. One of those services is public transportation.

## **BUS TRAVEL – PARATRANSIT**

The CT Department of Transportation facilitates transportation around the state including sponsorship of ride sharing and commuter buses and local buses. All **CTTRANSIT** buses have wheelchair lifts or ramps for access by persons with disabilities. Also, the bus can "kneel" to lower the first step height. Please ask the operator to kneel the bus to assist you in boarding or alighting. Most types of mobility devices (wheelchairs, 3-wheel scooters, and walkers) can be accommodated on the buses. Each bus has a system for securing wheelchairs near the front of the bus. **CTTRANSIT** safety policy requires a 4-point securement for all mobility devices. Use of the lap belt is recommended for the customer's maximum safety. Non-wheelchair, mobility impaired passengers may also use the lift or ramp to board the bus. Please ask the operator to deploy the mobility access unit. Passengers standing on the lift device should hold the handrails firmly and watch their head because of the vertical height limitations. To learn more about bus travel and routes go to <http://www.cttransit.com/>.

If you have a disability, which prohibits your use of a **CTTRANSIT** bus, you may be eligible for **Paratransit** service. This special service is provided by various organizations located within **CTTRANSIT's** service areas. Please call one of the following service operators for information about their **Paratransit** services.

- **Hartford Area**, [Greater Hartford Transit District](#): 860-247-5329
- **New Haven Area** [Greater New Haven Transit District](#) 203-288-6282
- **Stamford Area** [Norwalk Transit District](#): 203-299-5180
- **Waterbury Area**[North East Transportation](#): 203-756-5550
- **New Britain Area** [CCRPA/DATTCO](#): 800-997-0700
- **Meriden** [North East Transportation](#): 800-441-8901
- **Bristol** [CCRPA/DATTCO](#): 800-997-0700
- **Wallingford** [North East Transportation](#): 800-441-8901

**The Kennedy Center Travel Training** is a nationally acclaimed program that teaches people with disabilities and seniors how to properly and safely use the local bus and rail system on a one-to-one basis throughout the state of CT. Since 1991, **The Kennedy Center** has successfully travel trained more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities, aged 16-95, to use local buses and trains to access the community. There is no charge for travel training, the program is grant funded by The Connecticut Department of Transportation.

## **COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), the funding source, allows local areas to select one of a few acceptable options to meet the ADA requirement. These options allow for options:

- Ensure that at least 50% of the fixed route buses running during service hours are lift equipped.
- Establish a Paratransit or special system which is known as "door-to door" or "dial a ride", on a demand responsive basis.
- Establish service that is a combination of the other two options listed (1 and 2). Whenever a special service is employed, that service, as a whole must meet certain criteria of comparability with the service available to able-bodied persons.

Cities and towns, including some non-profit agencies, may operate special services for persons who are elderly or disabled. Most non-profit agencies limit the use of their special services to medical appointments and some for shopping trips for which modest fees are charged. **The 16(b) (2) Program** - The Federal Government, through the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) of

the U.S. Department of Transportation, will provide 80% of the cost of purchasing a special vehicle for persons with disabilities with 20% of the balance of the cost provided by the sponsoring private non-profit corporation. The 20% balance must be paid in cash before actual receipt of the vehicle. This applies only to private non-profit organization and is not available to individuals. However, you as an individual can influence local organizations to obtain accessible vehicles (i.e., vans). These vehicles transport the elderly and persons with disabilities where mass transportation services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. Many Senior Centers have vans available for seniors.

Medicaid, HUSKY A, and Healthy Start benefits include transportation to medical appointments. Several community service agencies may also provide transportation assistance for dialysis, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy appointments. Fares must be the same and routes and schedules must closely follow the public bus route under the ADA

Contact your town hall, your social service department, your senior center or local organizations to learn what may be available. Volunteer organizations such as the American Heart Association, Volunteer Care Givers, or the American Cancer Society may be able to help. Info Line (211) may also have some suggestions. Accessible private livery services and taxi services operate in some parts of the state. Many are available for long distance as well as local trips. Call for fee schedules.

## **TRAIN TRAVEL – METRO NORTH**

To locate information on train travels through Metro North go to <http://new.mta.info/mnr>. For information on accessibility go to <http://web.mta.info/accessibility/>. You will find a section referred to as “Meeting the Needs of Customers with Disabilities.” The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) offers reduced fares on its subways, buses, and commuter railroads to customers with disabilities. Their web pages include detailed information about reduced fare programs and a variety of other ADA-accessible services MTA agencies provide. Go to their website to find out more about these services, as well as paratransit programs. You may also find the “Useful Phone Numbers” link a quick and convenient reference source. All the

information on their pages is also available in large print or Braille brochure, or on audiotape. Call 211 for details.

To locate information on train travel through Amtrak including schedules and making reservations go to Amtrak. The following connection to Amtrak also offers the sites for travel for individuals with disabilities.

- Making Reservations for Passengers with a Disability
- Station Accessibility
- Wheeled Mobility Device Services
- Thruway Bus Service and Accessibility
- Traveling with a Companion/Attendant
- Meal Service for Passengers with a Disability
- Change Amtrak.com for Low Vision Users and Screen Reader Technology
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- A Quicker Alternative to Washington, DC - New York City Buses
- Auto Train Boarding and Vehicle Requirements

## AIR TRAVEL

The ADA also deals with air travel. A quick search showed the following resources that are available:

- [Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel](https://www.federalregister.gov/.../nondiscrimination-on-...), <https://www.federalregister.gov/.../nondiscrimination-on-...>, Federal Register, Nov 12, 2013 – “Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in *Air Travel; Accessibility of Aircraft and Stowage of Wheelchairs*”. A Rule by the Transportation ... ,You may obtain copies of this rule in an *accessible* format by contacting ... Web pages that provide core *air travel* services and information (e.g., ...
- [Accessible Air Travel - United Spinal Association](http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/accessible_air_travel.pdf) - [www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/accessible\\_air\\_travel.pdf](http://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/accessible_air_travel.pdf) - May 13, 2008 - *Accessible Air Travel: A Guide for People with Disabilities* ... agents, and others involved in *air travel* to know what to expect from the time.
- [Accessible Air Travel: A Guide for People with Disabilities](http://airtravel.about.com/od/safetysecurity/a/AccessibleAir.htm), [airtravel.about.com/od/safetysecurity/a/AccessibleAir.htm](http://airtravel.about.com/od/safetysecurity/a/AccessibleAir.htm), "The *air travel* environment can be overwhelming for most people ... even more stressful for travelers with disabilities. Knowing ahead of time about procedures ...
- [Airplane Travel with a Scooter or Wheelchair - Scootaround Inc.](http://scootaround.com/airplane-travel-tips), [scootaround.com/airplane-travel-tips](http://scootaround.com/airplane-travel-tips), *Airplane Travel with a Scooter or*

Wheelchair. ... Cruise Travel Tips. Cruise ship lines are becoming more *accessible*-aware · Rail Travel Tips. Confined spaces ...

- [HOW TO TRAVEL BY AIR WITH A WHEELCHAIR: Travel Tips and ...](http://sath.org/page/HOW_TO_TRAVEL_BY_AIR...WHEELCHAIR/.../768/), [sath.org/page/HOW\\_TO\\_TRAVEL\\_BY\\_AIR...WHEELCHAIR/.../768/](http://sath.org/page/HOW_TO_TRAVEL_BY_AIR...WHEELCHAIR/.../768/), The *airline* will probably want to preboard you, so be early at the airport. ... Topics include *accessibility* of airports and aircraft; requirements for advance notice, ...
- [Accessible Travel Tips - Accessible Journeys](http://www.disabilitytravel.com/accessible-travel-tips.htm), [www.disabilitytravel.com/accessible-travel-tips.htm](http://www.disabilitytravel.com/accessible-travel-tips.htm), Jump to [Travel by Airplane](#) - Download this article (Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader®). With more and more wheelchair travelers taking to the skies you ...
- [Accessible Air Travel: Able to Travel](http://www.abletotravel.org), [www.abletotravel.org](http://www.abletotravel.org) › [Travel Tips](#), although *air travel* today is available to most people, barriers to access still exist. A passenger with a disability may encounter obstacles just to reach an *airplane* ...
- [Passengers with Disabilities - Aviation Consumer Protection Division](http://airconsumer.dot.gov/publications/disabled.htm), [airconsumer.dot.gov/publications/disabled.htm](http://airconsumer.dot.gov/publications/disabled.htm), United States Department..., Jan 6, 2010 - This rule applies to all *flights* of U.S. airlines, and to *flights* to or from the United New twin-aisle aircraft must have *accessible* lavatories.

## MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATION

For many people with spinal cord injury the best means of transport is by automobile since bus and rail is often unavailable or inaccessible. An automobile can be safe, comfortable, and usually reliable.

## PARKING

The Department of Motor Vehicles offers options for parking. Go to <http://www.dmv.org/ct-connecticut/disabled-drivers.php> for information on Permanent Disability Parking Permits, Disability Plates, Temporary Disability Parking Permit, Handicapped Training Services, Qualifying for a Disability Permit or Plate, How to Apply for Disabled Driver Status , Traveling Out of State and Rules for Disabled Parking Plates and Permits.

## DRIVER ASSESSMENTS



Depending on the level of injury, many individuals with spinal cord injury can drive their own automobile or van. People with good, functional upper extremities can drive a hand-controlled vehicle with ease and safety. Those with limited use of their upper extremities can also be good drivers using power assisted adaptive controls in motor vehicles.

**The Easter Seals CT- Mobility Center** offers driver assessments. Contact them at 203-237-7835, [www.ct.easterseals.com](http://www.ct.easterseals.com), 158 State Street, Meriden, CT 06450. They provide clinical and on the road driving assessments, equipment recommendations and prescriptions, and vehicle inspections when appropriate. **The Mobility Center** also evaluates and recommends appropriate equipment and vehicles for a person to ride safely as a passenger. Driving assessments use standardized measures and devices that can include Driving Simulators to test abilities in vision, strength, dexterity, reaction time, and cognitive and perceptual skills. The actual on the road assessment utilizes an instructor's brake in addition to the driver's brake.

## **TRAINING SERVICES & LICENSING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The state offers disabled drivers training and information on using specialized equipment in their vehicles. To participate in the program, you must be 16 or older, require adaptive equipment to drive, and have written approval from a medical doctor. Instructors first evaluate your specialized needs for driving a vehicle. They also will provide you with a list of suppliers that equip vehicles with adaptive devices. Drivers can inquire about applying for government assistance to offset costs for adaptive equipment.

Modifications include steering devices and hand-operated headlight dimmers, gas, and brakes. The lessons can include a road test to obtain a valid CT driver's license, if you do not have one. The testing fee is \$40. To find out if you qualify for the program, contact the **Department of Rehabilitation Services** at 800-537-2549.

When traveling by automobile, position your body comfortably and securely in the seat. Remember to stop periodically on long trips for weight shifts

(pressure relief). Bring a supply of food, water, or some kind of liquid with you in the automobile. Always keep an emergency medical supply in the vehicle. Installing a cellular car phone or CB radio is advisable, as well as a special seat cushion (sheepskin) to avoid skin problems.

The Connecticut State Department of Motor Vehicles may provide driver training for people with disabilities. For further information, contact the Connecticut State Department of Motor Vehicles, Driver Services Division, 60 State St., Room 1093, Wethersfield, CT 06161, 860-566-1690. A limited number of commercial driving schools offer driver training with hand controls and/or appropriate equipment. A physician's statement may be required to initiate lessons. Refer to the Yellow Pages of your telephone directory to identify driving schools offering this service.

## **VEHICLE PURCHASING OR MODIFICATION**

Guidelines for purchasing or renting a motor vehicle such as a car include: a 2-door sedan for wheelchair user (wider doors, no center post), service available in most towns, intermediate or standard sized vehicles, comfortable seats and interior, maximum visibility from driver's seat, power brakes, power steering, power windows, power seats, power locks and a tilt steering column. The following options are a sample of what can be installed: dimmer switch on dashboard, turn indicator lever, or steering wheel, hand controls, swing away or removable headrests to permit throwing left arm over back of seat to load wheelchair, hand operated emergency brake, hand operated clutch and transfer hand grips.

There is a wide variety of additional adaptive driving equipment on the market with many differences in safety, reliability, design, and price. The type of equipment needed is dependent on the strength and abilities of the driver. Since each person has unique requirements, it is extremely important to obtain the correct equipment. Seek the advice of people experienced in the field of handicapped driving equipment before buying any piece of adaptive driving equipment.

## **COMMON TYPES OF HAND CONTROLS**

- Push-Pull: (push for brake, pull to accelerate) *Disadvantage*: can either accelerate or brake but not both simultaneously, which is needed when the vehicle is at a stop on an incline. In addition, this type of hand control requires functional grip.
- Push and Twist: (push for brake, twist to accelerate) *Disadvantage*: can either accelerate or brake but not both simultaneously, which is needed when the vehicle is at a stop on an incline. In addition, this type of hand control requires functional grip and cannot be used by people with limitation in wrist rotation or less good grasp. *Advantage*: Can accelerate and brake simultaneously.
- Push and Right Angle: (push for brake, accelerate at right angle) *Advantage*: Any person needing hand controls can use this type of device. Push right angle hand controls are the most sophisticated. *Disadvantage*: Compared to the other types of hand controls, the right angle type of hand control is the hardest system to learn.

Many quadriplegics find it difficult to transfer to and from an automobile. Some quadriplegics find it easier to drive a van from their wheelchair, using an automatic lift or ramp to get in and out of the van. There are numerous companies throughout the United States that convert and/or service vans for persons with disabilities. In some cases, the cost of modifications to van or car may be less. Before making a commitment to long distance installation of adaptive driving controls or vehicle modification, consider the ramifications of obtaining service for this equipment. Many local companies may either not repair equipment installed by other suppliers.

Some of the distributors and installers of driving equipment for Cars and Vans include RIDE AWAY HANDICAPPED EQUIPMENT CORP. <http://www.ride-away.com/why-ride-away/about-ride-away/>, Custom Coach Company. 860-621-7645 and Advanced Wheels of Technology Inc.

If you will be in a modified van be sure there are appropriate, safe tie-downs. In addition, be sure the vehicle will have an appropriate, safe lift.

## **AUTO INSURANCE**

Many insurance companies will insure drivers with disabilities without putting them in an assigned risk category. For further information, contact your local insurance agent, some larger insurance companies, or the State of Connecticut Commissioner of Insurance.

## **PAYING FOR ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT OR PURCHASE**

Unless there are public funds for complete accessible public transportation to your destination the need for automobiles or vans with a lift is important part of a person's independence and total integration into society. The following are some suggestions from people that may be able to assist, in whole or partially, with the financing of an automobile or van.

Some individuals are able to receive assistance in paying for driving equipment through the **Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)** if it is work related **Workers Rehabilitation or Veterans** may also be able to get financial assistance. For most people, this can be another unforeseen financial burden.

The following automobile dealers offer rebates on the installation of adaptive equipment for their vehicles: **Chrysler Crop Auto Mobility Program**, 800-255-9877; **Ford Mobility Motoring Program**, 800-952-2248 and **General Motors Mobility Program**, 800-323-9935.

- Look for used equipment or private fund. To raise money privately try contacting:
- Family members, friends, or neighbors to have a block party to raise money. Police and town officials can be of help with this.
- Local women's Clubs, Jaycees, B'nai Birth, Knights of Columbus, and Church groups.
- Foundations: Food Foundation, Carnegie Foundation (use your local library to find the names of other funding sources).
- Local Newspapers.
- Town Hall.
- Your Legislators.

Resources also include **ABLEDATA** [www.abledate.com/index.htm](http://www.abledate.com/index.htm), 800-227-

0216; Access Unlimited [www.accessunlimited.com](http://www.accessunlimited.com), 800-849-2143; the **Association of Driver Education for the Disabled (ABED)** P.O. Box 49, Edgerton, WI 53534, 608-884-8833; Disabled Dealers [www.blvd.com/ddm](http://www.blvd.com/ddm) and the **National Mobility Equipment Dealer's Association (NEMEDA)** 800-833-0427.

## RENTAL OF AUTOMOBILES OR VANS

To rent automobiles with hand controls make reservations by phoning the national toll-free telephone numbers listed below. Advanced planning is essential as each rental agency has different requirements and all companies have a limited numbers of cars with hand controls available. In addition, they may not be available at all locations. Be sure to be explicit about your limitation and subsequent needs.

Possible vendors with wheelchair Accessible vans or hand controls include:

- **National Car Rental** – To make reservations, call at least 72 hours in advance. All vehicles are left-hand controlled. There is no deposit required and no extra charge for the equipment. National Car Rental also offers TDD reservation service and cars equipped with special mirrors for the persons who are hearing impaired. The National Car Rental reservation number is 1-800-CAR-RENT and the TDD number is 1-800-328-6323.
- **Avis Rent A Car** – Reservations should be made at least 24 hours in advance. Avis has left and right hand controls. There is no extra charge for the equipment and no deposit required with a credit card. Avis's reservation number is 1-800-331-1212.
- **Hertz Rent a Car** – To rent a vehicle, make reservations at least five days in advance and return the car to the same rental location. Hertz has left and right hand controls. There is no extra charge for the equipment. There is no deposit required with a credit card. A \$25 deposit is required without a credit card. Hertz has TDD reservation service and special mirrors for the hearing impaired. The Hertz reservation number is 1-800-654-3131 and the TDD number is 1-800-654-2280.
- **Wheelchair Getaways** – (available Nationwide), Corporate Headquarters: [wheelchair-getaways.com](http://wheelchair-getaways.com) 800-456-1371 [sgatawood@aol.com](mailto:sgatawood@aol.com), [Airport Leasing, Inc.:](http://AirportLeasing.com) 15 F International Drive, East Granby, Ct 06026 860-653-6093 or 888-334-7981 [vanrental@awtwheels.com](mailto:vanrental@awtwheels.com).