

All the news on Access-A-Ride

AAR Contractors at Javits after getting their vaccine



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Safe Travel on AAR During COVID

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a sweeping order on January 31, 2021 requiring the use of face masks on all forms of public transportation. If customers cannot wear masks please let us know by calling the Comment Line.

To maintain social distancing in enclosed areas, AAR has not resumed shared-ride service and we thank our customers for doing the same by travelling with only one additional person (PCA or Guest) when possible.

Our Broker Service is also working on ensuring that their drivers are wearing masks during your trip. The drivers are being asked to take a 'selfie' (photo of themselves with their smartphone) before they start to drive you to your destination. Thank you for your cooperation.

Remember - fare collection has resumed as of January 19, 2021. Please note: Our drivers don't make change, have exact change ready for each trip: \$2.75. If Fair Fares status has been established by HRA and communicated to AAR your fare per trip is \$1.35, also in exact change.



All AAR vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before starting their route. Read more about AAR's proactive COVID measures in the [last issue of OTM](#).

Paratransit Monthly Stats

As service has increased, performance has remained stable. On-Time Performance has exceeded the goals for both the 30-Minute and 15-Minute windows. Average trip duration or ride time continues to remain low at 26 minutes, a decrease from prior months. Max ride time performance for both Primary and Broker remain at 99%. Visit AAR's performance metrics at our interactive dashboard: <http://aardashboard.mta.info/>

In April 2021, Paratransit weekday trips remain steady at approximately 81% of pre-pandemic levels.

AAR Trip Planning

Now that the snow has melted and the hours of sunshine are expanding each day, we can't help but want to wear our masks and get outside.... Especially if it is to get our COVID vaccine appointments! Here are some helpful tips when scheduling your trips with AAR:

Before you call: Make sure you have a vaccination appointment and that the accessible entrance (if needed) is located at the address provided. Sometimes the older venues may have accessible entrances around the block from the main entrance.

When to call: Reservations can be made 1 – 2 days in advance, 7 days a week, from 7 AM till 5 PM by calling AAR and pressing prompt #2. You can also go to the AAR website to make a reservation (MY AAR / manage my trips) - <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit>) or use the MYmta app - <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements/Mymta-app-for-Access-A-Ride>

On the day of your trip: Always travel with your cell phone so that we can keep in touch. AAR will call or text to tell you your vehicle is on its way. You can also call to check on your trip (prompt #5 operates 24/7 to help). Please reach out to us if there is a change with your return trip and need to reschedule.

If you are traveling within your borough, you may request a “taxi authorization” during the reservation process. You will be responsible for hailing the taxi, paying the metered fare and submitting the receipt for reimbursement (which now can be done online). For more information, visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/policies-and-forms/taxicab-car-service-reimbursement-policy>



“Call back” or “Will call” occurs if the trip cannot be accommodated during the Reservation process. We will ask to call the customer back with the scheduled pickup time.

If the customer agrees to be called back, AAR will call them by 7 PM that evening. If customers haven’t been called by 7 PM, call AAR / Prompt #5 to get the scheduled pickup time.

Update Your Information & Send us Your Latest Photo

As our technology improves, we would like to have an updated photo of you. This will ensure that we can verify who you are during your trip and that no one is using your AAR services. Please contact the Eligibility Unit (prompt #1) to get information on how to submit your photo to AAR and to update your contact information.

Your Destination May Have an AAR Designated Stop

AAR works with large venues (hospitals, colleges, sport complexes etc.) and advocacy organizations to help establish Designated AAR Pickup locations to ensure successful, safe drop-offs and pick-up. NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) establishes the location and signage if approved. You can find a list of Designated AAR Pickup locations online at <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements/designated-aar-pickup-locations>



Some other locations may be within private or high security areas where NYC DOT signage is not an option. However, in both cases, AAR (in conjunction with an organization) establishes the location, specific directions and GPS coordinates in our scheduling system allowing the trip to be scheduled and performed accurately.

Paratransit Welcomes Quemuel Arroyo to the MTA!

On February 4, 2021, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) announced the appointment of Quemuel Arroyo as the Authority's first all-agency Chief Accessibility Officer. Arroyo will have primary responsibility for all matters pertaining to accessibility and will report directly to MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick Foye. Read more at: <https://new.mta.info/press-release/mta-names-quemuel-arroyo-first-all-agency-chief-accessibility-officer>

Eligibility Process Update

In our [last issue of OTM](#) we explained that at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, all six citywide AAR assessment centers were closed, and all in-person paratransit interviews and eligibility assessments were suspended.

At this time, four AAR Assessment Centers have reopened at 25% (pre-pandemic) capacity with appropriate safety and compliant protocols in place. The reopening of the centers supports the return to a closer-to-normal eligibility process.

Paratransit Assessment Centers:

New York Doctors Urgent Care	65 West 13th St., Manhattan
Horizon Healthcare	101 Ellis Street, Staten Island
Excellence Physical Therapy	1811 Hone Avenue, Bronx
OMNI Rehabilitation Center	1651 Coney Island Avenue 2nd Floor, Brooklyn

Those interested in applying for AAR should call the Eligibility Unit at 877-337-2017 and press prompt #1. Agents are available to assist callers Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM.

Please call the Eligibility Unit to ensure that we have the most current information on record such as cell phone, emergency contact, email, home phone and address.

For more information about how to apply or recertify, please visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/how-to-apply-orrecertify-for-access-a-ride>.

Welcome New PAC Members

At the January virtual Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, Co-Chair Ellen Rubin introduced the three new PAC members, Jose Hernandez, Mark Anthony Phifer and Billy Mitchell. Filling all vacancies of the PAC, the new members bring welcomed advocacy experiences. To read more about each member of the PAC, committee guidelines and minutes of past meetings, visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements/access-a-ride-advisory-commitee>

Like with all organizations, the PAC had to forgo meeting in person during COVID and turned to conference calls and Zoom meetings where the members continue to contribute ideas and feedback that improve the delivery of service.

- Most recent, a member suggested an innovative idea to help drivers identify the customers they were picking up by supplying a photo. The photo, the image on file used as their ID photo, would only be available during the pick-up process. A photo ID pilot program is now being tested within our Broker Service.
- Members of the PAC continue to participate in disability awareness projects which supplement our provider's "Train the Trainer" program.
- Upon PAC members requests, bi-monthly meetings feature relevant, customer-driven topics for discussion. For example, the March PAC agenda included a presentation by the disability trainers from the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) focusing on safe transportation of wheelchair users and infraction repercussion.



April 8, 2021: Sarah Feinberg, Interim President, NYCT; Craig Cipriano, President, MTA Bus, Sr. VP NYCT DOB; Patrick Warren, Chief Safety and Security Officer; and Sarah Meyer, Chief Customer Officer, tour Paratransit HQ in Long Island City, Queens with Paratransit Leadership Team. Paratransit has maintained full service for our customers throughout the pandemic which included the shifting over 700 administrative and call center staff from this office to remote access.



March 25, 2021: Drivers from MVP Staten Island give the thumbs up after getting their vaccines at the Javits Center. Along with the AAR carrier drivers, staff and call center agents feature on the front cover of this month's OTM, hundreds of AAR contractors have rolled up their sleeves to keep NYC safe from COVID! Thank you!!

Access-A-Ride (AAR) Telephone Directory

Call 877-337-2017 toll-free from area codes in the NY Metro Area and adjacent counties. Reminder that we have a 718 number and from other area codes, call 718-393-4999. Customers who are deaf/hard of hearing can use their preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service.

After an important announcement, callers will be guided to

- press “1” for English. If “1” is not pressed, callers will hear choices in each of the respective languages:*
- press “2,” for assistance in Spanish*
- press “3,” or assistance in Russian, Chinese, French Creole, Korean or Bengali,*
- press “4.” for all other languages,*

Callers will then be directed to press one of the following prompts:

Prompt #1 – Eligibility Unit

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to assist with eligibility, appeals, certification or application questions and requests for updates to customer’s contact information etc.

Prompt #2 – Trip Planning

Agents are available to make a reservation 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm

Prompt #3 – Agents are available 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm to change a trip.

Prompt #4 – Agents are available 24/7 to cancel a trip.

Prompt #5 – Travel Services

Agents are available 24/7 assistance with same day trip. This may include getting information about your vehicle and its estimated arrival time, help with delays that may arise with your pick-ups or with your return trip such as rescheduling a later pick-up, etc.

Prompt #6 – Subscription Service

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to help arrange, re-schedule or cancel subscription service. This service is offered to any customer who travels from the same location to the same destination at the same time of day for each trip at least one day a week.

Prompt #7 – Automated System

Prompt #8 – Customer Comment Line

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to submit suggestions, commendations, complaints, along with requests for publications, and outreaches. If one prefers, report online.

Callers may repeat the prompt menu by pressing “0.” They may also hold for assistance if they don’t have a touch-tone phone. Conversations with AAR personnel are recorded and may be monitored.

The most updated AAR information, including AAR policies, newsletter and customers' bill of rights are available Online at new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit or via the [MYmta app](#).

Manage and monitor your AAR trips online or via your smartphone. For info and guides, visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/making-a-reservation-and-managing-trips/faqs>

Your questions and comments about On The Move are welcome. Please send them to:
MTA NYC Transit, Department of Buses Paratransit
Division, 130 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Or go to: <https://new.mta.info/customer-feedback>

Follow us on Social Media [@nyctAAR](#)