



Chautauqua Area Regional Transit System

Reasonable Modification Request Policy

Purpose

The Chautauqua Area Regional Transit System (CARTS) is committed to providing safe, reliable, accessible, and user-friendly services to our customers, including those with disabilities. To ensure equal and safe access to all riders, this policy outlines the procedure for receiving, processing, and responding to requests for reasonable modifications to CARTS policies or practices by persons with disabilities.

Legislation

On March 13, 2015, the Department of Transportation issued a Final Ruling regarding 49 CFR Parts 27 and 37 *Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities; Reasonable Modification of Policies and Practices*. This ruling requires public entities providing designated public transportation services to make reasonable modifications / accommodations to policies and practices to ensure program accessibility. The rule further requires that public entities adopt a formal process for tracking and responding to said requests for modifications.

Goal

Effective July 13, 2015, CARTS shall review and revise, the procedure to track all requests for reasonable modification to operational policies and practices to ensure services are accessible to persons with disabilities. As part of this implementation, CARTS will

- Ensure all front-line operators are properly trained to recognize a request for reasonable modifications/ accommodations related to a person's disability, and to properly document said request.
- Review and revise the method of communication that allows front-line operators a means to communicate said request with dispatch personnel to ensure federal guidelines are met.
- Review and revise training for all personnel who have contact with the public (Dispatch, Supervisors, etc.) to ensure they are properly trained on this policy.
- Review and revise a tracking mechanism, within CARTS complaint database, for complaints related to requests for reasonable modifications to ensure that passengers have an opportunity to escalate their requests.

- Ensure that responses to requests and/or complaints are promptly completed and that if a request is not granted, that all steps to the extent possible are taken to ensure services are accessible.
- Designate a single responsible employee as required under the Final Rule, to coordinate all efforts related to these requirements
- Ensure that all forms of communication with the public including website and print media contain information regarding this reasonable modification policy, how requests for accommodation can be made, and in a format that is accessible to an individual with a disability.

Procedure

- Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service.
- Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term “reasonable modification” when making a request.
- Whenever feasible, requests for modifications shall be made and determined in advance, before CARTS is expected to provide the modified service, for example, during the paratransit eligibility process, through customer service inquiries, or through CARTS complaint process.
- Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance, operating personnel shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Operating personnel may consult with CARTS management before making a determination to grant or deny the request.
- Requests for modification of CARTS policies and practices may be denied only on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of CARTS services, programs, or activities
 - b. Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
 - c. Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use CARTS services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose.

Contact

Please call the following numbers to make a request for reasonable accommodation *before* using the service, if at all practicable;

716-665-6466 – Jamestown Office

716-366-4500 - Dunkirk Office

TOLL FREE: 1-800-388-6534

