

**2021 ADA
Participation Group
Forum Meeting Dates**



Please join us for the ADA Participation Group Forum! Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month, **5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The next ADA forum is:

- July 14, 2021
- September 8, 2021
- November 10, 2021

Please note: Due to COVID-19, until further notice all ADA forums will only take place with the health and safety of our passengers and staff in mind. The next ADA forum will be held virtually. To obtain the link to join the meeting or for more information including accommodation requests, please visit the District's website at www.hartfordtransit.org, contact Pat Williams by email: pwilliams@ghtd.org or phone: (860) 380-2011.

Please provide notice prior to the meeting if you would like to share your input with the rest of the attendees. If time allows, all participants will have the opportunity to share their comments and concerns with the group.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next ADA forum!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know that if you have a question, compliment and/or concern about your ADA Paratransit trip we would like to hear from you?

Who do I contact? You may contact the Customer Service Department by calling (860) 724-5340 extension 9, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (For the hearing impaired, please dial Relay of Connecticut at 1-800-833-8134.) You may also contact Customer Service by sending an email to Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com, fax (860) 936-3750 or write:

**Customer Service Department c/o First Transit
148 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT 06108**

How soon should I call? Please contact the Customer Service Department as soon as possible when you wish to report an incident (ideally within 48 hours of the incident).

What information will I need to provide? Please be certain to have the day of the week, date, location, and time of all incidents that you would like to report. Any additional details you can provide will be helpful.

When will I receive a response? Any communication with the Customer Service Department will be addressed in a timely manner.

ADA RIDER TIP: Passengers may cancel trips afterhours from midnight to 4:30 a.m. by calling (860) 724-5340 and selecting "0".

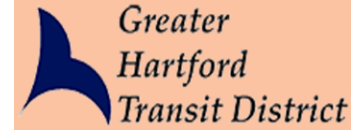


To obtain a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format or if information is needed in another language please contact us at: (860) 247-5329 x 3011
Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al 860-247-5329, extensión 3011.

CONTACT US AT: (860) 724-5340

- Reserve/Cancel/Confirm.....Select 1**
- Dispatch Department.....Select 2**
- ADA Application Request.....Select 4**
- SpanishSelect 5**
- Subscription Service.....Select 6**
- Service UpdatesSelect 8**
- Customer Service Select 9**

Published June 2021



THE S.T.A.R.
(Safe, Timely, Accessible, Reliable)
ADA Paratransit Newsletter
Spring / Summer 2021



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WEEKEND FARE-FREE RIDES!

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND through LABOR DAY WEEKEND



Whether you have been riding with us throughout the pandemic, are just coming back, or are taking ADA Paratransit for the first time, **WELCOME ABOARD!**

Along with other public transit agencies across Connecticut, the Greater Hartford Transit District will be offering **weekend fare-free ADA Paratransit service this summer from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.** Beginning on Saturday May 29, 2021 and continuing on weekends through Labor Day, Monday September 6, 2021, passengers can book their rides and not pay a fare on the specified dates.

In addition to Saturdays and Sundays, the fare-free transportation dates will also include:

- **Memorial Day – Monday, May 31, 2021**
- **Independence Day — Monday, July 5, 2021**
- **Labor Day — Monday, September 6, 2021**

Regular fares will be required on weekdays. Holidays operate on a reduced Sunday CTtransit schedule. Bus services in this promotion also include all CTtransit local routes! In March 2021, Governor Ned Lamont announced plans to launch "Weekend Wheels" as part of his efforts to help the state and its residents recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is being supported with funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act.

The governor said that the fare-free weekend bus service dovetails with other pandemic recovery initiatives his administration is launching this summer, such as his proposal to create a program that will allow all children in Connecticut to visit museums and other tourist attractions throughout the state free of charge this summer, such as Beardsley Zoo, the Connecticut Science Center, and the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, all of which are on CTtransit bus routes with weekend service.

"In addition to offering some economic relief to families that rely on bus service, this fare-free weekend initiative will encourage residents to visit locally owned businesses and help support Connecticut's economy in communities that have been heavily affected by the economic impact of the pandemic," Governor Lamont said. "I am appreciative of the local transit districts that are partnering with the state on Weekend Wheels."

("Governor Lamont Announces Weekend Wheels Fare-Free Summer Bus Service Will Also Include All Local Public Bus routes In Connecticut", (2021), <https://www.cttransit.com/news/governor-lamont-announces-weekend-wheels-fare-free-summer-bus-service-will-also-include-all>)

ENCOMPASS UPDATES

THE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL WITH NO LIMITATIONS



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 31 year Anniversary

On July 26, 2021 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) turns 31! The ADA became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

Celebrate and tell your story! Use any media of your choosing (video, pictures, written word, or other). Then post to social media using #ADA31 or #ThanksToTheADA. Find out more about how to celebrate at www.adaanniversary.org.

Want to learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act? Explore FAQs, Fact Sheets, and more by going to <https://adata.org/topic/transportation>.

In our Winter 2021 ADA Paratransit Newsletter, we shared information about the new grant-funded transportation program called Encompass. Encompass is an on-demand ambulatory and wheelchair transportation program for seniors (ages 60 and older) and individuals with disabilities, using the M7 taxi. Trips can be booked 24/7, 365 days a year. The service area has recently increased to include the towns of Berlin, Bristol, Cromwell, East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, West Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor. At this time applicants must live in one of the service area towns in order to be approved for the program. In addition, trips must begin or end in one of these service area towns for transportation. The Encompass website has also been made more accessible! Visit the website <https://encompass.m7ride.com/> and you will find the words "Accessibility" in the top right corner. This will allow individuals viewing the website to have an accessibility menu of items to make the text larger, increase the color contrast, and other tools to make it easier for individuals with disabilities to navigate the website. Interested applicants can apply through the website or can apply using a paper application. To receive a paper application or for additional information about the program, please call (860) 444-4444 extension 1 or (860) 380-2006, or visit the Encompass website.

Pictured: M7 cabs transport Encompass passengers 24/7, 365 days a year. The cabs include wheelchair-accessible vehicles upon request.



COVID-19 VACCINE FACTS: DID YOU KNOW?

COVID-19 vaccines do not provide 100% protection, which means 1 in every 20 people who are vaccinated can still get COVID-19. Widespread COVID protection requires time. It takes two weeks after your last dose of the vaccine to reach full effectiveness and about 7 in every 10 people must be vaccinated to secure your community. Wearing a mask while we strive toward herd immunity is important since not everyone will be able to get vaccinated to protect themselves. Certain people may not be able to get vaccinated, including: cancer patients, individuals who have coronavirus or recently recovered from the virus, some elderly patients, immunocompromised people, and individuals who are pregnant or lactating. Remind yourself that everyone is in this unusual situation together and wearing a mask is a gesture of kindness to others. (The Lexington Group, Inc., "Wearing Masks in 2021", (2021).

TSA EXTENDS TRANSPORTATION MASK REQUIREMENT

MASKS REQUIRED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is extending the face mask requirement for individuals across all transportation networks throughout the United States, including at airports, onboard commercial aircraft, on over-the-road buses, and on commuter bus and rail systems through September 13. TSA's initial face mask requirement went into effect on February 1 with an expiration date of May 11.

"The federal mask requirement throughout the transportation system seeks to minimize the spread of COVID-19 on public transportation," said Darby LaJoye, the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the TSA Administrator. "Right now, about half of all adults have at least one vaccination shot and masks remain an important tool in defeating this pandemic. We will continue to work closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to evaluate the need for these directives and recognize the significant level of compliance thus far." The CDC recently announced that fully vaccinated travelers with an FDA-authorized vaccine can travel safely within the U.S., but the CDC guidelines still require individuals to wear a face mask, socially distance, and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. The extension of the face mask requirement is consistent with this most recent CDC guidance. TSA encourages all commuters, and airline and bus travelers, including people considering international travel, to stay up to date with any changes to these requirements by checking the TSA and CDC websites prior to taking their trip.

While this announcement extends the date of enforcement, all other aspects of the requirement remain unchanged, including exemptions and civil penalties. Exemptions to the face mask requirement for travelers under the age of 2 years old and those with certain disabilities will continue. The existing civil penalty fine structure will also remain in place which starts at \$250 and rises to \$1,500 for repeat offenders who violate this face mask requirement.

For more information about the Security Directives and Emergency Amendment, visit tsa.gov/sd-and-ea. For additional information about TSA procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of their "Stay Healthy. Stay Secure" public awareness campaign, visit tsa.gov/coronavirus.

FACE MASKS



REQUIRED



Señor Pepe's Pointers for Spring and Summer During COVID-19

Señor Pepe has been a "good boy" by wearing his mask each time he boards the ADA bus. However, as you can see, he needs some help wearing his mask properly! Pepe says, "There are some do's and don't when wearing a mask!"

DO:

- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin entirely
- Adjust the mask to your face without having gaps on the sides
- Discard the mask after use, preferably into a closed bin

DON'T:

- Do not wear the mask only over your mouth or nose
- Do not wear a loose mask
- Do not remove the mask to talk to someone
- Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others

If you have questions about our policies during COVID-19, please contact our Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 x 9 or email Hartford.CustomerService@firstgroup.com.

