

TD Paratransit Podcast Transcript

Host 1: Hey everyone, ready to learn about something really important. We're doing a deep dive into transportation disadvantaged paratransit services.

Host 2: You might know it better as TD Paratransit. Exactly.

Host 1: You know, for folks who might not be able to use the regular buses or trolleys .

Host 2: Makes sense. Yeah.

Host 1: It's provided by Space Coast Area Transit, and we're going to figure out like who can use it, how to apply all that good stuff.

Host 2: It's really interesting. You know, they've thought about all kinds of situations where people might need a little extra help getting around. Oh, like what? Yeah. Well, even stuff like if you have a service animal, they've got accommodations for that.

Host 1: That's good to know. Okay, so first things first, let's break it down.

Sure. Okay, so TD Paratransit. It's a bit of a mouthful, I'll admit, but it sounds incredibly important. So what exactly is it

Host 2: Okay, so TD Paratransit is the service specifically for people who can't use, , Space Coast Area Transit's regular buses and trolleys.

Host 1: The fixed routes, right?

Host 2: Yeah, the fixed routes.

Host 1: Okay.

Host 2: They have accessible vehicles, and they operate from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Host 1: So it's really all about making transportation accessible.

Host 2: Exactly.

Host 1: . So if I'm picturing this right, it's like a personalized transportation service, tailored for accessibility. But that makes me wonder, who exactly is eligible for TD Paratransit?

Host 2: That's a great question.

And it's where things get really interesting. You might assume it's just for people with physical disabilities, but, um, the eligibility criteria are much broader than that. It includes seniors who might have difficulty navigating public transportation, individuals with low incomes who may not have access to a car, and even, you know, Even children with disabilities or those at

higher risk. And it's not just physical disabilities, it could be a mental thing too. Anything that prevents you from using the fixed routes.

Host 1: But now I'm a little confused. How is this different from ADA paratransit? I thought those were basically the same

Host 2: thing. Yeah, it's easy to get them mixed up. They both address transportation for people with disabilities, but there's a crucial distinction.

TD Paratransit, as we've been discussing, serves a broader range of individuals, individuals who face transportation barriers. ADA Paratransit, on the other hand, is specifically mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For individuals with disabilities who can't use the fixed route bus system, think of it this way.

ADA Paratransit is a subset of TD Paratransit.

Host 1: Okay, so ADA Paratransit is specifically for people with disabilities who can't use the regular buses. Well TD Paratransit covers those folks plus others who face transportation challenges. That clears things up a bit. So let's say someone listening realizes they might be eligible for TD Paratransit.

What's the next step? How do they go about applying?

Host 2: Well, Space Coast Area Transit has made the application process pretty straightforward. You have two options. You can apply online, which is convenient, or you can print out the application and mail it in. The key thing is to make sure you include all the necessary documentation you see to support your eligibility.

Host 1A: Documentation? Like What?

Host 2: It could be things like a doctor's note. Proof of age or documentation of income. The specifics depend on your situation. Once you've submitted your application, it typically takes about 21 days for them to process it.

Host 1: 21 days?

Host 2: Yeah. So don't wait till the last minute.

Host 1: Good point.

Host 2: Yeah.

Host 1: Now, what happens if your application gets denied?

Host 2: Oh, if that happens, you can appeal it.

Host 2B: There's a link on the page... called... um

Host 2: The Paratransit Eligibility Appeal Form.

Host 1: Okay, so there's a process.

Host 2: There's a process, yeah. Don't worry.

Host 1: That's reassuring.

Host 2: Yeah.

Host 1: So, okay, let's say you applied, you got approved, now you want to book a ride.

How do you do that?

Host 2: You just call Space Coast Area Transit's ride line. But you gotta call before 2pm the day before you need the ride.

Host 1: Gotcha, so plan ahead.

Host 2: A little bit, yeah.

Host 1: Okay.

Host 2: But the good news is, you can book up to 7 days in advance.

Host 1: Oh, nice. So you have some flexibility.

Host 2: Yeah, you do.

Host 1: What about if you need to, like, go to work or a doctor's appointment at the same time every week?

Host 2: Oh, they have recurring trips. You can just set it up so you don't have to call every time.

Host 1: That's so convenient.

Host 2: It is, right.

Host 1: Okay, speaking of convenience, what about the fares? How much does it cost?

Host 2: Okay, so single passes are \$1.50.

Host 1: Okay.

Host 2: You can pay with cash when you get on, but make sure you have exact change.

Host 1: Right.

Host 2: Or, you can use this app they have. It's called Token Transit.

Host 1: Cool. So they have options for folks who like to pay with their phones. And for those who prefer cash.

Host 2: Yep.

Host 1: Now, you mentioned Token Transit. Do they have anything besides single ride fares?

Host 2: Oh, yeah.

You can buy a 10 ride pass on there. Nice. And you can also buy the 10 ride passes at their offices in Melbourne and Cocoa.

Host 1: Okay.

Host 2: Or by mail or phone or online.

Host 1: Wow, they really thought of everything. They

Host 2: really did.

Host 1: Okay, I have another question. Shoot. What if someone needs, like, a personal care attendant?

Do they have to pay too? Hmm.

Host 2: No, PCA's ride for free.

Host 1: Oh, that's good.

Host 2: But companions do have to pay, unless they're 15 or younger.

Host 1: Okay.

Host 2: Important thing to remember though, you have to let them know when you book the ride, if you're bringing a PCA or a companion.

Host 1: So they can make sure there's enough space.

Host 2: Exactly. And you can only bring two companions, besides your PCA.

Host 1: So four people total, max.

Host 2: Yeah. They gotta make sure it works for everyone, you know.

Host 1: Mm

Host 2: hmm. Makes sense.

Host 1: Yeah. What about kids? Do they ride free?

Host 2: Kids 15 and under ride free if you're a fair paying passenger.

Host 1: Awesome. Good for families. Mm

Host 2: hmm.

Host 1: We talked about service animals earlier. Right. They're always allowed. But what about Emotional support animals or pets.

Host 2: So, service animals are always good, but emotional support animals and pets aren't allowed?

Host 1: I see.

Host 2: There's a difference, you know? Right.

Host 1: Service animals are trained for specific tasks.

Host 2: Exactly. The DOT ADA regulations, they define a service animal as, you know, one that's trained to do work, to help someone with a disability.

Host 1: Like guide dogs for people who can't see?

Host 2: Yep. Or even ones that can fetch things if you can't bend down. Mm hmm.

Host 1: That's amazing. Those dogs are so smart.

Host 2: They are.

Host 1: Okay. So service animals? Yes. Emotional support animals and pets? No.

Host 2: Right.

Host 1: Got it.

Host 2: Okay.

Host 1: What if you're just visiting Brevard County? Can you use TD Paratransit?

Host 2: Yeah. If you're eligible for ADA Paratransit where you live, you can use it here for up to 21 days. For free? For free. You just gotta show, like, your ADA Paratransit certification.

Okay. You can email it to them, fax it, mail it, or drop it off in person.

Host 1: So many options.

Host 2: Mm.

Host 1: What if you need it for longer than 21 days?

Host 2: Then you gotta apply through Space Coast Area Transit, just like a resident.

Host 1: Got it. So they have options for visitors, too.

Host 2: They do! It's really great.

Host 1: This is so helpful. I feel like I'm learning so much.

Host 2: Me too, and we're just getting started!

Host 1: Absolutely. We've covered like, the eligibility, the applications, how to book rides, the fares, all that good stuff.

Host 2: Right, the basics.

Host 1: But I'm really curious about what this all means for, you know, the people who actually use TD Paratransit, and for the whole community.

Host 2: I think it's important to remember that TD Paratransit, it's not just about getting someone to their destination.

Host 1: It's more than that.

Host 2: Yeah. It's about, like, empowering them to live their lives.

Host 1: You're right. We kind of take transportation for granted.

Host 2: Yeah.

Host 1: If you couldn't get to a doctor's appointment or to work, or even just, like, meet a friend for coffee, that'd be tough.

Host 2: Exactly. So it's really about removing those barriers and making society more inclusive.

Host 1: Absolutely. Yeah. When everyone can get around and participate, it benefits everyone, right?

Host 2: Exactly. It's like a ripple effect.

Host 1: We've heard some really inspiring stories about people who use TD Paratransit.

Host 2: Oh yeah.

Host 1: People who are able to keep working or go to school or just like stay connected with their families.

Host 2: It's amazing how much of a difference it makes.

Host 1: It really highlights the human impact.

Host 2: Yeah.

Host 1: You know? It's not just about logistics.

Host 2: Right. These are real people's lives.

Host 1: It reminds you that transportation, it's not just a convenience. it's Like a fundamental right almost.

Host 2: Exactly. It's about dignity, opportunity, freedom.

Host 1: And we should make sure everyone has that, don't you think?

Host 2: Absolutely.

Host 1: Well, that's all the time we have for today.

Host 2: Already? It feels like we just got started.

Host 1: I know, right? But thanks to everyone for joining us.

Host 2: Keep learning, keep exploring, and keep advocating for a better world for everyone.