

Chittenden County Elderly & Disabled Transportation

Ride Guide Information Handbook



Prepared by



**United Way of
Northwest Vermont**

In cooperation with

Special Services
Transportation
Agency



About this guide: the purpose of this document is to enable riders to make use of information regarding E&D Transportation, and to better understand a valuable service available to them in our community.

This document includes:

An overview of E&D Transportation and the other transportation options that complement its mission

Pages 3-4

Ride types available and how to determine current allowed rides

Page 5

A one page, Step-by-Step Guide to Scheduling a Ride:

Page 6

Frequently Asked Questions

Page 7

Winter Weather and No-Show Policies

Page 8

Contact information:

- who to contact with questions and feedback
- how to make a donation to support this service

Page 9

Program Overview

E&D Transportation is a program to support community members through affordable transportation to medical appointments, access to fresh food at the grocery store and social visits with friends and family. In Chittenden County, Green Mountain Transit (formerly CCTA) contracts with Special Services Transportation to provide the service.

The E&D transportation program is specifically designed to serve individuals who live more than 3/4 of a mile away from a bus route. We use a combination of lift-equipped vans, sedans and minivans, along with volunteer drivers who use personal vehicles to get you where you need to go. Last year, E&D Transportation provided over 20,000 rides to people in Chittenden County alone.

Program Eligibility

If you are:

- **60 years of age or older**

And/or

- **You live with an ADA defined disability**

There is no income requirement, application or physical exam required.

To determine eligibility, and start riding, call SSTA at **802.878.1527**, and the operator will work with you to determine your eligibility.

If eligible, you may be able to start using E&D transportation immediately, or you may be referred to a partner agency who will work with you to determine your qualification status.

Fares

E&D operates on a suggested donation between \$0.00 and \$2.50. Please pay what you are able. The suggested donation is collected in cash at the time of the ride.

Please refer to the online guide at ([URL!](#)) for the donation currently suggested by your provider-partner.

Combined Rides: SSTA creates a schedule that will efficiently use their vehicles over the course of the day. If the vehicle and schedule allow it, your ride may be combined with that of one or more other passengers.

Door to Door: SSTA's drivers and volunteers provide door to door service, meaning that they will accompany you from your door to the vehicle, and from the vehicle into the door of your destination.

Missed Ride: If you miss your scheduled SSTA trip home through circumstances beyond your control, or your appointment is running late and you know you will miss a scheduled ride, please call SSTA at 802.878.1527 as soon as possible in order to have a new ride scheduled. SSTA will dispatch a driver to complete your trip at the next available opportunity.

Other Services:

You may also be eligible for other programs that provide transportation at little to no cost to you, that can complement the services provided through E&D transportation.

GMT Fixed Route: Green Mountain Transit's fixed route buses are equipped with lifts and drivers are trained to meet mobility needs. Information on their service can be found at <http://ridegmt.com/gmt-schedules/> or by contacting GMT at 802.864.2282.

Essex Senior Vans: Residents of the Town of Essex (including Essex Junction) over the age of 60 can use this service within Essex as well as certain eligible destinations in Colchester and Williston. To schedule a ride call 802.878.6940 weekdays 9:00am to 12:00pm or 802.876.5087 weekdays 10:00am to 4:00pm.

South Burlington Shopping Shuttle: Free weekly shuttles are available from senior housing complexes to local super markets. For more information call GMT: 802.864.2282.

GMT ADA Transportation*: Federal guidelines require that GMT make door to door service with lift-equipped vehicles available to persons with **ADA defined disabilities** traveling within three quarters of a mile of fixed route bus service. One way fare is \$2.50. Ride eligibility is determined through an application process—request an application by calling 802.540.0874 or email jposner@ridegmt.com. For more information please see <http://ridegmt.com/wp-content/uploads/ADAParatransitGuide.pdf>

Medicaid Transportation: Medicaid provides transportation to qualified patients so that they can attend medical appointments. If your trip qualifies for Medicaid funding, Medicaid will take precedence over all other ride funding sources. Call SSTA at 802.878.1527 to determine eligibility. Medicaid trips are always free.

What can I use the rides for?

In Chittenden County each program partner sets its own parameters for allowable rides, so the number of rides you are eligible for per month may be different depending on where you live. The best way to determine the current ride parameters is to **visit xxxx website at www.xxxxxx.org**, or call GMT at 802.540.0878

Eligible Trip Purpose Categories	Definitions	Trip Examples
Critical Care	Non-Medicaid transportation to kidney dialysis and cancer treatment appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney Dialysis • Regular Chemotherapy
Medical	All trips to non-emergency medical appointments accept critical care as defined above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical & mental health appointments • Specialist visits • Dental and eye care
Meals Programs	Trips to local congregate meal programs or group settings for seniors at a meal site approved by the local AAA as outlined by the Older Americans Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meal sites • AgeWell's popular Restaurant Ticket program. More information can be found here. (Link)
Adult Day Services	Trips to access Adult Day programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional nursing services, respite, personal care, therapeutic activities, nutritious meals, support and education to families and caregivers
Shopping	Trips to local grocery stores and pharmacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food shopping and pharmacy services.
Vocational	Trips related to paid employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid employment, interviews or training programs.
Social/Personal	Trips for socialization and/or personal trips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit with friends/family • Recreational opportunities or events • Religious services • Activities that support health/wellness • Popular shopping destinations; Walmart, University Mall, Church Street Marketplace

How to Schedule a Ride?

Call SSTA: 802.878.1527, Monday – Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

By 4:30 PM, the day before your ride

In order to schedule a ride, you must call **SSTA at 802.878.1527 before 4:30pm the day before** your ride is needed.

Your customer service representative will ask you questions to help determine:

- Your Formal/Legal Name
- The exact street addresses of trip's origin and destination
- Day of travel and preferred pick-up or drop-off times
- Any mobility devices you'll be bringing with you
- The name of anyone will be accompanying you on your trip

Pick Up Rides:

Pick-up rides are for situations where you must leave at a certain time (for example if a class session ends at 10:00am, you would be asked to be picked up at 10:00am)

Drop Off Rides:

Drop-off rides are for situations where you must be at an appointment by a certain time (for example, if you have an appointment beginning at 11:00am).

The night before your ride

The SSTA staff use scheduling software to assign drivers and vehicles to the rides that have been requested the night before the ride.

You will then receive an automated phone call with your ride's scheduled time. This is your estimated ride time.

The day of your ride

SSTA asks that you be ready to leave **within five minutes during your 30 minute pickup window**.

The pickup window begins the 10 minutes before your scheduled ride time, and ends 20 minutes after. You can be picked up before your scheduled time if you are ready and your vehicle arrives early.

You will be contacted by SSTA in the event of any day-of changes.

Canceling a ride?

Please call 802.878.1527 as soon as you know your plans have changed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the volunteers?

All volunteer drivers are verified by federal and state background checks, have a clean driving record and complete a vehicle safety inspection. Volunteers use personal vehicles to transport community members and are reimbursed for miles driven. While you cannot request a volunteer driver, one may be assigned to you depending on your mobility status.

Volunteers are recruited by the Neighbor Rides program through United Way of Northwest Vermont, directly by SSTA and sometimes by the partner agencies themselves. Volunteers dramatically reduce the cost of rides to the system, and enable more rides to be provided.

What is an ADA defined disability?

An ADA defined disability that qualifies an individual for paratransit is “a mobility need that limits an individual’s ability to access and/or ride a local, regular route bus, either some of the time or all of the time.”

Can I schedule one way or round trips interchangeably?

Yes! When viewing the current ride parameters, any round trips can be broken up into two one way trips. There is no incentive for traveling using round trips and riders are encouraged to use their trips in the way that is best for them.

What if I didn’t receive an automated phone call the night prior to my requested ride?

Call 802.878.1527 and speak with SSTA’s call center staff to confirm your ride during business hours, or leave a message at the same number after hours and you will be contacted at the next opportunity.

What do I do if an appointment runs late resulting in a missed ride?

If you miss your scheduled SSTA trip home through circumstances beyond your control, or your appointment is running late and you know you will miss a scheduled ride, please call SSTA dispatch as soon as possible in order to have a new ride scheduled. SSTA will dispatch a driver to complete your trip at the next available opportunity.

Can I schedule a ride for myself and a friend?

Care companions are always permitted at no extra cost. Other riders may be able to join your ride if seats are available. SSTA should always be notified of additional riders at the time the ride is scheduled.

How many bags can I bring with me?

Each passenger is allowed to travel with 2 grocery bags. All baggage needs to be carried by the passenger.

Do I need exact change to make a donation?

Your driver will not have the ability to make change. However, suggested donations are strictly voluntary and riders are welcome to give more or less than the suggested donation.

Consider making a gift to your partner organization or to SSTA if you would like to support this service—for more information on how to give to support a partner’s funding contribution please visit ([URL!](#)) or call ([Jordan’s Number?](#))

What do I do if I need a ride right away?

This service is not emergency transportation and is not designed to accommodate urgent and/or emergency rides.

Is E&D Transportation available in other areas of Vermont?

All regions of Vermont have an E&D transportation program, though there are differences in how they are administered. Please contact the local transit provider to learn more.

Can I use E&D Transportation for trips outside of Chittenden County?

In general, trips through Chittenden County E&D Transportation are limited to destinations within Chittenden County.

Trips outside the county can be approved only rarely, and are evaluated on a case by case basis by the funding partner.

Are service animals allowed?

Service dogs and miniature horses are welcomed to board.

Other Policies and Important Information

Winter Weather

SSTA's drivers are experienced with driving in Winter and inclement weather conditions, and best efforts are made to keep this service running safely even in snow events. Service is rarely cancelled system wide, as there can be variable conditions across the county.

Given an approaching snowstorm, SSTA will notify affected riders between 5:00am and 8:00am the morning of cancelled service. SSTA takes into account the need for return service and therefore may cancel trips preemptively, even if a storm has yet to arrive if they believe they will not be able to get you home safely.

Drivers may make a final determination at the time of a ride that the route or access is unsafe. In this circumstance, the rider will be contacted by SSTA dispatch. Riders should feel confident that if SSTA is continuing service, their round trip will be completed safely.

Winter Weather Preparedness and Snow Removal:

In the interest of safety, SSTA asks that driveways, paths and entry ways necessary for door-to-door service are clear prior to the trip.

SSTA may use large, lift equipped vehicles for all/any rides to allow for efficient scheduling. These vehicles are 8.5 feet wide, 26 feet long and require 11 feet of overhead clearance to maneuver safely. If your property includes a long driveway or single lane access road, SSTA's vans will need a 20 by 40 foot area in order to turn around. In order to accommodate these vehicles, SSTA asks that turnaround space be cleared of snow, ice or debris.

Even if you have performed adequate snow removal on your property, your trip may still be cancelled due to unsafe conditions on state or town managed roads. In this circumstance, the rider is advised to contact their funding partner

Failure to Board

Failure to board incidents, or No Shows add cost to the system and create scheduling challenges. The following is GMT's official failure to board policy for non-Medicaid paratransit:

Policy: The purpose of this policy is to minimize repeated failure to board incidents in order to make the best use of scarce transportation resources and maintain high quality service. The policy is as follows:

- If a passenger schedules a ride with GMT's contracted paratransit service provider and cannot meet the vehicle, s/he must cancel the scheduled ride at least two (2) hours before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Canceling a ride less than two hours before scheduled pickup time can result in being charged with a 'failure to board.'
- After you have scheduled and confirmed your pickup time, your ride may arrive up to ten (10) minutes before or up to twenty (20) minutes after your confirmed pick up time. Please be ready to board the bus within five minutes of its arrival within this "pick up window."
- Not being ready to board the vehicle within five minutes of its arrival can result in being charged with a "failure to board."
- If a customer exhibits a pattern or practice of repeated failures to board, that customer will have their travel privileges suspended for an appropriate period of time.

Appeals

If you feel that you received a no-show or failure to board in error, or because of circumstances beyond your control, you are able to file a written appeal, which can be sent to:

Green Mountain Transit
Attn: Jordan Posner
101 Queen City Park Road
Burlington, VT 05401

Contact information:

To determine your eligibility or provide program feedback, call your program partner contact shown by town of residence in the table below.

To Schedule a Ride, Call SSTA at: 802.878.1527. Hours: 7:30– 4:30, Monday through Friday.

Town	Program Partner	Contact	Phone
Bolton	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Burlington*	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Charlotte	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Colchester*	Town of Colchester	Geoff Urbanik	802.434.5170
Essex (Including Essex Junction)*	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Hinesburg	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Huntington	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Jericho	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Milton	Milton Family Community Center	Vikki Patterson	802.893.1457
Richmond	Town of Richmond	Josh Arneson	(802) 434-5170
Shelburne*	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
South Burlington*	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
St. George	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Underhill	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Westford	AgeWell	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Williston*	Town of Williston	Jordan Posner	802.540.0874
Winooski*	City of Winooski	Barbara Pitfido	802.655.6425
Special Areas/ Facilities*			
AgeWell Meal Sites	AgeWell	Erica Marks	802.662.5224
Cathedral Square Properties Residents	Cathedral Square	Beth Alpert	802.482.7757
Champlain Senior Center	Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront	Candice Holbrook	802.865.7247
UVM MC Home, Health, & Hospice	UVM MC Home, Health, & Hospice	Heather Filonow	802.860.4438

We need your help!

Please consider a gift to support E&D Transportation!

Last year we served 603 riders in Chittenden County, helping people to access services they rely on, maintain connections in their community, and access critical medical services.

When you make a donation to support E&D Transportation in Chittenden County, your tax deductible gift is matched 4 for 1 by a grant from the Federal Transportation Administration.

In order to make a gift, please see the attached mailing address list to determine who is your partner and how to reach them.

Together we can keep this service affordable for all our riders, and make our community a more connected, healthier place to live.

Feedback:

E&D clients are surveyed annually about their experience with the E&D Transportation service. Riders are encouraged to reach out to their program partner contact with questions and comments. We value your honest feedback and use this data to help improve our service.

Happy riding!



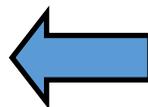
www.sstarides.org

SSTA Wallet Card

Take this card with you.

Missed your ride home?

Please call **802.878.1527**



Please cut this card out and take it with you in case you miss your return ride. If you are at an appointment that runs longer than expected, please dial the number on the card to be connected with a dispatcher.