

# DISABILITY & AGING RIGHTS



DEVELOPED BY EQUIP FOR EQUALITY UNDER A GRANT PROVIDED BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING



## TRANSPORTATION

# Taxi Service and People with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that protects the rights of people with disabilities, including older adults with physical, sensory, mental and cognitive impairments, when using private taxi services, including limousine services. Title III of the ADA covers some types of taxi vehicles and all private taxi service.

The ADA does not require that transportation service, including private taxi service, be provided in every community where people live. However, if private taxi service is provided, it must comply with some limited ADA requirements for accessibility for people with disabilities.

### Service requirements

Service requirements that apply to all taxi service:

- Cannot refuse to serve a person with a disability who can use taxi vehicles
- Cannot charge higher fares or fees for carrying people with disabilities and their equipment than are charged to other people
- Must provide help stowing mobility devices (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.)
- Must allow service animals to ride with passengers with disabilities

Taxi drivers do not have to help with transfers, lifting, or other types of personal assistance.

### Accessible vehicles

An accessible vehicle has a lift or a ramp, a securement system for wheelchairs and other mobility devices, and a seatbelt and shoulder harness for the passenger who uses a mobility device. There must be enough room inside the vehicle to allow the passenger to reach the securement location. When the mobility device is secured, it shouldn't move more than 2 inches in any direction, under normal conditions.

### Are taxi companies required to have any accessible vehicles?

It depends. The answer is no if the taxi company purchases only new or used sedans, or used vans. However, if a taxi company purchases any new vans (including minivans), it must buy accessible vehicles, unless the

company is already providing “equivalent service” to people with disabilities.

To figure out if a private taxi company is providing “equivalent service” to passengers with disabilities who need an accessible vehicle, you need to look at its system as a whole. All aspects of the accessible service must be the same as the service provided for someone who doesn't need an accessible vehicle: response time, fares, service areas, hours and days of service, availability of service and reservations.

Taxi companies have to keep accessible features like ramps and securement systems in good working condition and fix them quickly when they are not working or damaged.

### Training

All personnel involved in providing taxi service, including reservations/dispatch employees, must be “trained to proficiency” in serving customers with disabilities, in relation to their duties. For example, this means that taxi drivers must be trained in:

- How to use and maintain accessibility features and equipment in accessible vehicles
- Proper securement of mobility devices
- Sensitive and appropriate interaction with passengers with disabilities
- Understanding the requirements of the ADA



## What can you do if you have a disability-related problem with a private taxi or limousine service?

First, and most important, let the company know about any problems. If you can, make your complaint in writing (email or letter). Give them as much information as possible (description of what happened, date, time, location, etc.). Keep a copy for your records.

You can file an ADA complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line:

**1-800-514-0301** or **1-800-514-0383** (TTY)  
[www.ada.gov/filing\\_complaint.htm](http://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm)  
[ADA.complaint@usdoj.gov](mailto:ADA.complaint@usdoj.gov)  
**U.S. Department of Justice,**  
**950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Civil Rights**  
**Division, Disability Rights Section – 1425**  
**NYAV, Washington, DC 20530**

You can also file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights, which has offices in Chicago, Springfield and Marion. Submit a completed “Public Accommodations Complainant Information Sheet” in person or by mail. A charge of discrimination must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.

[www2.illinois.gov/dhr/FilingCharge/Pages/Public\\_Accommodations.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/dhr/FilingCharge/Pages/Public_Accommodations.aspx)  
**1-312-814-6200** or **1-866-740-3953** (TTY)  
 Chicago office: **100 W. Randolph St.,**  
**10th Floor, Intake Unit, Chicago, IL 60601**

Another option is to file a complaint with the Illinois Attorney General’s Disability Rights Bureau. Send a letter to: **Office of the Attorney General, Chicago Disability Rights Bureau, James R. Thompson Center, 11th Floor, 100 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601.** Include as many details as possible.

[www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/disabilityrights.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/disabilityrights.html)  
**1-312-814-5684** or **1-800-964-3013** (TTY)

Many taxi and limousine companies are licensed and regulated by the cities and towns where they operate. Check with your local government office to find out if they act on complaints about private taxi or limousine services.

For more information about this and other topics, contact Equip for Equality at **1-800-537-2632** or visit [www.EquipForEquality.org](http://www.EquipForEquality.org).

## Additional helpful resources and links

**Easter Seals Project ACTION** is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation to promote access to transportation for people with disabilities by providing training, technical assistance, research, outreach and communication.

**1-800-659-6428.**  
[www.projectaction.org/Resources/Publications/TaxiServices.aspx](http://www.projectaction.org/Resources/Publications/TaxiServices.aspx)

**Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund** provides advocacy for and training about accessible transportation.

**1-510-644-2555 or 1-510-841-8645 (Fax/TTY)**  
**info@dredf.org**  
**www.dredf.org/public-policy/transportation/**

**U.S. Access Board** issues ADA standards for transportation facilities and vehicles:  
**www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/transportation**

**Community Transportation Association of America** is a national association of organizations and people that provides programs and services to remove barriers and improve mobility for all people, particularly senior citizens and people with disabilities.

**1341 G St. NW, 10th Floor**  
**Washington, DC 20005**  
**1-800-891-0590**  
**www.ctaa.org**

**The National Center on Senior Transportation** strives to increase transportation options for older adults to support their ability to live independently in their homes and communities throughout the United States.

**1-866-528-6278**  
**ncst@easterseals.com**  
**www.seniortransportation.net/ResourcesPublications/Taxis.aspx** ■



**Equip for Equality**  
20 North Michigan Avenue  
Suite 300  
Chicago, IL 60602

[www.equipforequality.org](http://www.equipforequality.org)  
1-800-537-2632  
1-800-610-2779 (TTY)

**Illinois Department on Aging**  
One Natural Resources Way  
Suite 100  
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Senior HelpLine:  
1-800-252-8966  
1-888-206-1327 (TTY)  
[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel like you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).