

Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois

ADA Transportation Policy

Purpose

It is the goal of the Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois (VAC), through its public transit services, to design, implement, and maintain a safe, efficient, effective, and accessible transportation system for persons with disabilities. VAC works to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation to enhance the social and economic quality of life for all people of the communities we serve.

Policy

It is the policy of VAC to abide by all provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, and US Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations found at 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38, as amended, in the delivery of transit services that are open to the public and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and sets specific requirements that transit agencies must follow.

Wheelchair Definition

For the purposes of this policy a wheelchair is defined as a three-or-more wheeled mobility aid device, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

With respect to the size and weight of wheelchairs, VAC will transport a wheelchair and its user, as long as the lift can accommodate the size and weight of the passenger and the wheelchair, and there is space for the wheelchair on the vehicle. However, VAC is not required to carry a wheelchair if, in fact, the lift or vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair and its user, consistent with legitimate safety requirements according to the lift manufacturers.

Transportation of Persons with Disabilities

The VAC is committed to ensuring safe, efficient, and effective transportation for persons with disabilities, as provided by the ADA and related DOT regulations (both as amended) and will abide by the following:

- VAC's vehicles will be lift equipped and have securement systems for wheelchairs.
- VAC requires that wheelchair users permit their wheelchairs to be secured. Service will not be denied due to VAC's inability to secure a wheelchair. Securement problems of wheelchair shall be reported to the dispatch office.
- VAC will not require a wheelchair user to transfer to another seat.
- VAC staff will provide assistance upon request or as necessary with lifts, ramps, and securement systems.

- Persons with disabilities who do not use wheelchairs will be permitted to use the vehicle lifts or ramps upon request.
- VAC will permit service animals, such as, but not necessarily limited to, service dogs, that have been individually trained to work or perform tasks to accompany persons with disabilities in vehicles and facilities. The service animal must remain under the control of the rider and not present an immediate danger to the driver or other riders. This policy does not include “comfort animals.”
- VAC vehicle operators and other VAC personnel will make use of required accessibility related equipment and features (example: tie-downs will be used to secure a wheelchair on the vehicle).
- VAC will provide service to persons using respirators or portable oxygen. Vehicle operators will properly secure this equipment.
- VAC will ensure adequate time for persons with disabilities to board and/or disembark a vehicle.
- VAC will provide training to dispatchers and vehicle operators about the safe operation of vehicles and accessibility equipment and customer service sensitivity of persons with disabilities.
- VAC vehicle operators will check operation of lifts/ramps and inspect all securement equipment through pre-trip and post-trip inspection procedures on a daily basis. All ADA equipment failures will be reported immediately to dispatch and operations staff.
- VAC will make service information available in accessible formats as requested.
- VAC may refuse service and may contact local police for instances when a passenger engages in violence, is a danger to him- or her-self or others, is seriously disruptive, or is engaged in illegal activities.

Reasonable Modification to Policies, Practices, and Procedures

VAC is committed to providing safe, reliable, courteous, accessible, and user-friendly services to its riders. To ensure equality and fairness, VAC is committed to making reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure programs and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. For more information on our reasonable modification procedures, including requesting a reasonable modification or appeal process, please see VAC’s Reasonable Modification Policy.

Refusal of Service and Nondiscrimination

VAC can refuse to provide service to an individual with disabilities if that individual engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct, or represents a direct threat to the health or safety of others. However, VAC will not refuse to provide service to an individual with a disability solely because the individual's disability results in an appearance or behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience VAC staff/employees or other persons.

ADA Service Requirements

The Maintenance and Operations staff are responsible for maintaining all accessible features on agency vehicles including lifts, ramps, securement devices, elevators, signage and systems to facilitate communication.

Interlocks:

Vehicle interlocks shall be inspected on daily pre and post trip inspections and monthly checks. Vehicles with malfunctioning interlocks shall be taken out of service until repaired.

ADA Equipment Maintenance Schedule:

The lift maintenance service was modeled after manufactures recommendations. To ensure timely ADA equipment maintenance, standardized procedures, and better track records, all ADA service equipment will be serviced at every vehicle oil change intervals for vehicles housed at the main facility. If a vehicle is housed at a satellite location, the agency shall follow the manufacturer's scheduled recommendations.

ADA Complaint Procedures

The Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois (VAC) is committed to ensuring safe and efficient transportation for persons with disabilities, as provided by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Any ADA transportation service complaints received by VAC will be immediately investigated and every effort made to seek an appropriate and prompt resolution. By promptly identifying deficiency areas, VAC will work to make the necessary corrections or adjustments to alleviate the situation.

Any and all ADA Transportation service complaints shall be submitted in writing on the agency's complaint form and returned to the:

VAC ADA Officer, Chief Operations Officer or Chief Executive Officer
Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois
1606 Bethany Rd., Sycamore, IL 60178.

If you would like a copy of this form, or require additional information, please visit the VAC website at www.vacdk.com, or call the VAC ADA Officer or Chief Operations Officer at (815) 758-3932.