



TRIP TIPS

How to use ACCESS Connections

(412) 562-5353

Relay 711

www.MyACCESSRide.com

WELCOME TO ACCESS!

ACCESS is a shared-ride, public transportation program sponsored by Port Authority of Allegheny County. ACCESS is part of Port Authority's family of services. Port Authority's bus and light rail service is accessible to people with a variety of disabilities. All Port Authority buses are equipped with ramps and "kneelers" to lower the first step. Other accommodations such as stop announcements and easy to read signs make using the bus easier than ever. There are also special fare incentives for ACCESS riders using Port Authority service. Make Port Authority's accessible bus and light rail service your first transportation choice whenever possible.

ACCESS Connections service is provided throughout Allegheny County, seven (7) days per week between the hours of 6:00 am and 11:00 PM.

Service is provided to destinations in adjoining counties, provided the origin of the trip is within Allegheny County and the destination is within one and a half miles of the Allegheny County line.

ACCESS services are provided by a number of companies under contract to ACCESS Transportation Systems. ACCESS service providers are the companies which own and operate the vehicles and actually provide the transportation service.

Central ACCESS Office

The ACCESS program is managed from the central ACCESS office with an experienced customer service staff available to answer questions or provide assistance. The central ACCESS office is located in Downtown Pittsburgh in Centre City Tower at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Smithfield Street.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, **8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Mailing address:

ACCESS Transportation Systems
Centre City Tower
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 440
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Telephone number: (412) 562-5353 or Relay 711

Fax number: (412) 391-0594

Website: www.MyACCESSRide.com

Accessible Formats: Upon request, can be provided in large print, Braille, Audio Cassette Tape or txt files by email.

Connections Service

You can use Connections to:

- Get to and from Port Authority bus stops if there is no stop within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from your origin or destination. This is called “Feeder Service.”
- Take a direct ACCESS trip if the trip on the bus is less than 5 miles and would take you more than 90 minutes
- Take a direct trip on ACCESS if there is bus service within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, but not within an hour of the time you wish to travel.

SCHEDULING A TRIP

To place a reservation for ACCESS service, call the main ACCESS office. Reservations are accepted Monday through Friday, one business day in advance of your trip, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM.

- When you call to place your order, have the following information ready:
 - ✓ Your full name
 - ✓ PIN number for your ePurse
 - ✓ Your complete address, including neighborhood (*Ex. Troy Hill*) including any special entrance information
 - ✓ Your apartment number, intercom or bell number
 - ✓ Your home or cell phone number
 - ✓ The day and date of your trip
 - ✓ Appointment time **or** pickup time (*If you do not have an appointment time the call taker will help you determine a pickup time that will ensure your on-time arrival, and remember, you may be asked to adjust your pickup time to accommodate the shared-ride trip.*)
 - ✓ Return time (*Only trips for appointments with non-predictable ending times may be scheduled with a “will call” return.*)
 - ✓ Complete address of your destination, including specific entrance (*The call taker will tell you which entrance to use if you are going to a mall or hospital.*)
 - ✓ Phone number at your destination, whenever possible
 - ✓ If you use a wheelchair or need special assistance (*ex: “I am blind.”*)
 - ✓ If you are taking an escort with you. You may take one person with you and they will pay the same fare as you.
 - ✓ Be sure the call taker tells you his or her name, repeats your itinerary back to you and tells you the fare for your trip; please keep record of this information.
- The call taker will confirm the service provider for your trip and give you their phone number.

Standing Orders

Customers may request “standing order” reservations for trips which are taken on a regular basis. The vehicle automatically comes as scheduled unless you call to change or cancel the order. A standing order trip must meet the following criteria:

- Taken at least **three (3) times** per week at the same time
- Has the same origin and destination **all** three (3) days
- Taken at least 75% of the time.
- A cancellation rate of 50% or more may result in the cancellation of your standing order
- **Standing orders are automatically cancelled on the following major holidays:** New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you need your regular standing order trip on these days, you must call your service provider.

Fares

ACCESS fares are predetermined based on trip length. When you place your trip reservation, the reservationist will tell you how much your trip will cost each way. See the enclosed **ePurse User Guide** for information about setting up and using your ePurse.

- The fare to or from a bus stop is \$2.50 each way
- The fares for direct trips are based on trip length. The fare for a direct trip is \$3.15 and the maximum fare is \$5.25 each way.

During Your Ride

- ACCESS vehicles are permitted to arrive (10) minutes before or twenty (20) minutes past the scheduled time. You must be ready to go and waiting at the front door (10) minutes before the time you scheduled your pickup.
- If you would like to receive a phone call or text message from ACCESS while the vehicle is on the way and is within 10 minutes of arrival at you address, call the ACCESS central office and ask to register for an In-Touch call.
- There are special rules for trips to and from bus stops. See the enclosed “Feeder Service” brochure for more information.
- ACCESS passengers must wear seat belts.
- There is no smoking, eating or drinking in ACCESS vehicles.
- All vehicles are equipped with security cameras

- Vans, with and without lifts, and sedans are all used for ACCESS service. You may not request any specific type of vehicle unless you use a wheelchair. You must ride in the vehicle that comes for you.
- Drivers will only wait **five (5) minutes** for a late passenger.
- If you are traveling to an appointment with a non-predictable ending time, you may call for our return ride when you are ready to return. After you call, go directly to the entrance specified to wait for your vehicle. You must return from the same place you were dropped off. If you choose to call for a return, you should expect to wait anywhere from 5 – 45 minutes. Will call returns are not permitted on weekends or after 5:00 PM, even for medical appointments. You must schedule your return if riding on the weekend, on a holiday or after 5:00 PM.
- You may be asked to present your ACCESS I.D. Card before boarding the vehicle. Please carry it with you when riding ACCESS.
- **Tipping is not permitted.**

Cancellation/Changes

Call your service provider to cancel your trip no less than one hour before your scheduled pickup time if you are not able to go.

- Cancellations at the door and “no shows” are a serious violation of ACCESS policy and a waste of valuable resources. Excessive no shows may jeopardize your eligibility for ACCESS service.
- If your first trip of the day is a no show, all your other trips for the day will be automatically cancelled, unless you call.
- Drivers are not permitted to accept information regarding cancellations or changes. You must call your service provider.
- You may not change our destination or time once you have boarded the vehicle.
- Severe weather conditions may cause unavoidable delays in service.
- It is the responsibility of riders to make sure that the entryway of their home is free of snow and ice, and clear year-round. If your walk is snow covered, you will have to meet the driver at the curb.

Assistance

- Your driver is a professional.
- Drivers are well trained, have good driving records, have had criminal history background checks and drug and alcohol screening.
- Drivers will meet you at the front door of your origin and see you safely to the front door of your destination, as long as there are not more than four (4) steps. If there are more than four (4) steps, the driver will not assist you to and from the door.
- All drivers wear a Photo I.D. Badge, clearly displayed, with their name, employee number and company name.
- Drivers are not permitted to enter your home or look for you if you are not at your scheduled pickup point.
- You may take up to four packages in the ACCESS vehicle. They must be of reasonable size.
- Service animals are welcome
- Pets are permitted on ACCESS vehicles as long as they are in a carrier which fits on your lap.

Let us hear from you!

Providing high quality service is a top priority for the ACCESS program. You are encouraged to call the central ACCESS office any time you have a suggestion, complaint or compliment about ACCESS service. ACCESS service providers are not permitted to accept complaints from customers. Complaints may be registered by calling or writing the central ACCESS office.

Special Requests

If there is an ACCESS rule or policy that, due to your disability, makes it very difficult or prevents you from using the service, you may call or write to the central ACCESS office to discuss your situation. When at all possible, requests should be made in advance and will be considered on a case by case basis as long as it is: necessary for your use of the service; reasonable; do not create a direct threat to others; or create a fundamental change to basic ACCESS service.

When to Call the Central ACCESS Office

The central ACCESS office manages the ACCESS program. The Customer Service staff is available to answer questions or to provide riders with assistance. Information regarding other transportation services are available.

You should call the central ACCESS office when:

- You have a suggestion or a complaint. Service providers are not permitted to accept complaints from passengers.
- You have a question about your ePurse account.
- You are traveling to or from Pittsburgh International Airport.
- You cannot get through to place a trip or on the telephone after trying for fifteen (15) minutes.
- You think you may have missed your vehicle.
- Your pre-scheduled vehicle is more than 30 minutes late.
- You have waited over 30 minutes for your will call return.
- You need a ride and have not called the day before (*Same day service is provided Monday through Friday on a space available basis.*)