

METRO ParaCruz Customer Guide

Paratransit Plan of
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's
Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA) Complementary Paratransit Service



This Guide serves as the official paratransit plan of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and includes all the information needed to apply for and use METRO ParaCruz

METRO ParaCruz Customer Guide

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METRO ParaCruz Contact Numbers

TTY users: please connect through the California Relay Service

1-800-735-2929

METRO ParaCruz	425-4664
	(voice)
	464-5400 (FAX)
Paratransit Users Advocate	
Central Coast Center for Independent Living.....	462-8720 (voice)
	462-8729 (TTY)
METRO Accessible Services Coordinator	
(Mobility Training).....	423-3868 (voice)
METRO Ticket and Pass Program Specialist	
(Pre-paid ParaCruz tickets).....	425-3822 (voice)
METRO Fixed Route Customer Service.....	425-8600 (voice)

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

Meeting Our Customers' Travel Needs

The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) provides mass public transit within Santa Cruz County. METRO operates a fleet of safe, clean, modern and accessible buses connecting people with educational, business, medical, shopping and social destinations. Most people are able to use these buses for some or all of their transportation. Modern accessibility features make METRO's buses easier to use than ever before. You do not have to climb steps to board METRO's newer local buses. The floor of the bus is close to the curb. The driver can lower a ramp to make it easy to board with a walker or wheelchair. The "talking bus" helps you find your way by announcing almost every bus stop along the way. People with physical, cognitive and psychiatric disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed route system some or all of the time may qualify for ADA complementary paratransit service (METRO ParaCruz).

Fixed Route Bus Service

All METRO buses have lifts or ramps to better serve riders who use wheelchairs or scooters, or have difficulty getting up and down the bus steps. All major stops, intersections, and connecting points are announced to help riders recognize their bus stop or points of transfer. A limited number of seats near the front of the bus are designated as priority seating for seniors and people with disabilities. Every bus is equipped with specialized equipment to securely transport customers using wheeled mobility devices. Drivers are trained to assist with securing wheeled mobility devices.

Many paratransit customers find that our fixed route buses provide greater flexibility and independence. For route and schedule information and any questions about using the METRO bus service, call METRO Customer Service at **425-8600** Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM.

METRO offers free training for people who want to learn to use the bus. For more information or to schedule training to use the bus, call the Accessible Services Coordinator at **423-3868**.

METRO ParaCruz Service

METRO ParaCruz operates to insure that people who have a physical, cognitive, or psychiatric disability that **prevents** them from making some or all of their trips on fixed route buses have a level of access to mass public transportation comparable to the rest of the community, as required by the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA).

This shared ride service is provided with ramp-equipped minivans and lift-equipped small buses. METRO ParaCruz service operates in the same areas and during the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service. Rides must be reserved at least one day in advance.

How to Apply for METRO ParaCruz Service

METRO ParaCruz service is limited to people who have been certified as meeting the strict eligibility criteria described in the ADA. The eligibility assessment includes an in-person transit evaluation in order to determine a person's functional ability to use fixed route bus service. You can be found eligible even if you live more than ¾ miles away from a bus route; however, ParaCruz will pick you up and drop you off within ¾ mile of an operating bus route. You will have to make other arrangements to travel beyond ¾ mile of an operating bus route. (See: *Service Area and Service Hours* on page 8). If, as a result of a disability, you can never use the fixed route buses under any conditions, you will be determined eligible and "unrestricted." If you can use fixed route buses for some trips, you may be determined eligible but "restricted" from those trips that you could make by bus. Restricted eligibility may be based on how your disability is impacted by environmental conditions, such as extreme weather or may be location specific, such as a destination at the top of a steep hill.

To apply, call the METRO ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator at 425-4664 and schedule an appointment for a transit evaluation. Transit evaluations normally take about 30 minutes. If you need transportation to and from the evaluation, ParaCruz will provide it at no charge to you. The person who interviews you will discuss your travel abilities and needs. You may also ask any questions you have about the service.

Your eligibility determination will be postmarked within 7 days of the transit evaluation. If you are approved, a letter and ID card will be sent to you. If for any reason a decision is not made within 21 calendar days, METRO ParaCruz service will be provided until a final decision is made. **If you do not agree with the decision, you may appeal the decision to an independent appeals panel.**

METRO ParaCruz eligibility is good for a maximum of three years. Between 60 and 90 days prior to the customer's eligibility expiration date, a one-page form will be sent to the most current address on file with METRO ParaCruz. The customer is asked to verify that their condition still prevents them from using the fixed route bus and to verify their contact information and mobility device(s). Customers who indicate that they have had a change in their mobility or mobility device may be asked to attend another transit evaluation.

Immediate Needs

METRO recognizes that due to unforeseeable circumstances there may be times when a new customer may need transportation before they are able to complete the eligibility process. In these cases, the METRO ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator may be able to arrange temporary eligibility for up to fourteen days while the customer goes through the eligibility determination process.

Temporary Disabilities

Temporary eligibility is provided to customers who have a limited term condition that prevents them from using the METRO bus system. Limited term eligibility may be provided for the expected duration of the disability. Should the disability continue longer than expected, the customer may request an extension of eligibility.

Appealing an Eligibility Determination

Applicants who believe an eligibility determination was made in error may appeal the decision. The applicant may initiate an appeal in writing (forms are included with eligibility denials) within 60 days of the determination. Address the appeal to:

**METRO ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator
2880 Research Park Dr, Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073**

Prior to your hearing, please provide additional information to assist the panel in making a determination:

- The reason you believe the determination was incorrect
- Any information you would like the appeals panel to consider supporting your request

An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 30 days of receipt of the appeal request.

Service for Visitors

Visitors to Santa Cruz County who have been determined eligible for ADA complementary paratransit services by a transit agency in another part of the country can use METRO ParaCruz for up to 21 days within a 365-day period. Visitors will be required to provide eligibility information from the transit system in their hometown. Visitors who do not have this kind of eligibility because they live in areas without public transit service will be asked for documentation of their disability and verification of their place of residence.

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

Visitors seeking to ride more than 21 days within a 365-day period will need to participate in the METRO ParaCruz transit evaluation process to continue to ride. (See: *How to Apply for METRO ParaCruz Service* on page 6).

METRO ParaCruz Service Area and Service Hours

METRO ParaCruz is designed to be "comparable to" (or similar to) the fixed route bus service. For this reason, it operates in the same general area as the fixed route bus service.

Service Area

METRO ParaCruz provides service to any destination within Santa Cruz County that is within 3/4 miles of an operating bus route.

Service Days and Hours

METRO ParaCruz operates:

6:00AM to 10:30PM, 7 days a week

(except holidays listed below).

METRO ParaCruz **does not operate** on the following holidays

New Years Day

Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

METRO ParaCruz operates additional evening hours to correspond with certain fixed routes. Call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 for more information.

METRO ParaCruz operates the complementary paratransit service adjacent to fixed routes #33 and #34 on weekdays only from 6:00AM to 10:30PM during the summer months when these fixed routes do not operate.

Fares

The one-way fare for METRO ParaCruz service is currently \$3.00 (twice the adult fixed-route cash fare). Fares are set by the METRO Board of Directors and are subject to change.

Fare must be paid each time, before you board the vehicle. Customers who do not pay the fare will not be transported. Fares can be paid as:

- **Cash.** Exact fare only (no pennies, please). **Drivers cannot make change.**
- **Pre-paid METRO ParaCruz Tickets.**

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

Tickets may be purchased at the METRO Center Information Booth or by mail.

METRO ParaCruz Tickets
METRO Center
920 Pacific Avenue, Suite 21
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Note: Drivers are *not permitted* to accept tips. If you would like to express your appreciation for the service that was provided please call 425-4664.

Reserving Rides on METRO ParaCruz

When to Reserve a Ride

You can reserve your METRO ParaCruz ride up to three days in advance of your trip. Reservation telephones are open seven days a week from 8:00AM until 5:00PM (except holidays). If you **must** call on a holiday to request a ride for the **next day**, you may leave a message with your ride request and the scheduler will call you back that evening between 5:00PM and 9:00PM to confirm your ride.

SCHEDULING TIPS

- When you call to schedule trips, please have a pen and paper handy so you can write down when you will need to be ready for the METRO ParaCruz vehicle.
- Have all of the information for each trip available when you call. This will help the reservationist serve you efficiently. If you are not certain of exactly when you will need your return pick up, give yourself some extra time.
- If you have an appointment, remember to allow some extra time to get from the METRO ParaCruz vehicle to your final destination. For example, if your appointment is at 9:00AM, you may want to tell the reservationist you would like to arrive no later than 8:45AM.
- Similarly, leave time to get to the place where the METRO ParaCruz vehicle will pick you up for your return trip. For example, if you work until 5:00PM, you might want to ask the reservationist for a pick-up no earlier than 5:15PM.

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

How to Reserve a Ride

To request a ride, call 425-4664 (TTY: connect through the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929) one to three days in advance of your trip. During the busiest reservation times of the day you may reach a busy signal or be placed on hold until a reservationist can assist you. Hold times can be 2-3 minutes or longer.

Please DO NOT reserve trips you are not sure you will actually take. Changes and cancellations hurt everyone, by making ParaCruz service more expensive to provide.

The reservationist will guide you through the reservation process.

Please have the following information ready when you call to make a reservation:

1. Your first and last name.
2. The date and day of the week you need to ride.
3. The street address where you need to be picked up.
4. The street address or a known landmark where you are going and the telephone number (if you have it) or your cell phone number if you travel with one. If you will be going to a large facility with several entrances (such as a mall or large medical facility), please specify the entrance where you would like to be dropped off or picked up.
5. The time you would like to arrive (the appointment time, for example).
6. The time you will be ready to be picked up for a return trip
7. If you use a mobility aid such as a cane, walker, wheelchair or scooter. This will determine the type of seating that will be reserved for you. (See: *Wheelchairs and other Mobility Aids* on page 19 for information about the maximum sizes and weights our vehicles can accommodate.)
8. If a personal care attendant or guest(s) will be traveling with you, and whether or not your attendant or guest uses a mobility device.
9. If you will need a car seat for a child traveling with you. (No more than 3 children under 46 inches may travel per fare paying adult)
10. If a service animal will be riding with you.
11. If you will be using a collapsible wheeled cart for shopping.

Your “Ready Window”

After you have requested your trip(s), the reservationist will read your request back to you and inform you of the ready window (time within which you can expect the vehicle to arrive) for each one-way trip. This 30-minute period of time is called your **Ready Window**. You may arrive at your appointment a little early or be picked up later than you requested. After you have provided the above trip information, the reservationist will offer you one or more trip options. We will make every effort to offer you a drop-off time and return time that is as close as possible to the time you request. **Like the bus, METRO ParaCruz is a *shared-ride* service.** The driver may pick up and drop off other passengers while you are on board.

To ensure that the scheduling options offered will meet your needs as closely as possible, METRO ParaCruz established the following scheduling guidelines:

- Your ride should arrive at your destination point no more than 45 minutes before your requested drop-off time and no later than your requested drop-off time.
- A return pick-up should arrive no later than 60 minutes after the time you have requested and no earlier than that time.
- The evening before you travel, ParaCruz staff may call to request that you adjust your “Ready Window” in order to coordinate your trip with other customers along the route to your destination. Every effort will be made to assure that you arrive on time for your appointment.

Will-Call Returns

Please *schedule* your return trip times whenever possible. If you are taking a trip for an appointment and you do not know when you will be ready for a return trip, you may request a Will-Call return. You will need to call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 when you are ready to return. METRO ParaCruz will schedule a trip on the first available vehicle in your area. After a Will-Call return is activated, you may have to wait up to an hour or longer for the vehicle to arrive. Will-Call returns are only available during normal business hours. Will-Call returns cannot be activated after 7:00PM. All return trips after 7:00PM require a definite pickup time that coincides with the fixed route times serving the return address location. As time allows between the hours of 5:00PM and 7:00PM, ParaCruz staff will attempt to reach a customer at the telephone number of record to determine if the customer has arrived home safely.

Scheduling Multiple Trips

You may request up to three (3) round-trips per telephone call. If you have more than three trips you need to schedule, please call again to schedule these additional trips. If you are requesting trips with multiple stops, you may not reserve in excess of six (6) total “legs” during one call. This limit on scheduling has been set to minimize the telephone hold times for all customers. Scheduling each trip can take 3 minutes or longer. The limit on the number of trips scheduled at one time helps to keep the telephone lines from being tied up for long periods.

Subscription Service

In addition to “one time” or “casual” rides, METRO ParaCruz also offers Subscription Service. Federal regulations limit the availability of this type of service. If you need a ride to the *same place*, at the *same time*, at least once a week (going to work, attending a class or church, for example), “Subscription Service” may be a good option for you. This allows you to schedule these recurring trips with one call. You will then be automatically placed on the schedule each week with the same ready window, same pick up and destination. Customers desiring greater flexibility in their travel plans may prefer to reserve rides individually. Ask the reservationist about this option.

If you are receiving Subscription Service, it is important to *let us know in advance if you don't need a ride on a particular day*. This way, we can make the change on our schedules. For example, if you have Subscription Service for a trip to school each weekday, you need to keep us updated on holiday and vacation times when school is not in session. This will help us avoid unnecessary trips. If you don't cancel you will be charged with a “no show” (See: *No-Shows* on page 14).

It is important to let us know when your schedule changes. Excessive no shows, cancellations of or changes to subscription rides may result in removal from the subscription list.

You may put your subscription trip on “hold” for up to 30 days. Call METRO ParaCruz one week in advance to start up your subscription again. If you need to put your trips on hold for a period longer than 30 days, your subscription will be canceled and you will need to request a new subscription trip when it is again needed.

Only a limited number of subscription service slots are available. If we are unable to accommodate your request for subscription service, you will be put on a waiting list. You will be contacted when space becomes available. **While you are on the waiting list, you may continue to reserve trips individually.**

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

Remember, reservationists are available every day (except holidays) from 8:00AM until 5:00PM. If plans change and you need to adjust your ride times, destinations, seating type or other aspects of your trip, call METRO ParaCruz *before* 5:00PM the day prior to your trip.

Tell the reservationist you would like to change a ride that has already been requested. The reservationist will ask you:

- Your first and last name.
- The date, day of the week and time of the trip you are calling to change.
- The new times that you would like to schedule, or changes you would like to make.

The reservationist will try to accommodate your needs. Changes to your original ride request may result in adjustment to your ready window and ride time, subject to schedule availability. The reservationist will read back your new ready window and travel details.

If you must call on a holiday to change a ride for the next day, you may leave a message with the information and you will receive a call back that evening between 5:00PM and 9:00PM to confirm the change.

METRO ParaCruz cannot change pick-up times or pick-up/drop-off locations or your seating type on the day of your ride (for example; you reserve a ride planning to use a wheelchair, but sometimes travel without it. ParaCruz would expect you to travel in your wheelchair unless you changed the reservation before 5:00PM the day before you travel. Other passengers may be scheduled to ride in all available seats).

If Your Appointment is Running Late

Everyone has occasional circumstances **beyond their control** that can cause delays at a scheduled appointment. If your appointment is running later than you expected and you will not be ready for your scheduled return trip (or if you have missed your return ride), call METRO ParaCruz as soon as possible.

You will be asked for:

- Your name
- The time of your scheduled return trip pick-up
- The new time that you expect to be available for return.

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

METRO ParaCruz will attempt to adjust your return trip pick-up time and assign another vehicle to pick you up at a later time. **Because schedules are set the day before, there may be a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available to accommodate your trip.**

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

Please call and cancel the ride as soon as you know you will not be traveling to avoid being considered a no-show. No-shows can lead to a suspension of service. (See: *No-shows* on page 14)

Call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 between 6:00AM and 10:30PM.

If you need to cancel a trip on the day of your ride, please call at least one hour before the beginning of your Ready Window. It is important to notify METRO ParaCruz in time so that the driver does not make an unnecessary trip, and so you are not considered a no-show.

No-Shows

No-shows cause excess delays, inconvenience other riders, waste resources and increase operating costs. Generally, a “No-Show” costs METRO ParaCruz as much as if the customer had taken the trip. To emphasize the importance of avoiding “No-shows”, METRO ParaCruz has adopted the following “No-Show” Policy. Through this policy, a customer can have his/her service suspended for establishing a “pattern or practice” of missing scheduled trips which result in assessed “no-shows”.

A “No-Show” is defined as follows:

1. After scheduling a trip, the customer no longer needs the ride and fails to call and cancel at least one (1) hour before the start of the Ready Window
 2. The ParaCruz vehicle arrives within the Ready Window, but the Operator cannot locate the customer at the requested pick-up location (as identified by the customer and accepted by the reservationist) within five (5) minutes;
or
 3. The vehicle arrives within the Ready Window but the customer is not ready to go within five (5) minutes and does not board the vehicle.
- **If a customer “No-Shows” for the first leg of a trip, any subsequent leg or return trip will not be canceled automatically and may result in an additional “No-Show” assessment if not canceled as required by this policy.**
 - **If you miss a scheduled ride for any reason, be sure to call METRO ParaCruz to let them know whether or not you still want to keep other trips on that day.**

- If a schedule delay, bad weather, or breakdown causes the METRO ParaCruz service to be late or to miss a pick-up and you decide to find another way to your appointment, please call the METRO ParaCruz and tell them that you would still like a return ride.
- If it is determined by METRO ParaCruz that the “No-Show” was assessed appropriately the customer shall be notified and shall be advised of the No-Show Policy and the consequences of excessive “No-Shows”.
- When a customer has “No-Showed” 15% of his/her rides, including all assessed “No-Shows” within a rolling 90-day period and the actual number of “No-Shows” exceeds 3 during the period, he or she shall be notified of the intention to suspend paratransit service to him/her for a fourteen (14) day period.

If you exceed 15% No Shows within 90 days, your service may be suspended for fourteen (14) days.

Examples:

You take 15 rides and no show 3 times: 18 total, 16.67% no shows

You take 50 rides and no show 9 times: 59 total, 15.25% no shows

You take 70 rides and no show 13 times: 83 total, 15.66% no shows

You have the right to appeal this determination before any suspension would be imposed and may do so by providing either a written or oral request for an appeal hearing to:

METRO ParaCruz
2880 Research Park Drive, Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073

Or you may telephone (831) 425-4664.

The request for an appeal hearing must be made within 10 days from the postmark date on the Letter of Intent to Suspend METRO ParaCruz Service.

If the customer does not appeal the suspension, the suspension shall be scheduled and the customer shall be notified of the dates of the suspension. The customer will be given notice 10 days prior to the suspension dates.

If a customer takes twenty-four (24) rides or more within a twelve (12) month period without being assessed a “No-Show”, he/she shall be allowed one round-trip ride free of charge.

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

What to Expect When the Vehicle Arrives

The METRO ParaCruz driver will arrive in a bus, van or minivan (sometimes a taxi sedan may be substituted for ambulatory customers). The driver will pull the vehicle up to the curb in front of the pick-up address you provided. ***The vehicle may arrive any time within your Ready Window.*** Please be ready to go when the vehicle arrives so that the driver can stay on schedule for all customers. If possible, wait in an area where you can see or hear the vehicle arrive or where the driver will be able to see you. If you do not appear at the scheduled time, the driver will come to the specified entrance of the building and make his presence known. The driver will wait up to five (5) minutes before departing.

Door-to-door service

Door-to-door service means that the driver will escort you from the designated street level entrance of the building you are being picked up from to the designated street level entrance of your destination. The driver is not allowed to enter your home, or to escort you beyond the street level entrance at your destination. If you travel with a personal care attendant (PCA), the driver will not provide assistance to the attendant beyond boarding and getting off the vehicle.

If you think it may be difficult for you to know when the METRO ParaCruz vehicles arrive (because of your disability or where you are being picked up), please let us know. We will work with you to identify possible ways to alert you to when vehicle arrives.

What the Driver Will Do:

- Arrive at your pick up location and wait for up to five minutes.
- Provide assistance from your front door to the vehicle. (If your pick up is from a skilled nursing or group facility, drivers will meet you at the front of the main lobby.)
- Provide assistance into and out of the vehicle.
- Operate the wheelchair ramp or lift.
- Assist with the securement of wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- Assist with safety belts
- Provide limited assistance with packages up to 30 pounds total. Driver must be able to load and unload them in one trip and without delaying the vehicle.
- Provide the customer with assistance to the street level entrance of your destination.

What the Driver Will Not Do:

- Drivers are not permitted to go inside your home to get you, nor inside the building at your destination.

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

- Drivers will not go beyond the lobby of a skilled nursing or group facility to search for a customer in the patient’s room or other locations.
- Drivers are not permitted to perform health care duties such as assistance transferring from or to a wheelchair in the home, disconnecting medical equipment such as oxygen, or turning off appliances or televisions. The customer must arrange for a family member, personal care attendant or guest if these types of services are needed.
- Drivers may not go into your purse or wallet to get your fare. If you are unable to take your fare out of your purse or wallet, you may put your fare in a separate coin purse or envelope for the driver.
- Drivers do not provide assistance loading or unloading objects over 30 pounds. If you need assistance with objects over 30 pounds, please arrange for a personal care attendant or guest to assist you. Your assistant or guest must be able to load and unload them in one trip and without delaying the vehicle.
- Drivers are not allowed to lift passengers under any circumstances.
- Drivers are not permitted to take wheelchairs (over 30 pounds) up stairs or excessively steep ramps or driveways.
- Drivers do not accept tips. If you would like to express your appreciation for the service that was provided by a driver call METRO ParaCruz and ask to file a Customer Service Report.

To Check on Your Ride

If a ParaCruz vehicle has not arrived by the end of the Ready Window, you may call METRO ParaCruz and request an estimated arrival time. The dispatcher will contact the driver for you. If possible, stay in sight of the pick-up location, in case the vehicle arrives while you are calling. *Please do not call before the end of your ready window. Unnecessary phone calls create longer hold times for other callers and cause delays in important communication between dispatchers and drivers.*

Rider Tips

- Make sure that your address is clearly visible from the street, especially at night.
- If you are being picked up at a large building, make sure when you schedule your ride to tell the reservationist the entrance where you will be waiting.
- Carry needed medication with you in case your trip takes longer than expected.
- If you have a medical need, please bring a small snack with you in case the trip is longer than planned.

Personal Care Attendants

Some people need a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to assist with personal care or tasks. A PCA is not required to pay a fare when traveling with you. Your PCA must get on and off the vehicle at the same places and times as you. The driver does not provide assistance to the attendant beyond boarding and getting off the vehicle.

For a PCA to ride free with you, your need for a PCA must be determined during the transit evaluation. If your condition has changed since your eligibility certification and you now require an attendant, call the ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator for more information.

You will need to tell the reservationist when you schedule trips that you will be traveling with a PCA. This ensures that there will be room on the vehicle for you, your PCA, and other scheduled riders.

Guests

A guest is someone you want to bring along to share the trip, not someone you must bring to assist you with personal care or tasks. Guests must pay a fare when accompanying you, and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you.

If you make a reservation for them, you are always entitled to bring one guest with you. Reservations for additional guests will be accommodated only if there is enough space on the vehicle.

You will need to tell the reservationist when you schedule trips that you will be traveling with one or more guests. Drivers cannot add riders who do not have a reservation.

Children

Children under six (6) years of age will be considered for METRO ParaCruz eligibility based on the functional ability of both the accompanying adult and child (as a team) to use fixed route bus service. When an eligible child is traveling with an adult (who is serving as a personal care attendant), a fare must be paid for the child and the adult attendant rides free.

All children less than 46 inches tall must be accompanied by an adult. If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, children under 46 inches tall do not need to pay a fare. Not more than 3 children less than 46 inches may ride free with one fare paying adult.

The California Vehicle Code requires that children under six (6) years of age (or under 60 pounds) must travel in an approved child car seat. You are encouraged to use your own car seat if you have one. METRO ParaCruz has a limited number of child car seats available. Please let the reservationist know if you need one when scheduling your trip.

An adult accompanying a child on METRO ParaCruz is responsible for the child. Drivers can assist with securing child car seats, but are not permitted to carry children on or off of the vehicle for you. If you will need assistance with the child, please plan to bring someone else along to help you.

Wheelchairs and Other Wheeled Mobility Devices

METRO ParaCruz vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. Wheelchairs and scooters will be secured upright/non-reclining, facing forward. All wheelchairs and scooters that are within the following limits (when occupied) will be transported:

- Not more than 30 inches wide
- Not more than 48 inches long
- Not more than 600 pounds (mobility device and passenger combined)

If your wheelchair or scooter exceeds these limits, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to accommodate your mobility device. Please keep this in mind when replacing or purchasing wheelchairs and scooters. If you are not sure whether or not your device is oversized, please contact METRO ParaCruz. We will arrange for a member of our staff to assess the size of your mobility device.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on METRO ParaCruz. The driver will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted, however, to assist you in using this equipment. If you need assistance with portable life support equipment, please arrange to bring a qualified attendant along with you.

Service Animals

Service Animals are welcome on METRO ParaCruz vehicles. Service animals include guide dogs, signal dogs, and other animals specially trained to work or perform specific tasks for persons with disabilities. Service Animals must be under the full control of the owner at all times. Service Animals must not misbehave, soil the vehicle, growl, harass or lick other customers. Service Animals shall not occupy vehicles seats and must ride on the floor in either a sit or “down” position.

Be sure to inform the reservationist when you are scheduling a ride if you will be traveling with a service animal.

Pets and Companion Animals

Pets and companion animals may ride on METRO ParaCruz only if they are in a carrier specifically designed for that purpose and under the full control of their owner. Drivers are not permitted to carry carriers (including the animal) heavier than 30 pounds on or off of METRO ParaCruz vehicles. If you need assistance with a caged pet, please arrange to travel with someone who can help you.

Safety Belts and Securement Devices

For your safety and security, the California Vehicle Code requires that all passengers use available restraint equipment and remain seated while riding on ParaCruz vehicles.

Packages and Personal Items

You may bring grocery bags, luggage, or other packages or personal items with you on METRO ParaCruz. No item may be greater than five (5) feet in any dimension. Drivers will assist with loading and unloading of packages and personal items weighing no more than 30 pounds, but must maintain sight of their vehicle. You may bring packages in excess of this limit onboard the vehicle, but you and/or your assistant or guest must be able to load and unload them in one trip and without delaying the vehicle. Also, keep in mind that this is a shared-ride service and space is limited. Grocery store shopping carts are not permitted on vehicles, but you may bring packages on-board in personal two-wheeled, collapsible carts. Please let the reservationist know that you are bringing a cart.

Lost and Found Items

Lost and found items may be inquired for by calling METRO information at 425-8600 (TTY 1-800-735-2929). Drivers or information staff should not be asked to use vehicle radios to check on lost items except in extreme emergencies.

Found items should be available for pick up by 1:00PM the following day at Pacific Station (METRO Center) information booth. The information booth is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00AM and 4:00PM.

Inclement Weather and Natural Disasters

METRO reserves the right to suspend, modify or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions or natural disasters which may jeopardize the safety of our passengers and employees. If service is suspended METRO ParaCruz will make every effort to contact scheduled riders to advise them of service suspension.

If you are traveling during inclement weather, be sure to prepare for longer ride times. Bring any medication you may need. If you have a medical need, bring a small snack with you in the event your trip takes longer than expected. If you use a power wheelchair or scooter, please carry a plastic bag or other protector large enough to cover the electronic controls while boarding and getting off the vehicle.

Rider Courtesy

METRO has a list of common-sense rules to ensure the safety and comfort of all riders and drivers. We ask that riders observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- Please have your fare and ParaCruz ID ready when the vehicle arrives.
- Smoking is not permitted on, or within forty (40) feet of, the vehicles.
- Please travel fragrance free.
- Please be sure that wheelchairs are clean, safe and in good working order.
- Exposed sores or open wounds are not permitted.
- No leaking or dripping bodily fluids
- No clothing soiled with bodily discharge
- No eating or drinking on-board (unless required for health reasons).
- No possession of illegal drugs or open containers of alcohol.
- No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions.
- No physical or verbal abuse of another rider or the driver.
- No petting guide dogs or other service animals without the permission of the owner.
- No playing of radios, cassette tape players, mp3 players, or compact disc players (without earphones), or other noisy equipment while on-board.
- No operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment while on-board.

Riders who engage in verbal or physical abuse or cause injury to another rider, driver, or other METRO ParaCruz staff member, or who engage in other illegal or disruptive activities may be subject to immediate and permanent suspension of METRO ParaCruz service.

Any rider who is suspended from service will be notified in writing and will be given an opportunity to appeal the suspension.

Suggestions, Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Feedback about METRO ParaCruz service is encouraged.

If you have a comment or complaint about a particular trip or reservation experience, please call and ask to file a Customer Service Report.

Comments about service policies may be directed to the Paratransit Administrator by phone or in writing to:

**Paratransit Administrator
2880 Research Park Dr, Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073**

To allow us to follow-up on your comments or suggestions, please be specific and provide us with the following information:

- Your name, mailing address, and telephone number.
- The date, time, and location of the incident.
- The vehicle number, driver's ID or both (if possible).
- If concerning METRO ParaCruz office staff, the time of your conversation with them and the name or number of the employee.
- A detailed explanation of the incident or suggestion.

All Customer Service Reports will be investigated and you will be provided with the findings of your report within thirty (30) days.

Advisory Body and Public Participation

The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) is the officially recognized advisory body for METRO ParaCruz service. MAC meetings are held once a month and are open to the public. For more information, contact the Administrative Services Coordinator at (831) 426-6080.

Paratransit Users Advocate

The Paratransit Users Advocate is available to assist customers with addressing METRO ParaCruz service issues.

You may request assistance with a policy issue, a service requirement, make a comment or complaint, or, if you wish, you may file a complaint or comment anonymously.

You may contact the Paratransit Users Advocate at:

**Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCCIL)
1395 41st Avenue, Suite B
Capitola, CA 95010
Email: CCCIL@cccil.org
Phone: 831-462-8720 (TTY 831-462-8729)**

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

Glossary of METRO ParaCruz Terms

ADA Complementary Paratransit (METRO ParaCruz): The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public providers of fixed route bus service to make transportation service available to persons with disabilities who are unable to use accessible fixed route bus service. METRO ParaCruz is the name given to the ADA Complementary Paratransit provided by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO). METRO ParaCruz service must be “comparable” to fixed route service in seven key areas: service area, days and hours of service, fares, response time, travel time, trip purpose restrictions, and capacity constraints.

Appeals Process: The opportunity available to an METRO ParaCruz customer to dispute, before an independent panel, METRO decisions regarding his/her eligibility for service or suspension of service due to no-shows.

Cancellation: A cancellation is notification from a customer to METRO ParaCruz that he/she will not need a ride previously reserved. Cancellations should be made as early as possible, but *must* be made no later than one hour prior to the beginning of the Ready Window.

Driver Wait Time:

A period of five minutes, beginning when the driver arrives at the specified pick up location, during which the driver will wait for the customer before departing. The vehicle may arrive at any time during the Ready Window for a particular trip; the driver will wait for the customer for up to five minutes after that time before leaving to pick up the next customer. The customer will be charged with a “no show” if the customer is not at the vehicle and ready to board by the end of the driver wait time.

METRO Accessible Services Coordinator: The staff person responsible for providing training and support for persons wanting to learn how to use METRO’s fixed-route transit system and its accessible features and services.

METRO ParaCruz Eligibility: METRO ParaCruz service is limited to:

Certified individuals who, because of a disability, are unable to board, ride, or exit independently from an accessible fixed route bus

Certified individuals who, because of a disability, are unable to travel to or from a bus stop

Visitors to the METRO service area who are eligible for ADA complementary paratransit service in another community

Personal Care Attendants and guests of ADA-eligible individuals traveling with certified individuals (boarding and getting off the vehicle at the same time and place as the certified passenger).

METRO ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator: The staff person responsible for overseeing the METRO ParaCruz eligibility determination process.

METRO Paratransit Administrator: The manager responsible for overseeing all aspects of the administration and delivery of METRO ParaCruz service.

Paratransit Users Advocate: The Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCCIL) will act as a liaison, when needed, between METRO ParaCruz service customers and METRO with regard to service issues.

No-show: After scheduling a trip, the customer no longer needs the ride and fails to call and cancel at least one (1) hour before the start of the Ready Window OR the ParaCruz vehicle arrives within the Ready Window, but the Operator cannot locate the customer at the requested pick-up location (as identified by the customer and accepted by the reservationist) within five (5) minutes; OR the vehicle arrives within the Ready Window but the customer is not ready to go within five (5) minutes and does not board the vehicle.

Ready Window: A 30-minute period of time surrounding a negotiated METRO ParaCruz pick-up time (10-minutes before and 20-minutes after), during which the vehicle will arrive at the pick-up location. Example: for a requested pick-up time of 9:00AM, the Ready Window would be from 8:50AM to 9:20AM. The customer needs to be ready to board and waiting for the vehicle throughout the Ready Window.

Seating Type: During the reservation process, you will be asked to confirm whether or not you will be traveling with any mobility aids, such as cane, walker, wheelchair or scooter. Based on information you provide, the reservationist will reserve specific space within the METRO ParaCruz vehicle. (For example; you reserve a ride planning to use a wheelchair, but sometimes travel without it. ParaCruz would expect you to travel in your wheelchair unless you changed the reservation before 5:00PM the day before you travel. Other passengers may be scheduled to ride in all available seats).

Subscription Service: A standing reservation for a trip to the same place at the same time, at least once a week.

TTY: Text Telephone. A text messaging communication device that operates through the telephone system, frequently used by persons with hearing or speech impairment as an alternative to the telephone. Text messaging functions similar to computerized instant messaging.