

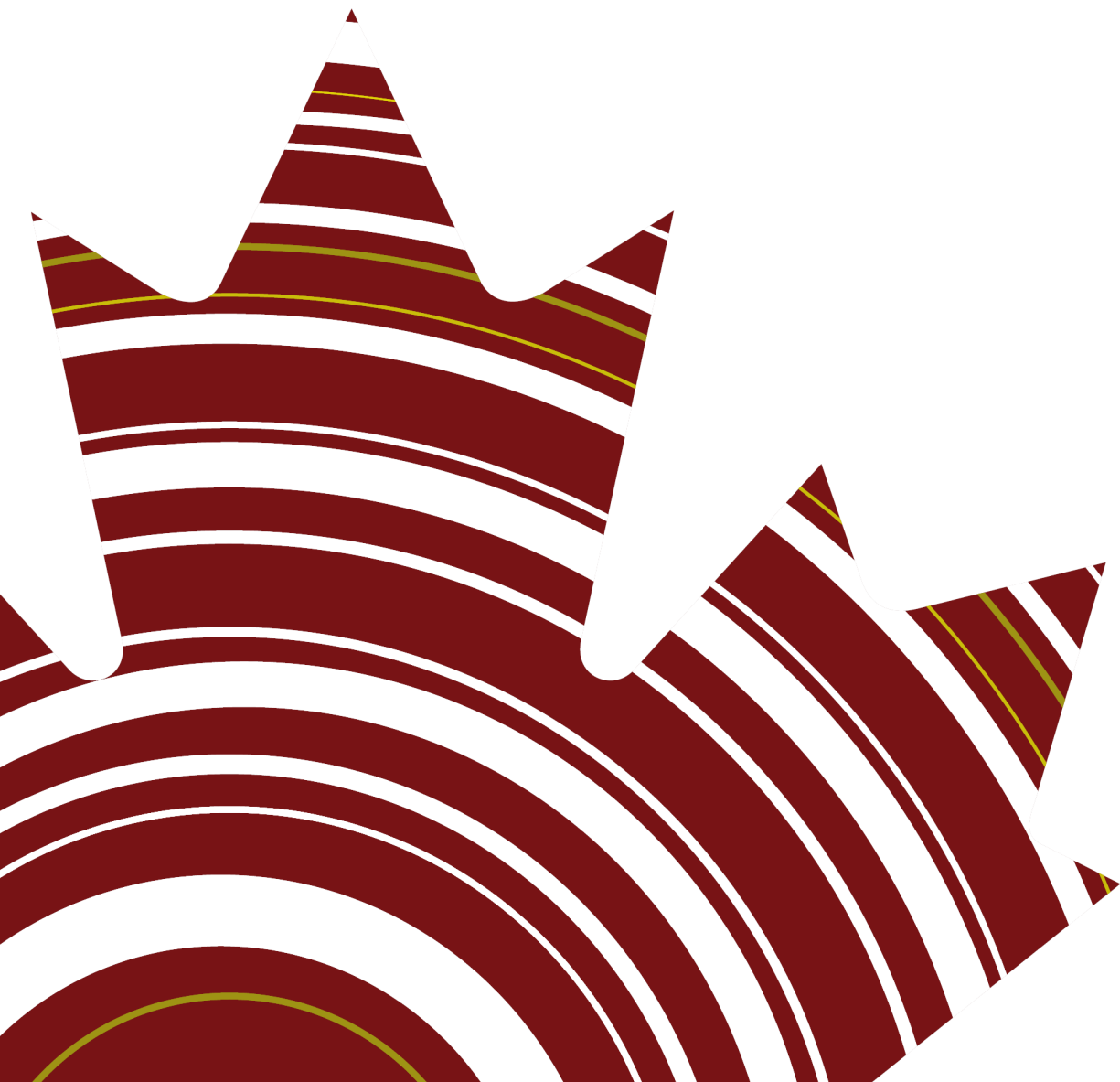


Canadian
Transportation
Agency

Office
des transports
du Canada

Accessible Transportation — Curbside Assistance: A Guide

Canadian Transportation Agency



Canada 

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[Alternate formats](#) are available. Une [version française](#) est disponible.

1. Purpose

This guide explains the obligations of terminal operators and carriers, under the *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations* (ATPDR), to provide curbside assistance to help persons with disabilities move through a terminal smoothly. This guide describes:

- What kind of assistance operators and carriers must provide, including information to be published; and
- Curbside assistance tips for passengers.

Transportation providers not covered by the ATPDR may still have obligations related to curbside assistance. For more information consult [Accessible Transportation Guides — Introduction](#).

This is not a legal document. The explanations and definitions it provides are for general guidance purposes only. Curbside assistance obligations can be found in the [ATPDR](#), Part 2 and in [Annex A](#) of this guide. In case of differences between this guide and legislation or regulations, the legislation and regulations prevail.

2. Terminal operator curbside assistance obligations

Services

When a person with a disability requests curbside assistance, terminal operators must help the traveller enter or exit the terminal. This means:

- helping a traveller arriving at a terminal get from the **curbside zone** outside to the check-in area inside or to get to a carrier representative if there is no check-in area; and
- helping a traveller who has landed/disembarked at the terminal get from the general public area inside (which the carrier must help them reach – see [Section 3](#)) to the **curbside zone outside**.

The **curbside zone** is the area outside a terminal where passengers are picked up or dropped off. At a bus stop, an equivalent zone could include, for example, an area near the stop where a passenger can wait.

This assistance includes helping the passenger with their baggage, providing a wheelchair if needed, helping the passenger with their wheelchair, and providing guiding assistance to a passenger who needs it (for example, a passenger who is blind).

Recommendations: Service standards

When a passenger requests curbside assistance to enter or leave a terminal, the terminal operator should have personnel available to provide that assistance without delay.

Terminal operators should have a policy with appropriate timelines for answering assistance requests. The standard should account for the time it takes to log the request and send a staff member to meet the passenger. In all cases, the terminal operator should tell the passenger when they can expect to receive the curbside assistance. This practice respects the dignity of the passenger by allowing them to move smoothly through the terminal and to check in or meet their scheduled pick-up transportation on time.

If the passenger's carrier is giving them curbside assistance that meets the ATPDR's requirements, terminal operators are not required to do so. In these cases, terminal operators must make sure the carrier continues to meet the curbside assistance requirements. Terminal operators may be held responsible if the requirements are not met.

Tips for Terminal Operators

To allow passengers to contact terminal staff when they arrive at the curbside zone for the start of their trip, terminal operators may choose to use a telephone or buzzer system. If so, the system must be accessible. For example, it should give the passenger instructions through audio and visual prompts, Braille and tactile controls, and pictograms.

Signage that identifies the terminal's curbside assistance zone (including any telephone or buzzer system) should display an international symbol of accessibility. This helps passengers recognize the zone as a feature designed for persons with disabilities.

Terminal operators should make sure the designated drop-off and pick-up points are clearly marked and provide safe, easy access to and from the curbside zone for persons with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs. The location of these drop-off and pick-up points must be featured on terminal operators' websites.

Information to be published

Terminal operators must publish information about the services or facilities they offer for persons with disabilities. For curbside assistance, this includes information about:

- curbside zones and where they are located;
- how to request curbside assistance; and
- conditions for obtaining the assistance, such as how far in advance of a carrier's check-in time a passenger should arrive at the terminal to receive the service.

This information must be featured on the terminal operator's website. Terminal operators without a website must publish this information in another way, which passengers should be able to find easily, such as in a brochure.

3. Carrier obligations

Carriers are responsible for helping a traveller with a disability get from the check-in point or a particular place in the public area to their on-board seat.

After a traveller with a disability has disembarked at a terminal, the carrier has to help that person reach a specific place in the general public area where terminal staff can help them get to the curbside zone.

- The particular place will depend on the terminal. It could be a service desk, or a place where there is an accessible telephone or buzzer system that the passenger can use to request curbside assistance from the terminal operator.

At bus stops, bus operators must also help passengers with a disability to embark or disembark and to move between the bus and an area near the stop where they can wait. The bus operator must help the passenger get on and off the bus with their bags, if they request it. Bus operators are also expected to help a passenger with their wheelchair, and to provide guiding assistance to a passenger who needs it (for example, a passenger who is blind).

At terminals, some carriers choose to provide curbside assistance themselves, instead of bringing passengers to the terminal operator. If this is the case, terminal operators must make sure the requirements outlined above in [Section 2](#) are met. These carriers would also have to publish information on their curbside assistance services and conditions for obtaining the services. For more information consult [*Accessible Transportation — Communicating with Persons with Disabilities: A Guide*](#).

Recommended practices for terminal operators and carriers

- **Coordination:** Coordination between terminal operators and carriers helps to make sure that their roles are clear, and that the service to passengers is seamless and meets all requirements. Terminal operators are responsible for curbside assistance unless a carrier is providing assistance that meets the ATPDR's requirements. A carrier that offers curbside assistance should let the terminal operator know what kind of assistance will be provided, and there should be a formal arrangement made between the carrier and terminal operator. Coordination is also important to make sure that there is a smooth transition from the end of a terminal operator's assistance and the beginning of the carrier's (and vice versa). For example, it would be preferable for a person with a disability not to have to change wheelchairs at the transition point.
- **Confirming the type of curbside assistance needed:** Personnel who provide curbside assistance should always ask the person with a disability what type of assistance they need. A common complaint from persons who are blind and who ask for curbside assistance is that they are offered a wheelchair instead of an attendant to guide them. Rather than making assumptions, those providing assistance should confirm the passenger's needs – this respects the dignity of the passenger and helps avoid potential frustration and delays.
- **Training personnel to provide curbside assistance:** Terminal operators and carriers are required to train their personnel on how to properly provide services to persons with disabilities, including those relating to curbside assistance. The CTA's [Accessibility for All](#) training program provides information that can help staff know the best ways to confirm the type of assistance a passenger needs and to provide assistance in an effective way that respects their dignity.

4. Curbside assistance tips for travellers

There are a number of things a passenger with a disability can do to help make sure they receive curbside assistance that is timely and that meets their needs.

Because different terminals will offer different ways to request curbside assistance (for example, using a telephone or buzzer system) and may require different arrival times to receive the service, it is a good idea for a traveller to find out:

- how to request curbside assistance at the terminal;
- how early to arrive at the terminal to receive the assistance; and
- where the terminal's drop-off and pick-up points for curbside assistance are.

A traveller should always tell the terminal operator what kind of curbside assistance is needed (for example, wheelchair assistance, help with baggage, or guidance into or out of the terminal). Clear communication will help the personnel providing assistance understand the traveller's specific disability-related needs.

5. We're here to help

For more information and guidance about accessible travel and the CTA's dispute resolution services, please contact us at info@otc-cta.gc.ca.

Annex A: Curbside assistance obligations in the *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations*

Provisions in the *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations* applicable to curbside assistance are set out in Part 2 (*Service Requirements Applicable to Carriers*), and in Part 4, Division 1 (*Service Requirements Applicable to Terminal Operators*).

Carriers

Part 2: Requirements applicable to curbside assistance

35 A carrier must, on the request of a person with a disability, provide the following services to the person without delay and in a manner that respects their dignity:

...

- (v) assisting the person, after disembarkation, in proceeding to a location where the person may receive assistance to proceed to the curbside zone from a member of the terminal operator's personnel

Note: the above obligation applies to the air, rail, marine (ferry) and bus carriers reflected in Section 3 of this guide.

Terminal operators

Part 4, Division 1: Requirements applicable to curbside assistance

Communication of information

215 A terminal operator must publish, including on its website, information about the services or facilities available at the terminal for persons with disabilities, including information:

- (a) the curbside zone, including where the curbside zone is located and how to request assistance to or from the curbside zone;
- (b) ground transportation from the terminal that is accessible to persons with disabilities, including whether a vehicle that is capable of carrying a non-folding or non-collapsible mobility aid is available;
- (c) the location of designated areas for service dogs to relieve themselves;
- (d) transportation between facilities within a terminal that is accessible to persons with disabilities; and
- (e) wheelchair and electric cart services.

Assistance for persons with disabilities

216 (1) A terminal operator must, on the request of a person with a disability, provide the following services to the person without delay:

- (a) assisting the person with their baggage or assisting with a wheelchair, including by providing a wheelchair if needed by the person;
- (b) assisting the person to proceed between the general public area and the curbside zone; and

- (c) assisting the person to proceed between the curbside zone and the check-in area or, if there is no check-in area, between the curbside zone and a representative of a carrier.

Exception

216 (2) However, a terminal operator is not required to provide a person with any assistance referred to in subsection (1) if a carrier is already providing that person with that assistance.