

SLATS RIDER GUIDE AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT



2300 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, FL 34982



This brochure was created to "Help you ride" SLATS (St. Lucie Alternative Transportation System)

The information in this brochure contains policies that are pertinent to making your trip as convenient as possible.

For eligibility information, contact us at 772-462-1778, press option #3 To speak to our Eligibility Specialist.

If you have any concerns regarding the service, please contact SLATS Customer Relations at 772-462-1778 and press option #4.

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AN OVERVIEW

SLATS is a shared ride paratransit, origination-to-destination service provided by St. Lucie County and the contracted service provider, MV Transportation. The program offers complimentary service for eligible individuals who are not able to use the regular bus service (also known as the "fixed route") because of a disability or other limitations.

Fixed-route buses are fully accessible. Currently, the SLATS and Fixed route transit bus systems are "Fare-Free." If, in the future, fares return, bus passes for customers with disabilities will be available at a discounted rate.

Because the demand for SLATS transit service is high, it is very important that each customer carefully follow the guidelines in this booklet.

Your cooperation and flexibility will allow SLATS to serve you better and help make it possible for us to serve others in the community.

SERVICE PROVIDER

MV Transportation's Reservationists take reservations from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday by calling 772-462-1778 and press option #1. They take all reservation requests along with answering customer service questions. MV Transportation's Dispatchers are responsible for scheduling vehicles and dispatching trips

within St. Lucie County. If you need to cancel a trip, call 772-462-1778 and press option #2. Please make sure to let the Dispatcher know if you are **canceling both trips or just one of the trips planned**. Cancellations calls should be made at least 2 hours before the ride time. If the cancellation is less than 2 hours before the ride time, the rider will be marked a "no-show"

SERVICE AREA

Federal regulations define the ADA paratransit service area as being within three-quarters of a mile on either side of a fixed bus route.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals interested in using SLATS Paratransit Service must apply through a written/paper or the online application process. Individuals under the age of 67 are required to provide a medical qualification statement from their doctor. SLATS is responsible for determining eligibility for paratransit service.

SLATS provides transportation under various programs.

Program determination is based on verification of the application (which can take up to 3 weeks). All programs have a three-year (3) certification period. Paratransit eligibility is not automatic, nor is eligibility recertification.

Paratransit service is provided to: Serve individuals with a disability who cannot utilize the fixed route system because of physical or mental impairments.

The Eligibility Specialist can be reached Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by calling 772-462-1778 and press option #3.

Additional information can be obtained by utilizing the Telephone Service for the Deaf - Florida Relay-711 and by going to the SLATS website at www.slcart.org

CUSTOMER SERVICE - Reservations

Customer service operates between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except holidays). Customer Service is available to make reservations, check on your trip, or cancel a trip. To reach SLATS Customer Service, please call: 772 462-1778 and press option #1.

OPERATIONAL HOURS

SLATS services are available Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Except on Holidays). Operational hours and services are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. SLATS will not operate on the following holidays: (Unless additional grant funding becomes available to allow for services.)

New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

MAKING A RESERVATION

Reservations are accepted a maximum of fourteen (14) days prior to the travel date. Next-day reservations must be completed before 5:00 p.m. **Same-day service is NOT available.**

A minimum of 60 minutes wait is required between your appointment time and your next pick-up time.

****If you are in an emergency situation, please call 911. SLATS cannot provide same-day service or assume liability if you are in a distress situation.****

Companions:

One (1) companion may accompany an ADA paratransit rider. Both must be picked up and dropped off at the same address at the same time. SLATS must know in advance that a companion is traveling with you.

****Personal Care Attendants:**

A PCA is a person designated or explicitly employed by the rider, traveling as an aide to assist with life functions, facilitate safe travel, or meet the rider's personal needs. The PCA must be approved to be eligible to travel with a rider. If your PCA has not been authorized, they may travel as a companion. Both must be picked up and dropped off at the same address at the same time. SLATS must know in advance that a PCA is traveling with you.

When making your reservation indicate a PCA will accompany you.

When reserving a ride(s), please have the following information ready:

Name

Address

Telephone Number **(please provide the number you want us to use to contact you about your trips)**

Client ID Number (provided when eligible)

Complete Pick-up address (apartment/suite number/building number (gate/security code) and zip code

Complete destination address (apartment/suite number/building number (gate/security code) and zip code

Indicate Mobility Aids (Wheelchair, Walker, Service Animal, or other aids)

Indicate if a companion or PCA (Personal Care Attendant) will be traveling with you (1 per eligible rider)

Companion pays fare when applicable

Persons with particular dietary concerns NEED to advise the reservationist before their trip of such situations to bring a snack and allowed only if documented in your eligibility file.

You will receive an automated call the night before your scheduled trip, advising you of the information confirmed and provided to you by the reservationist on the day of your booking.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS

Subscription orders are trips provided **at least twice a week** to and from the same locations, at the same time, on the same days of the week—examples of standing orders subscriptions: work, school, medical treatments, and dialysis. Subscription orders are scheduled for a maximum of 3 months. Once arranged, subscription orders are automatic for those 3 months, and additional telephone calls are not necessary unless of a cancellation. They are subject to be canceled on holidays where there is no service or reduced service because of circumstances beyond our control.

RIDING SLATS

SLATS services are a door-to-door service, which is the standard for all passengers. Door-to-door refers to the outside of the main entrance locations only. Passengers are not escorted beyond the ground floor lobby of any public building or threshold of a residence. Drivers do **NOT** go upstairs, into houses, nursing homes, doctor's offices, or business places to locate or drop off riders. Suppose the pick-up address is located inside a gated

community or requires special access. In that case, it is the rider's responsibility to arrange entry for the vehicle. If you need to be escorted past the outside of the main entrance, be sure to have a companion or PCA added when booking your trip.

Please be ready at least **ninety (90) minutes** before your scheduled appointment. When you have booked your trip, the reservationist will give you a service window of **30 minutes** the bus is due to arrive during that time. For example, if your service window is 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., the earliest time your ride will come will be 9:00 a.m., and the latest is 9:30 a.m. The bus may arrive at any time in between, so you must be ready and waiting for the vehicle's arrival.

Drivers operate on a schedule allowing a maximum of five **(5)** minutes to wait after arriving at the pick-up location.

SLATS does **NOT** guarantee early pick-ups from your original booked service window.

TRANSPORTING PACKAGES

Drivers are **not required** to assist with riders' packages or personal belongings. Other riders share vehicles, many of whom travel with large mobility devices such as power scooters. Space is not available for bulky or numerous items. You are allowed up to (4) bags with a weight limit of 10 pounds each. Riders may not transport explosives, illegal substances, flammable liquids, or materials hazardous to themselves, the driver, or other riders. Riders may transport self-carrying portable oxygen containers.

Riders in possession or using illegal drugs will be denied paratransit transportation.

TRANSPORTING SERVICE ANIMALS

All service animals must be controlled appropriately. Service animals must ride on the floor or, if appropriate, in the rider's lap and may not use vehicle seats. Riders are responsible for the behavior and hygiene of service animals. Service may be refused or discontinued for the service animal if the service animal is disruptive. All other animals may travel only in a properly secured cage or travel container. There is no additional charge for animals.

RIDERS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Seat belts must be worn at all times
2. No eating or drinking unless required for dietary/medical purposes, and documentation is on file with SLATS
3. No smoking (including electronic smoking devices)
4. No riding under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
5. No littering
6. No physical or verbal abuse of others will be tolerated
7. Specific providers and drivers cannot be requested
8. Requests for specific vehicle types cannot be accommodated
9. No sound-generating equipment is to be played aloud. Riders must use earphones or headphones
10. Disruptive, physically, or verbally abusive riders will be subject to service suspension

11. Riders may not allow their paratransit privileges to be utilized by others
12. Riders cannot change schedules or locations while being transported

RIDERS DISORDERLY CONDUCT POLICY

Penalties

1st Violation

The passenger will receive a phone call and a warning letter by mail

2nd Violation

The passenger will receive two (2) weeks suspension of service and a phone call and letter by mail

3rd Violation

The passenger will receive a 30-day suspension and, if applicable, a loss of subscription to service. (They will have to call for all future reservations and will not have automatic times and dates for standing orders). This will be done by phone call and letter by mail.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Drivers offer assistance to all riders and assist riders when entering and debarking the vehicle. This includes providing aid to the rider when walking, bringing the rider's wheelchair or

other mobility devices to/from the main door, and, if requested, assisting with unlocking, or opening the main entrance door of a building or residence. Drivers must follow the assigned service schedule.

DRIVERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO:

- Lift or carry riders
- Enter residence
- Accept tips or gratuities
- Play loud music
- Maneuver wheelchairs up or downstairs
- Perform any personal care assistance for riders, including dressing, giving medications, or operating medical equipment.
- Smoke in vehicles (including electronic smoking devices)
- Chew tobacco
- Use the telephone while driving
- Text while driving
- Eat while driving

If a driver acts unreasonably (or contrary to our policies and procedures), the problem should be reported by calling 772-462-1778 and pressing option #4

CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOW POLICY

To cancel your reservation, make sure to call the customer service line at **772-462-1778** and **press option #2**, and let them know you will not need your ride.

Trips are to be canceled at least 2 hours before the beginning of your service window. If not, that would be considered a no-show.

Suppose the operator arrives within the agreed-upon service window time. In that case, if the rider fails to board the vehicle within the full five minutes allotted, the trip is considered a no-show.

Suppose the rider has traveled to a destination using SLATS and has been "no-showed" from within that destination's trip pick-up service window. In that case, the rider calls customer service and rebook a return trip. Keep in mind that another vehicle's availability may take up to two (2) or more hours.

If a rider is a no-show from home, SLATS does **NOT** send another vehicle to pick up the rider from home, but we do **NOT** cancel the return trip if the rider has one. The rider is responsible for calling and canceling the rest of the day's trips, if not needed.

NO-SHOW POLICY

No-show/late cancellations represent 10 percent or more of a passenger's scheduled trips. The rider has three (3) no-shows in a calendar month, which may result in a violation. Violations are as follows: (subject to change at any time)

PENALTIES:

First No-Show:

The passenger will receive a warning letter and phone call

Second No-Show:

The passenger will receive a warning letter and a call to review the No-Show & Late Cancellation policy via phone.

Third No-Show: The passenger will receive a phone call and written letter noting service suspension for seven calendar days. The suspension will begin five days following the no-show determination to ensure receipt of notification.

Fourth No-Show: The passenger will receive a phone call and written letter of a suspension of service for 30 calendar days. The suspension will begin five days following the No Show determination

BOARDING EARLY

If your vehicle arrives before your scheduled pick-up window and you are ready, you may board immediately. (i.e., SLATS arrives at 8:50 a.m. for a pick-up window that runs from 9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. if you are not ready, and the vehicle arrives early. In that case, the driver must wait five (5) minutes into the pick-up window before leaving) (Using the example above, the driver must wait until 9:05 a.m.)

WHEELCHAIR SERVICE

Our service is an origin-to-destination service. When you make your reservation, be sure to mention if you have difficulties walking, use a mobility device, or use a wheelchair. The passenger must provide wheelchairs, and you must be on the ground floor when you are to be picked up. A wheelchair is a mobility aid designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

AMBULATORY CUSTOMERS

Ambulatory customers may ride the lift if they request it. An ambulatory rider is a person who does not require the use of a wheelchair or similar equipment.

OUT-OF-AREA VISITOR RIDING PRIVILEGES

Paratransit service is offered for persons with disabilities visiting from outside the service area. These riders are required to be certified ADA paratransit eligible from another jurisdiction. Proof of ADA paratransit eligibility must be provided to obtain visitor

status within the SLATS program. Twenty-one days of visitor service may be used for one year. At the end of that time, the visitor must complete the local eligibility process to continue to use the service.

OXYGEN REQUIREMENT

Travel with oxygen equipment is permitted, but the equipment must be small enough so that the driver does not have to assist with the loading and unloading it. The safety and use of this equipment is the responsibility of the passenger.

DRIVERS

MV Transportation trains all SLATS drivers. Drivers must meet these requirements. They need to have a safe driving record, pass a criminal background check, be able to pass a Florida Department of Transportation physical and test negative for drugs and alcohol. They are also trained in defensive driving and to safely assist and be sensitive to passengers' special needs. Drivers are selected based on their ability to provide the specialized service needed for the SLATS program. Drivers are not required to carry the passenger's belongings, push wheelchairs through grass or sand, or do any lifting of the passenger into or out of their mobility device.

REPORTING COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS, OR COMPLAINTS

If you have a comment, compliment, or complaint, please call 772-462-1778 and press option #4.

LOST ITEMS

If you have lost a personal item and believe, it may be in a SLATS vehicle, please contact Customer Service at 772 462-1778, and press option #1, to report it. If the item is found, you may be asked to travel to a central pick-up point to retrieve it. If the item is not located on the vehicle, SLATS nor the driver will be held responsible for replacement.

This brochure is available in other formats upon request.

SLATS operates according to the Title VI regulation, 49 CFR, Part 21, which states: "No person or group of persons shall be discriminated against about the routing, scheduling, or quality of service of transportation based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status."

If you feel you have been discriminated against, about the above and would like to register a complaint, please call (772) 462-5114 to speak with Tracy Jahn, the Title VI Coordinator.

The Rider's Guide Summarization:

SLATS goals, objectives, and general policies. It is not intended to create a contract; a violation or deviation of any of the goals, objectives, and practices contained in this guide will not give rise to a cause of action nor create any presumption that a legal duty has been breached. In addition, SLATS may change the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in the Rider's Guide at any time without liability to anyone.

ST. LUCIE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (SLATS)

2300 VIRGINIA AVENUE, FORT PIERCE, FL 34982

772 462-1778

Florida Relay System - 711