

Sun Van & You

**A Passenger's Guide
To
Public Transportation Services
For
Persons with Disabilities**



**City of Albuquerque
Transit Department
Alvarado Transportation Center
100 1st St SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
(505) 243-7433 (RIDE) or (505) 724-3100**

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Information in accessible formats is available upon request
by calling (505) 724-3100

Introduction

The purpose of Sun Van service is to complement ABQ RIDE's fixed route service. Sun Van operates a share-a-ride, origin to destination, accessible service, which means you, as a passenger, will most often ride with other passengers on the van. This service is sometimes called ADA Paratransit Service because it is provided as part of ABQ RIDE's effort to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Sun Van service must be reserved at least one day in advance. The service is provided with lift or ramped-equipped vans, which are scheduled through ABQ RIDE's Customer Call Center at 243-7433 (RIDE). Sun Van operates during the same days and hours as ABQ RIDE's fixed route bus service. The service can be used for any trip purpose.

This passenger guide provides information about Sun Van Service – who is eligible to use the service, when it operates, how to request a ride, fares and other important information. If you still have questions after reading this guide, please call Sun Van at 724-3100.

The City of Albuquerque does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, religion, age or disability in the provision of services, programs or activities.

What is Sun Van?

Sun Van is a complementary public transportation service for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligible persons who are unable to use fixed route buses for all or part of their trips. To qualify for ADA paratransit service, an individual must have a disability that prevents them from riding the fixed route bus system.

Eligibility

According to the ADA, Sun Van must establish an eligibility process for paratransit services. The process must “strictly limit” paratransit eligibility to persons with disabilities, and provides the following eligibility categories:

Categories of Eligibility

The applicant is eligible for paratransit services as defined by the ADA if, because of a disability, they cannot:

- (1) Get to and from fixed route stops within the service area;
- (2) Ride the fixed route bus system because it is not accessible on the trip they wish to take;
- (3) Independently navigate the system (board, ride or get off the bus/train).

Eligibility is based on “functional” criteria. Eligibility is not based on type of disability or mobility aid(s) used. Overall eligibility is based on the individual’s most limiting conditions and if there are barriers that prevent them from using the fixed route bus service.

Application Process

Requesting an Application

Applicants may request an application packet by mail by calling Sun Van at 243-RIDE (7433); or by picking one up at the Sun Van offices located at the Alvarado Transportation Center, 100 1st SW (located on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and 1st Street); or by applying online from the City of Albuquerque website: cabq.gov/transit/paratransit-service.

Filling out the Application

Applicants can fill out the application themselves or have someone assist them with filling it out. The applicant will be required to provide information on how their disability affects their ability to ride transit. At the end of the application the applicant will provide contact information for their healthcare provider. Once the application has been completed and submitted, a phone/Zoom interview or an in-person interview will be required to complete the process. Sun Van will provide a free ride to and from the in-person interview.

Length of Application Process

It can take up to twenty-one (21) days from the date of the interview to complete the application process. Once the application process is complete, a letter will be mailed to the applicant indicating their eligibility, expiration date of certification, conditions of eligibility, whether authorized to ride with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or "sheltered" (explained below) and a Sun Van ID card.

If the applicant does not receive notification of eligibility within twenty-one (21) days from the date of the in-person interview, the applicant will receive

presumptive eligibility, which will entitle the applicant eligibility to ride Sun Van. Sun Van service will be provided until and unless Sun Van denies the application.

Right to Appeal

Sun Van provides for an appeals process for determinations of eligibility. Applicants for Sun Van service may appeal:

- ❖ A determination that an applicant is not eligible for Sun Van;
- ❖ The conditions placed upon their eligibility;
- ❖ Suspension of service based on Suspension Penalties from the Late Cancellation and No Show Policy

You will have Sixty (60) days from the receipt of this letter, to request either in writing or by contacting Sun Van at (505) 724-3100, to indicate your intention:

- ❖ To be present at the meeting. If you choose to attend the Appeals Sub-Committee of the Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB), a free ride to and from the meeting will be provided.
- ❖ To provide a written statement. If you choose to respond in writing, the written response must be received at least one day prior to the meeting.
- ❖ To attend the meeting virtually. If you choose to attend the meeting virtually you need to provide an email address at least one-day prior to the meeting.

You will receive a letter notifying you of the date and time for the Appeals Subcommittee for the Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting at least seven days prior to the meeting.

If you do not attend the Appeals Sub-Committee Meeting of the Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB), provide a written statement, or attend virtually, the Committee will make a determination based on the available facts.

Until a decision has been made by the Committee, and you have received written notification from Sun Van, you will continue to be able to schedule and ride Sun Van. The rider, caregiver, guardian or advocate will receive a written decision from Sun Van informing the rider of the decision within 30 days.

In addition, Sun Van certified eligible customers whose services have been suspended for any reason may appeal their suspension of service according to the guidelines above.

A copy of these procedures will be included in every letter for determinations of ineligibility, conditional eligibility or suspension of Sun Van services.

Please call the Sun Van offices at 243-7433 (RIDE) if you have any questions on the appeals process.

Types of Eligibility

Sun Van assigns types of eligibility based on functional capabilities.

Unconditional Eligibility

Individuals certified as unconditional are unable to use the ABQ RIDE fixed route bus system. Unconditionally certified riders may use Sun Van for all of

their trips. Unconditional riders are required to renew their certification every three years by contacting the Sun offices to verify any changes to contact information and disability status.

Conditional Eligibility

Some applicants are able to use the ABQ RIDE fixed route bus system for at least some of their trips, under certain conditions, but may not be able to under conditions such as: seasonal (cold, heat, dark, light), pathway (uneven, curb cuts, incline, inaccessible bus stop, complex traffic patterns, and distance), navigational or other applicable conditions.

Sheltered Eligibility

Applicants certified to ride Sun Van under the sheltered category will not be dropped off at any destination without a responsible person signing to accept the sheltered rider.

Sun Van recognizes that some “sheltered” riders can be dropped off at their destination without a signature. In order for this to occur, a designated family member or caretaker must sign and complete a Sun Van permission form allowing Sun Van to drop off the sheltered rider at specific location(s) without a responsible party signing to accept the sheltered rider. Each location and address must be indicated.

The permission form must be completed and located in the rider’s file at the Sun Van offices before the rider can be dropped off without the responsible party’s signature. It is the responsibility of the designated family member or caretaker to notify Sun Van if the permission form is no longer valid, or if there are any changes that need to be made to the permission form. A sheltered rider will not be dropped off at any addresses that are not noted on the permission form. Any time an address changes for a sheltered rider,

the rider will not be dropped off without a signature of a responsible party until a revised Sun Van permission form is received by Sun Van and in the passenger's file.

Temporary Eligibility

Some applicants only need to use SunVan temporarily. For example, the individual might need SunVan service while they are waiting for one or more broken bones to heal.

Immediate Needs Certification

Applicants with an urgent medical need for transportation may be granted an immediate needs 30-day certification, e.g., after discharge from a hospital. During the period in which they receive transportation, they will be required to follow the regular application process for longer term eligibility.

Visitor Eligibility

Sun Van will provide complementary service to visitors who present documentation that they are ADA paratransit eligible from another paratransit system; or if the individual has an apparent disability; or if the individual presents reasonable documentation of a disability. Sun Van service will be provided for twenty-one (21) days during a three hundred sixty-five (365) day period. Visitors should call Sun Van at 243-RIDE (7433) to request the visitor eligibility and receive information on how to ride Sun Van.

Wheelchair or Mobility Aid Users

Riders who will be using a wheelchair or other mobility aid to ride on Sun Van should note that Sun Van can only transport riders whose combined weight with their mobility aid is less than 800 lbs., and their mobility aid should not exceed 51 inches in length, or 33 inches in width. If you think you may be close to these measures, please indicate this in the eligibility interview.

Service Animals

Service animals are allowed to ride on Sun Van. Riders must keep the service animal under control at all times, so that the service animal does not get injured or pose a threat to other passengers. Pets other than service animals are not allowed on Sun Van.

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are able to travel only if "PCA" appears on the front of their Sun Van ID card issued by the City of Albuquerque. PCAs ride Sun Van at no charge, but must have the same origin and destination.

In addition to riding with a PCA, you may also request to travel with a companion. (See Companions below).

Companions

Sun Van allows one companion with the same ride origin and destination, to ride with the Sun Van rider.

At the time of the reservation, the rider should notify the customer service support representative that they will be traveling with a companion. If the rider wishes to travel with more than one companion, the rider must call back on the day of the service and a customer service representative will notify the rider if space is available. No guarantees can be made that more than one companion will be allowed to travel with the Sun Van rider.

Children under the age of nine are not limited to the one companion rule if they are related to the adult.

Holiday Service

Like ABQ RIDE, Sun Van does not operate on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Abbreviated and/or reduced Sun Van service may be provided for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Veterans Day, the Day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Eve. Please call the Sun Van offices for further information.

On the holidays when Sun Van service is not provided, a Sun Van customer service representative will be available to schedule next day reservations and cancellations for Sun Van riders, from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Subscription trips will automatically be cancelled for holidays on which Sun Van service is not provided. For those holidays on which Sun Van service is provided, it is the responsibility of the rider to cancel their trips.

Service Area

Similar to ABQ RIDE, Sun Van serves the Albuquerque City metropolitan area and portions of Bernalillo County. Sun Van provides service at least to and from points within three-quarters of a mile along each ABQ RIDE bus route, except for commuter routes, during the days and times that ABQ RIDE operates.

Trip origins and destinations must be within the Sun Van service area. To determine if a trip is within the service area, call the Sun Van reservation office at 243-7433 (RIDE).

Outside the Sun Van Service Area – Sun Van eligible individuals who live outside of the Sun Van service area can still use Sun Van service, however, it is the responsibility of the individual to get to and/or from the pick-up or drop-off point that is within the Sun Van service area.

Service Times

Monday – Saturday 5:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Sunday 6:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sun Van will also provide paratransit service for trips whenever fixed route is in service, when the origin and destination are within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of those fixed routes. Sun Van service will be provided until the ending time of the fixed route service.

Please note when ABQ RIDE fixed route bus service is reduced, Sun Van service may also be reduced.

Trip Length

Sun Van is a shared ride service. Sun Van rides are comparable to travel times on ABQ RIDE fixed route service, taking into account actual time on board the bus, walk time to/from transfer points and anticipated wait time. This could mean that the Sun Van trip will take up to twenty (20) minutes longer than a comparable fixed route trip.

Fares

Due to Council adopted legislation in April of 2023, Sun Van service is free.

Pick-Up Window

Sun Van riders must be ready for pick-up at least 15 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. The van is considered on time if it arrives between 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the requested pick-up time. The Sun Van rider must board the Sun Van within 5 minutes. If the rider fails to board the vehicle within the 5 minutes, the Sun Van rider will be marked a no show.

Boarding Sun Van

Upon immediately boarding the Sun Van, Sun Van riders must show their Sun Van ID card to the Sun Van driver. Sun Van riders who do not have their Sun Van ID card will **not** be allowed to ride Sun Van for that trip.

Once a Sun Van rider has shown their Sun Van ID Card, walk-on riders should take a seat and put on their seat belt. Sun Van riders who are unable to put on their seatbelt will be assisted by the driver. Wheelchair or other mobility device riders should position themselves in the designated

wheelchair or mobility devices station. The Sun Van driver is responsible for securing the Sun Van rider with a tie down system.

Subscription Trips

If the rider travels to the same location two or more times a week, on the same days and times, the rider may be eligible to receive subscription service. If Sun Van is able to accommodate the subscription trip, a standing reservation will be scheduled for the rider's trip(s). A subscription trip does not guarantee a specific Sun Van driver or vehicle type.

Subscription ride services may not always be available for the day and/or times when a request is submitted. If a subscription request cannot be accommodated, the request will be placed on a waiting list. As space becomes available, Sun Van will contact the Sun Van rider and notify them of the day and time of the subscription trip(s) and the date the subscription trip begins.

Subscriptions are automatically cancelled on those holidays that Sun Van does not provide service.

Subscription trips will be permanently cancelled in cases where:

- ❖ 20% or more subscription trips are cancelled within a ninety (90) day period;
- ❖ Excessive no-shows or late cancellations occur;
- ❖ Subscription service has not been used consecutively for thirty (30) days or more.

In cases where riders have had their subscription rides cancelled, and later request subscription service, if the days and/or times are not available, the request will be placed on the waiting list.

Any changes to a subscription schedule due to time changes, address changes and/or days of the week may result in the loss of subscription service. If Sun Van is not able to accommodate the requested subscription changes, the passenger will have the option of being placed on the waiting list.

Call When Ready (CWR)

A Call When Ready (CWR) is an optional service for a rider's return trips from a medical facility because the exact time of the return trip is unknown.

The Call When Ready (CWR) is activated when the rider phones in and notifies the customer support representative that they are ready to be picked up for their return trip.

Once the Call When Ready (CWR) is activated, Sun Van has up to seventy-five (75) minutes to pick up the rider.

Same Day Service (SDS)

Same Day Service is a request to travel on the same day the service is requested. Same Day Service requests are only provided on a "space available" basis and are not guaranteed. Riders are required to call Sun Van at 243-7433 (RIDE) at least thirty (30) minutes before the requested pick-up time to verify if Sun Van is able to grant the same day service request.

How to Schedule a Trip

Sun Van trip reservations are accepted by phone one to five days in advance.

Reservation phone number: 243-7433 (RIDE)

Reservations Scheduling Hours: Monday – Sunday

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The customer service representative is required to identify themselves by first name at the beginning of each call.

Please provide the Sun Van Customer Service Representative with the following information when scheduling trips:

Your name and Sun Van ID number as it is on your Sun Van ID card.

- ❖ Date(s) you wish to travel.
- ❖ Exact address(es) of your pick-up and destination locations. Be specific, including suite and/or building numbers, doctor's name, etc. Some large destination locations have designated pick-up and/or drop-off locations and riders can only be picked up and/or dropped off at those designated locations.
- ❖ Desired arrival time or requested pick-up time.
- ❖ Return time to your place of origin, or arrival time at your next destination.
- ❖ Number of individuals traveling with the Sun Van rider including a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), child or guest.
- ❖ Whether door-to-door service is being requested.

When calling to schedule a trip, Sun Van riders should be ready to record important information concerning their Sun Van trips such as scheduled dates and scheduled pick-up times. All Sun Van trips will be scheduled within one hour before or after the requested pick-up time. The exact pick-up time requested may not be available. Sun Van riders may schedule their trips either by requested pick-up time or by appointment time.

Sun Van customer service support representatives will confirm Sun Van trips, by repeating the Sun Van trips back to the customer or their representative.

If your travel schedule is flexible, please work with the customer service representative to select a time when fewer people travel. Since Sun Van is a shared ride service, the more flexible you can be with your pick up time, the better Sun Van can meet your needs and the needs of others.

Please note that Sun Van riders may call 243-7433 (RIDE) to cancel trips:

- ❖ Monday – Saturday 5:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- ❖ Sunday 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

As a reminder, Sun Van riders should keep their address, telephone number and emergency information current with Sun Van since this is the primary source for rider information.

Late Cancellations and No Show Policy

The no show and late cancellation policy provides for procedures that meet the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) guidelines to establish an administrative process to suspend for a reasonable period of time, complementary paratransit service. This policy applies to riders who

establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips, except where the trips are missed for reasons that are not under their control.

Sun Van will maintain a record of each no show or late cancellation. Riders whose no shows or late cancellations are excessive, as defined by this Policy, may be suspended for a reasonable period of time. This policy applies to both advance reservations and subscription trips.

For the purposes of this policy, no shows and late cancellations will be considered no show occurrences.

Each scheduled leg of a trip will be treated separately. If a rider is marked a no show or late cancellation for a scheduled pick-up, Sun Van will **not** cancel the rider's return trip. If the rider does not appear for the return trip, the rider will be marked a no show for the missed trip. A rider will be counted a no show for each leg of any trip for which they fail to cancel and do not appear for the trip.

Definitions

A **no show** occurs when the rider has:

- ❖ A scheduled Sun Van ride, and
- ❖ The Sun Van vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up location within the specified 30-minute window (15 minutes before or after the scheduled pick-up time), and
- ❖ The driver (while sitting in the driver's seat) cannot reasonably see the rider approaching the Sun Van vehicle, and
- ❖ The driver waits the required 5 minutes, and the rider fails to board the vehicle.

A **late cancellation** occurs when the rider

- ❖ Does not call two or more hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time to cancel the trip.

A **missed trip** occurs when a vehicle arrives after the end of the 30 minute window and the rider is not available, or chooses not to take the trip. This will **not count** as a rider no-show. If the rider chooses to board the vehicle, this will count as a late pick-up by Sun Van for the purposes of calculating Sun Van's on-time performance.

Policy

Sun Van will track scheduled trips, no shows and late cancellations by rider. No shows and/or late cancellations will be considered excessive:

- ❖ When a rider reserved five or more trips within any month, and
- ❖ When a rider no shows and/or late cancels **30 percent** or more of those scheduled trips.

No passenger shall be suspended under this Policy for having two or less no shows and/or late cancellation occurrences in one month.

Suspension Penalties

Riders incurring excessive no shows and/or late cancellations as defined above will be in violation of the no show and late cancellation policy and will be subject to suspension for a reasonable period of time. The following progressive suspension periods will apply to violations of the Policy that occur within a rolling 12 month period:

- ❖ First violation within a calendar month period – warning letter is issued, copy of policy mailed

- ❖ Second violation within a second calendar month period – rider receives a 3-day suspension
- ❖ Third violation within a third calendar month period – rider receives a 7-day suspension
- ❖ Fourth violation within a fourth calendar month period – rider receives a 15-day suspension

Warning Letters and Notice of Suspension

Warning Letters

Sun Van will send a warning letter and a copy of the no show and late cancellation policy containing the following information:

- ❖ A listing of the dates when the no shows and/or late cancellations occurred, and
- ❖ A copy of the no show and late cancellation policy, and
- ❖ Instructions on how to request an appeal.

Suspensions

Sun Van will send a letter of suspension containing the following information:

- ❖ A listing of the dates when the no shows and/or late cancellations occurred, and
- ❖ The beginning and ending dates of the pending suspensions, and
- ❖ The date the rider can begin riding Sun Van again, and
- ❖ Instructions on how to make an appeal.

Right to Appeal

Sun Van riders who have been notified of a scheduled suspension from Sun Van services have the right to appeal.

You will have Sixty (60) days from the receipt of this letter, to request either in writing or by contacting Sun Van at (505) 724-3100, to indicate your intention:

- ❖ To be present at the meeting. If you choose to attend the Appeals Sub-Committee of the Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting, a free ride to and from the meeting will be provided.
- ❖ To provide a written statement. If you choose to respond in writing, the written response must be received at least one day prior to the meeting.
- ❖ To telephonically conference call into the meeting. If you choose to telephonically conference call into the meeting, you need to provide the telephone number at least one-day prior to the meeting.

A Sun Van representative will call you to notify you of the date and time for the Appeals Subcommittee for the Paratransit Advisory (PTAB) meeting.

If you do not attend the Sub-Committee of the Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting, provide a written statement, or attend telephonically, the Committee will make a determination based on the available facts.

Until a decision has been made by the Committee, and you have received written notification from Sun Van, you will continue to be able to schedule and ride Sun Van. The rider, caregiver, guardian or advocate will receive a written decision from Sun Van informing the rider of the decision within 30 days.

Driver Assistance

Sun Van will provide curb-to-curb paratransit service unless door-to-door is requested during the eligibility process, at the time of the reservation or during travel on the Sun Van. Sun Van riders should meet the van at the curb near the pick-up address, and will be dropped off at the curb near their destination address. Sun Van riders are expected to get to the curb at the pick-up point and from the curb at the destination point.

Upon request, Sun Van drivers will offer and provide assistance as needed for riders boarding and/or exiting the van. This includes assistance in climbing the steps of the van, deploying the lift or ramp and assistance for both ambulatory and wheelchair riders.

If the rider has a disability that requires assistance in traveling to or from the curb, the rider may request door-to-door service or to be certified to ride with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). The Sun Van driver will assist the rider unless this will take the driver out of sight of the vehicle for a significant amount of time.

Riders requiring additional assistance for door-to-door service on a regular basis are encouraged to provide this information as part of the application process for complementary ADA paratransit eligibility, or at the time that a change in circumstances makes door-to-door service necessary. Drivers will at no time provide services that exceeds door-to-door service.

At facilities with multiple entrances, such as malls or hospitals, Sun Van has established designated pick-up/drop-off locations to minimize confusion. Riders whose disabilities prevent use of these designated locations, can request other pick-up or drop-off points.

Grocery Bags, Packages and Other Carry-On Items

Sun Van allows up to four grocery bags per rider. Reusable/plastic bags count as one grocery bag.

Blankets, sheets, and pillows must be in an enclosed bag.

Packages cannot exceed 18"x18" and only one 18"x18" package is allowed per trip.

The rider is responsible for carrying and holding all grocery bags, packages and other carry-on items while on the Sun Van. All items must be contained within a reasonable space of the rider and may not encroach into other seats, the aisles of the Sun Van or wheelchair tie down spaces. The items must not impede the ability of other riders to get to or from their seats and/or wheelchair tie down station or the ability for other riders to get on or off the Sun Van.

Rules for Riding Sun Van

Please follow these simple rules for a safe and enjoyable ride:

- ❖ You must show your Sun Van ID card to the driver each time you ride Sun Van
- ❖ You must wear your seatbelt at all times
- ❖ You must stay seated at all times while riding on Sun Van
- ❖ Children nine and under must be accompanied by an adult

- ❖ Eating and drinking on the van is prohibited (unless required for health reasons)
- ❖ Alcoholic drinks are never allowed on a Sun Van vehicle at any time except unopened cans or bottles in enclosed bags.
- ❖ Shirt, pants, and shoes are required to ride Sun Van
- ❖ Smoking or vaping on the van is not permitted
- ❖ No weapons or flammable liquids are allowed on a Sun Van vehicle.
- ❖ No car batteries are allowed on Sun Van.
- ❖ You must maintain reasonable personal hygiene.
- ❖ You may not disrupt the driver while they are driving the vehicle
- ❖ You may not disrupt other passengers
- ❖ You may not engage in any conduct or activity that may endanger other passengers or the driver
- ❖ You may not make verbal or physical threats to the driver or to other passengers
- ❖ You may not damage or destroy any Sun Van property, driver property or other passenger's property
- ❖ You may not get out of your seat while the Sun Van is in motion
- ❖ Taking more than one seat is prohibited.

- ❖ You may not disrobe
- ❖ You may not swear, name call or use abusive language

Sun Van may refuse service to anyone who engages in violent, seriously disruptive or illegal conduct. Although a rider's behavior may be offensive or annoying to other passengers, if it does not pose a direct threat, the rider exhibiting the behavior will not be denied service.

You have the right to appeal if you disagree with the suspension of service. Please contact Sun Van for information on how to appeal a suspension of service.

Complaints, Comments and Questions

We want to hear what you have to say. Complaints, comments and suggestions you may:

- ❖ Phone: Sun Van at 243-7433 (RIDE)
- ❖ Mail: Sun Van, Alvarado Transportation Center, 100 1st SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102
- ❖ Phone: 311