

Town of Ingersoll – Specialized Transportation Services (Paratransit)

Intent

This policy establishes the Town of Ingersoll’s specialized transportation service (paratransit) in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation O. Reg. 191/11, as amended.

Policy

The Town of Ingersoll provides specialized transportation services, hereinafter referred to as paratransit services, through an agreement between the Town and a service provider. The Paratransit services agreement, hereinafter referred to as ‘the agreement’, establishes the Town and service provider’s responsibilities in detail. For further information or to access the agreement, please contact the Town of Ingersoll’s Clerk’s Department.

Paratransit services are offered to eligible residents and visitors who, due to a disability, are unable to access traditional transportation services. Ingersoll Paratransit provides door-to-door service within the boundaries of the Town of Ingersoll, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

Definitions

Assistant/Aide – An individual who is required to accompany a paratransit rider per the direction of their physician or other medical professional and is responsible for their care and assistance during the entire trip. Attendants must be a minimum of 18 years of age and able to travel independently.

Companion – An individual, such as a partner, family member or friend, who travels with a paratransit rider but is not required to accompany the rider to provide assistance per the definition of “assistant” above.

Visitor – A visitor is someone who requires specialized transportation in the Town of Ingersoll but whose permanent residence is outside of the Town. Visitors to Town with

disabilities will be eligible to access the Town's paratransit service if they meet one of two conditions:

- a) The visitor can confirm that they are eligible for specialized transportation services in their home jurisdiction; or
- b) The visitor meets the Town's eligibility requirements.

Procedures

Paratransit service is available on an unconditional (permanent), temporary, or conditional basis, depending on eligibility. Unless otherwise requested for emergency or compassionate grounds, access to Paratransit services is facilitated through an [application](#) process and is granted based on the applicant meeting one or more of the following eligibility criteria, as confirmed by their physician or other healthcare professional:

- Persons physically unable to climb or descend steps
- Persons unable to walk a distance of 175 meters (575 feet)
- Visual impairment (confirmation letter from CNIB required)
- Persons who are temporarily disabled due to illness/injury

Paratransit is available to all eligible residents of the Town of Ingersoll and will be approved on a temporary basis for eligible visitors, as detailed in this policy.

Approval of paratransit services is based solely on the above-stated eligibility criteria and compassionate grounds and is not based on an applicant's particular disability, income level or general health.

1. Application Process

Requests to access the Town of Ingersoll's Paratransit services are completed through the Town's application form.

- A. Once received, staff will review the application for completeness and will follow up with the applicant or their approved designate for further information or where the application is deemed incomplete.

- B. Once deemed complete, staff will review the application to determine if the applicant is eligible to receive paratransit services.
- C. Staff will issue a decision within 14 calendar days of receiving a complete application.
 - I. Decisions will be documented and communicated to the applicant and their emergency contact upon request.
 - II. If a decision to approve or deny the application is not made within 14 days of receiving a complete application, the applicant will be granted temporary eligibility for paratransit services until a decision is made.
- D. The Town will classify approvals into one of the following three categories:
 - I. Unconditional eligibility
 - II. Temporary eligibility
 - III. Conditional eligibility.
- E. Applicants who do not meet eligibility criteria and are denied access to paratransit services may appeal the Town's decision through the independent appeal process. See Schedule "A" to this policy.

2. Eligibility Categories and Communications

A. Unconditional Eligibility (permanent)

Individuals approved under this category require ongoing access to paratransit services due to permanent disability as indicated by their physician or another medical professional.

Upon approval, the individual will be added to the Town's paratransit subscriber list, and the paratransit welcome letter will be issued.

B. Temporary Eligibility

Individuals approved under this category have a temporary disability that necessitates access to paratransit services as indicated by their physician or other medical professional. The duration of the temporary access that is granted is based on the information provided on the application form.

Upon approval, the individual will be added to the Town's paratransit subscriber list under the temporary category, and a welcome letter will be sent indicating the expiration

date of their approval. Subscribers are responsible for requesting an extension to the approved access period and must provide confirmation from their physician of their ongoing eligibility.

C. Conditional Eligibility

Conditional Eligibility applies to individuals who cannot access conventional transportation services because of periodic physical or environmental barriers. Since the Town of Ingersoll does not offer conventional transportation services, approval under this category has not been issued.

D. Approvals with Medically-Required Assistants

A physician or other medical professional may require an applicant to be accompanied by an assistant when accessing paratransit services. If this requirement is indicated on the individual's application form, it will be noted on the subscriber list and communicated to the paratransit service provider.

Subscribers are responsible for ensuring that an Assistant is available to travel with them on each trip. The Town does not provide this service.

An Assistant may be any person of the subscriber's choosing, so long as that individual is 18 years of age or older and can provide the necessary care to the individual. Care is any mobility or cognitive support required by the subscriber. Assistants cannot be a registered paratransit subscriber.

Assistants are not charged a fare.

E. Emergency and Compassionate Applications

If an individual with a disability requires urgent access to paratransit services because of an emergency or on compassionate grounds and there are no other accessible transportation services to meet their needs, the Town of Ingersoll may grant temporary eligibility without completing a full intake assessment to accommodate the request earlier than the standard timeline of 10 business days.

Individuals applying for emergency or compassionate access to paratransit services must indicate their request for expedited consideration on their application form and provide justification for their request. If approved, the Town will extend access to paratransit services to the applicant for a maximum of seven (7) calendar days. Any extension or more permanent access must be facilitated through the non-emergency application and meet eligibility requirements.

3. Approval of Visitor Applications

The approval process for visitor applications is the same as established under section 1. of this policy, unless the applicant confirms that they have been approved for specialized transportation services in the municipality where they reside.

Approvals for visitors will be issued under the temporary eligibility category, and subscribers will be provided with a welcome letter stating the expiration date of their approved access to paratransit services.

4. Appeal Process

Individuals who are denied access to paratransit services based on eligibility are entitled to appeal the decision of Town staff. Applicants may appeal a decision regarding eligibility, eligibility level or type of assistance required. The appeal process is intended to ensure that applications are dealt with fairly and consistently and that decisions are made in alignment with established eligibility criteria.

The designated Paratransit appeal review panel will review appeals. The decision of the panel is final.

For further information on the appeal process, please refer to Schedule "A".

The Appeal process is as follows:

1. File a Notice of Appeal with the Town of Ingersoll Clerk's Department.
2. Attend a meeting with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee,
 - Who acts as the independent appeal body?
 - Final decision to be communicated to the applicant
 - The Town shall make a decision on an appeal with respect to eligibility within 30 calendar days after receiving the complete appeal application.

- If a final decision is not made within 30 calendar days, the applicant will be granted temporary eligibility until a final decision is made.

Collection of Personal Information and Document Retention

Collection of Personal Information

The Town of Ingersoll will comply with all requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* when collecting personal information in the course of facilitating paratransit services. Applicants will be made aware of the collection and the purpose for which personal information is being requested. Applicants will also be advised of the extent to which that information will be shared with the service provider to provide paratransit services. At all times, the Town will endeavour to limit collection to what is deemed necessary to determine service eligibility and deliver the service. For example, the Town will limit subscriber information provided to the service provider to the individual's name and contact information, whether they rely on an assistive device, and if they must be accompanied by an assistant. No medical information or diagnosis shall be shared.

Document Retention

All documents related to the Town of Ingersoll's Paratransit service delivery will be collected and retained per the Town's records retention by-law. Access to personal records will be provided at the applicant's request and in alternate formats upon request per the Town's Information and Communications Standards Policy.

Contracted Service Provisions

The Town of Ingersoll delivers Paratransit services through a contracted service provider who negotiates such things as booking procedures, trip cancellation policies and hours of operation.

Detailed information and expectations with respect to the delivery of paratransit services in the Town of Ingersoll are reflected in the current paratransit service delivery contract, which is available for review upon request.

Upon the execution of any new service agreement, the Town will update all relevant information that is made available to subscribers to reflect current policies and practices. At a minimum, the Town's welcome letters and paratransit brochures will be amended as required to remain current with contract specifications. All changes approved through contract negotiations that may impact the Town's subscriber list will be communicated promptly to those individuals and will include advance notice, where possible.

When negotiating a new contract, the Town will ensure that the delivery of its specialised transportation services will adhere to the relevant section of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Service Delays

Disruptions to the delivery of paratransit services will be subject to requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and will apply to disruptions that impact the service provider's ability to deliver specialized transportation services for any duration of time. Where the service provider anticipates or is experiencing a disruption of service that will impact its ability to provide paratransit services as expected per the paratransit service contract, the Town will work with the service provider to communicate and advertise the disruption.

The service provider is responsible for advising subscribers of any trip delays related to the pick-up or drop-off and will make all attempts to communicate the delay to the subscriber via the contact information provided for the individual.

Companion, Assistant, and Dependant Policy

Assistants, as defined in this policy, will not be charged a fare when accompanying a subscriber on any paratransit trip where the assistant is required by the individual's physician or another medical professional.

Subscribers' dependents will also not be charged when accompanying the individual on a paratransit trip. However, it is the subscriber's responsibility to ensure that, where required due to the dependent's age, height, or weight, the dependent is secured in the taxi with the appropriate child restraint securement system.

When a subscriber travels with a companion in the service provider's taxi, the regular taxi fare will be charged for the trip.

Schedule “A” - Town of Ingersoll Paratransit Appeal Process

Individuals who have been denied access or desired level of access to Ingersoll Paratransit services may file an appeal to have their eligibility reconsidered. Appeals may be filed regarding eligibility, level of eligibility or the type of assistance required.

Ways to File an Appeal

Appeals can be filed through the following means:

- In person – Clerk’s Department, 130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll Ontario.
- By Mail: Attn, Clerk’s Department, 130 Oxford St. 2nd Floor, Ingersoll ON, N5C 2V5.
- Email: clerks@ingersoll.ca

Appeal Process

1. Upon receipt of your appeal, your initial application, the appeal and any documentation, information supporting your appeal, will be sent to the appeal panel for review and you will then be provided with a hearing date.
2. Individuals who cannot attend the provided hearing date must advise the clerk’s department through one of the methods of communication established above.
3. Missed hearings will not be rescheduled. The applicant must re-submit their paratransit application and begin the application process anew.
4. On the day of the hearing, the appeal panel will consider any new information presented by the applicant so long as it was provided with the appeal. New information may include new and/or updated information or direction as provided by the applicant’s physician or another medical professional.

Appeal Decisions

- The appeal panel has thirty (30) days to make a decision on an appeal following receipt of a complete appeal application.
- If the panel fails to make a decision within thirty days, the applicant will be granted temporary eligibility until a final decision is made.

- The appeal panel will make all attempts to arrive at a consensus on the appeal; however, if consensus cannot be reached, a decision will be made by the majority vote of the panel.
- Decisions of the appeal panel are final and will be documented and communicated to the applicant.
- The decision will stand without further appeal for one (1) year unless the appeal panel receives additional information that affects the person's eligibility to access paratransit services.