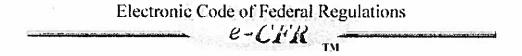
Home Page > Executive Branch > Code of Federal Regulations > Electronic Code of Federal Regulations



e-CFR Data is current as of August 5, 2010

Title 49: Transportation

PART 37—TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)

Browse Previous

Subpart H—Over-the-Road Buses (OTRBs)

Source: 63 FR 51690, Sept. 28, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 37.181 Applicability dates.

This subpart applies to all private entities that operate OTRBs. The requirements of the subpart begin to apply to large operators beginning October 30, 2000 and to small operators beginning October 29, 2001.

§ 37.183 Purchase or lease of new OTRBs by operators of fixed-route systems.

The following requirements apply to private entities that are primarily in the business of transporting people, whose operations affect commerce, and that operate a fixed-route system, with respect to OTRBs delivered to them on or after the date on which this subpart applies to them:

- (a) Large operators. If a large entity operates a fixed-route system, and purchases or leases a new OTRB for or in contemplation of use in that system, it shall ensure that the vehicle is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.
- (b) Small operators. If a small entity operates a fixed-route system, and purchases or leases a new OTRB for or in contemplation of use in that system, it must do one of the following two things:
- (1) Ensure that the vehicle is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs; or
- (2) Ensure that equivalent service, as defined in §37.105, is provided to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs. To meet this equivalent service standard, the service provided by the operator must permit a wheelchair user to travel in his or her own mobility aid.

§ 37.185 Fleet accessibility requirement for OTRB fixed-route systems of large operators.

Each large operator subject to the requirements of §37.183 shall ensure that-

- (a) By October 30, 2006 no less than 50 percent of the buses in its fleet with which it provides fixed-route service are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.
- (b) By October 29, 2012, 100 percent of the buses in its fleet with which it provides fixed-route service are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.

- (c) Request for time extension. An operator may apply to the Secretary for a time extension of the fleet accessibility deadlines of this section. If he or she grants the request, the Secretary sets a specific date by which the operator must meet the fleet accessibility requirement. In determining whether to grant such a request, the Secretary considers the following factors:
- (1) Whether the operator has purchased or leased, since October 30, 2000, enough new OTRBs to replace 50 percent of the OTRBs with which it provides fixed-route service by October 30, 2006 or 100 percent of such OTRBs by October 29, 2012;
- (2) Whether the operator has purchased or leased, between October 28, 1998 and October 30, 2000, a number of new inaccessible OTRBs significantly exceeding the number of buses it would normally obtain in such a period;
- (3) The compliance with all requirements of this part by the operator over the period between October 28, 1998 and the request for time extension.

§ 37.187 Interline service.

- (a) When the general public can purchase a ticket or make a reservation with one operator for a fixed-route trip of two or more stages in which another operator provides service, the first operator must arrange for an accessible bus, or equivalent service, as applicable, to be provided for each stage of the trip to a passenger with a disability. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (a):
- Example 1. By going to Operator X's ticket office or calling X for a reservation, a passenger can buy or reserve a ticket from Point A through to Point C, transferring at intermediate Point B to a bus operated by Operator Y. Operator X is responsible for communicating immediately with Operator Y to ensure that Y knows that a passenger needing accessible transportation or equivalent service, as applicable, is traveling from Point B to Point C. By immediate communication, we mean that the ticket or reservation agent for Operator X, by phone, fax, computer, or other instantaneous means, contacts Operator Y the minute the reservation or ticketing transaction with the passenger, as applicable, has been completed. It is the responsibility of each carrier to know how to contact carriers with which it interlines (e.g., Operator X must know Operator Y's phone number).
- Example 2. Operator X fails to provide the required information in a timely manner to Operator Y. Operator X is responsible for compensating the passenger for the consequent unavailability of an accessible bus or equivalent service, as applicable, on the B-C leg of the interline trip.
- (b) Each operator retains the responsibility for providing the transportation required by this subpart to the passenger for its portion of an interline trip. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (b):
- Example 1. In Example 1 to paragraph (a) of this section, Operator X provides the required information to Operator Y in a timely fashion. However, Operator Y fails to provide an accessible bus or equivalent service to the passenger at Point B as the rules require. Operator Y is responsible for compensating the passenger as provided in §37. 199.
- Example 2. Operator X provides the required information to Operator Y in a timely fashion. However, the rules require Operator Y to provide an accessible bus on 48 hours' advance notice (i.e. , as a matter of interim service under §37.193(a) or service by a small mixed-service operator under §37.191), and the passenger has purchased the ticket or made the reservation for the interline trip only 8 hours before Operator Y's bus leaves from Point B to go to Point C. In this situation, Operator Y is not responsible for providing an accessible bus to the passenger at Point B, any more than that it would be had the passenger directly contacted Operator Y to travel from Point B to Point C.
- (c) All fixed-route operators involved in interline service shall ensure that they have the capacity to receive communications at all times concerning interline service for passengers with disabilities. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (c):

- Example 1. Operator Y's office is staffed only during normal weekday business hours. Operator Y must have a means of receiving communications from carriers with which it interlines (e.g., telephone answering machine, fax, computer) when no one is in the office.
- Example 2. Operator Y has the responsibility to monitor its communications devices at reasonable intervals to ensure that it can act promptly on the basis of messages received. If Operator Y receives a message from Operator X on its answering machine on Friday night, notifying Y of the need for an accessible bus on Monday morning, it has the responsibility of making sure that the accessible bus is there on Monday morning. Operator Y is not excused from its obligation because no one checked the answering machine over the weekend.

§ 37.189 Service requirement for OTRB demand-responsive systems.

- (a) This section applies to private entities primarily in the business of transporting people, whose operations affect commerce, and that provide demand-responsive OTRB service. Except as needed to meet the other requirements of this section, these entities are not required to purchase or lease accessible buses in connection with providing demand-responsive service.
- (b) Demand-responsive operators shall ensure that, beginning one year from the date on which the requirements of this subpart begin to apply to the entity, any individual with a disability who requests service in an accessible OTRB receives such service. This requirement applies to both large and small operators.
- (c) The operator may require up to 48 hours' advance notice to provide this service.
- (d) If the individual with a disability does not provide the advance notice the operator requires under paragraph (a) of this section, the operator shall nevertheless provide the service if it can do so by making a reasonable effort.
- (e) To meet this requirement, an operator is not required to fundamentally alter its normal reservation policies or to displace another passenger who has reserved a seat on the bus. The following examples illustrate the provisions of this paragraph (e):
- Example 1. A tour bus operator requires all passengers to reserve space on the bus three months before the trip date. This requirement applies to passengers with disabilities on the same basis as other passengers. Consequently, an individual passenger who is a wheelchair user would have to request an accessible bus at the time he or she made his reservation, at least three months before the trip date. If the individual passenger with a disability makes a request for space on the trip and an accessible OTRB 48 hours before the trip date, the operator could refuse the request because all passengers were required to make reservations three months before the trip date.
- Example 2. A group makes a reservation to charter a bus for a trip four weeks in advance. A week before the trip date, the group discovers that someone who signed up for the trip is a wheelchair user who needs an accessible bus, or someone who later buys a seat in the block of seats the group has reserved needs an accessible bus. A group representative or the passenger with a disability informs the bus company of this need more than 48 hours before the trip date. The bus company must provide an accessible bus.
- Example 3. While the operator's normal deadline for reserving space on a charter or tour trip has passed, a number of seats for a trip are unfilled. The operator permits members of the public to make late reservations for the unfilled seats. If a passenger with a disability calls 48 hours before the trip is scheduled to leave and requests a seat and the provision of an accessible OTRB, the operator must meet this request, as long as it does not displace another passenger with a reservation.
- Example 4. A tour bus trip is nearly sold out three weeks in advance of the trip date. A passenger with a disability calls 48 hours before the trip is scheduled to leave and requests a seat and the provision of an accessible OTRB. The operator need not meet this request if it will have the effect of displacing a passenger with an existing reservation. If other passengers would not be displaced, the operator must meet this request.

§ 37.191 Special provision for small mixed-service operators.

- (a) For purposes of this section, a small mixed-service operator is a small operator that provides both fixed-route and demand-responsive service and does not use more than 25 percent of its buses for fixed-route service.
- (b) An operator meeting the criteria of paragraph (a) of this section may conduct all its trips, including fixed-route trips, on an advance-reservation basis as provided for demand-responsive trips in §37.189. Such an operator is not required to comply with the accessible bus acquisition/equivalent service obligations of §37.183(b).

§ 37.193 Interim service requirements.

- (a) Until 100 percent of the fleet of a large or small operator uses to provide fixed-route service is composed of accessible OTRBs, the operator shall meet the following interim service requirements:
- (1) Beginning one year from the date on which the requirements of this subpart begin to apply to the operator, it shall ensure that any individual with a disability that requests service in an accessible OTRB receives such service.
- (i) The operator may require up to 48 hours' advance notice to provide this service.
- (ii) If the individual with a disability does not provide the advance notice the operator requires, the operator shall nevertheless provide the service if it can do so by making a reasonable effort.
- (iii) If the trip on which the person with a disability wishes to travel is already provided by an accessible bus, the operator has met this requirement.
- (2) Before a date one year from the date on which this subpart applies to the operator, an operator which is unable to provide the service specified in paragraph (a) of this section shall comply with the requirements of §37.169.
- (3) Interim service under this paragraph (a) is not required to be provided by a small operator who is providing equivalent service to its fixed-route service as provided in §37.183(b)(2).
- (b) Some small fixed-route operators may never have a fleet 100 percent of which consists of accessible buses (e.g., a small fixed-route operator who exclusively or primarily purchases or leases used buses). Such an operator must continue to comply with the requirements of this section with respect to any service that is not provided entirely with accessible buses.
- (c) Before a date one year from the date on which this subpart applies to an operator providing demandresponsive service, an operator which is unable to provide the service described in §37.189 shall comply with the requirements of §37.169.

§ 37.195 Purchase or lease of OTRBs by private entities not primarily in the business of transporting people.

This section applies to all purchases or leases of new vehicles by private entities which are not primarily engaged in the business of transporting people, with respect to buses delivered to them on or after the date on which this subpart begins to apply to them.

- (a) Fixed-route systems. If the entity operates a fixed-route system and purchases or leases an OTRB for or in contemplation of use on the system, it shall meet the requirements of §37.183 (a) or (b), as applicable.
- (b) Demand-responsive systems. The requirements of §37.189 apply to demand-responsive systems operated by private entities not primarily in the business of transporting people. If such an entity operates a demand-responsive system, and purchases or leases an OTRB for or in contemplation of use on the system, it is not required to purchase or lease an accessible bus except as needed to meet the requirements of §37.189.

§ 37.197 Remanufactured OTRBs.

- (a) This section applies to any private entity operating OTRBs that takes one of the following actions:
- (1) On or after the date on which this subpart applies to the entity, it remanufactures an OTRB so as to extend its useful life for five years or more or makes a solicitation for such remanufacturing; or
- (2) Purchases or leases an OTRB which has been remanufactured so as to extend its useful life for five years or more, where the purchase or lease occurs after the date on which this subpart applies to the entity and during the period in which the useful life of the vehicle is extended.
- (b) In any situation in which this subpart requires an entity purchasing or leasing a new OTRB to purchase or lease an accessible OTRB, OTRBs acquired through the actions listed in paragraph (a) of this section shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.
- (c) For purposes of this section, it shall be considered feasible to remanufacture an OTRB so as to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs, unless an engineering analysis demonstrates that including accessibility features required by this part would have a significant adverse effect on the structural integrity of the vehicle.

§ 37.199 [Reserved]

§ 37.201 Intermediate and rest stops.

- (a) Whenever an OTRB makes an intermediate or rest stop, a passenger with a disability, including an individual using a wheelchair, shall be permitted to leave and return to the bus on the same basis as other passengers. The operator shall ensure that assistance is provided to passengers with disabilities as needed to enable the passenger to get on and off the bus at the stop (e.g., operate the lift and provide assistance with securement; provide other boarding assistance if needed, as in the case of a wheelchair user who has transferred to a vehicle seat because other wheelchair users occupied all securement locations).
- (b) If an OTRB operator owns, leases, or controls the facility at which a rest or intermediate stop is made, or if an OTRB operator contracts with the person who owns, leases, or controls such a facility to provide rest stop services, the OTRB operator shall ensure the facility complies fully with applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- (c) If an OTRB equipped with an inaccessible restroom is making an express run of three hours or more without a rest stop, and a passenger with a disability who is unable to use the inaccessible restroom requests an unscheduled rest stop, the operator shall make a good faith effort to accommodate the request. The operator is not required to make the stop. However, if the operator does not make the stop, the operator shall explain to the passenger making the request the reason for its decision not to do so.

§ 37.203 Lift maintenance.

- (a) The entity shall establish a system of regular and frequent maintenance checks of lifts sufficient to determine if they are operative.
- (b) The entity shall ensure that vehicle operators report to the entity, by the most immediate means available, any failure of a lift to operate in service.
- (c) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, when a lift is discovered to be inoperative, the entity shall take the vehicle out of service before the beginning of the vehicle's next trip and ensure that the lift is repaired before the vehicle returns to service.
- (d) If there is no other vehicle available to take the place of an OTRB with an inoperable lift, such that taking the vehicle out of service before its next trip will reduce the transportation service the entity is able to provide, the entity may keep the vehicle in service with an inoperable lift for no more than five days from the day on which the lift is discovered to be inoperative.

§ 37.205 Additional passengers who use wheelchairs.

If a number of wheelchair users exceeding the number of securement locations on the bus seek to travel

on a trip, the operator shall assign the securement locations on a first come-first served basis. The operator shall offer boarding assistance and the opportunity to sit in a vehicle seat to passengers who are not assigned a securement location. If the passengers who are not assigned securement locations are unable or unwilling to accept this offer, the operator is not required to provide transportation to them on the bus.

§ 37.207 Discriminatory practices.

It shall be considered discrimination for any operator to-

- (a) Deny transportation to passengers with disabilities, except as provided in §37.5(h);
- (b) Use or request the use of persons other than the operator's employees (e.g., family members or traveling companions of a passenger with a disability, medical or public safety personnel) for routine boarding or other assistance to passengers with disabilities, unless the passenger requests or consents to assistance from such persons;
- (c) Require or request a passenger with a disability to reschedule his or her trip, or travel at a time other than the time the passenger has requested, in order to receive transportation as required by this subpart;
- (d) Fail to provide reservation services to passengers with disabilities equivalent to those provided other passengers; or
- (e) Fail or refuse to comply with any applicable provision of this part.

§ 37.209 Training and other requirements.

OTRB operators shall comply with the requirements of §§37.161, 37.165–37.167, and 37.173. For purposes of §37.173, "training to proficiency" is deemed to include, as appropriate to the duties of particular employees, training in proper operation and maintenance of accessibility features and equipment, boarding assistance, securement of mobility aids, sensitive and appropriate interaction with passengers with disabilities, handling and storage of mobility devices, and familiarity with the requirements of this subpart. OTRB operators shall provide refresher training to personnel as needed to maintain proficiency.

§ 37.211 Effect of NHTSA and FHWA safety rules.

OTRB operators are not required to take any action under this subpart that would violate an applicable National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or Federal Highway Administration safety rule.

§ 37.213 Information collection requirements.

- (a) This paragraph (a) applies to demand-responsive operators under §37.189 and fixed-route operators under §37.193(a)(1) that are required to, and small mixed-service operators under §37.191 that choose to, provide accessible OTRB service on 48 hours' advance notice.
- (1) When the operator receives a request for an accessible bus or equivalent service, the operator shall complete lines 1–9 of the Service Request Form in Appendix A to this subpart. The operator shall transmit a copy of the form to the passenger no later than the end of the next business day following the receipt of the request. The passenger shall be required to make only one request, which covers all legs of the requested trip (e.g., in the case of a round trip, both the outgoing and return legs of the trip; in the case of a multi-leg trip, all connecting legs).
- (2) The passenger shall be required to make only one request, which covers all legs of the requested trip (e.g., in the case of a round trip, both the outgoing and return legs of the trip; in the case of a multi-leg trip, all connecting legs). The operator shall transmit a copy of the form to the passenger in one of the following ways:
- (i) By first-class United States mail. The operator shall transmit the form no later than the end of the next business day following the request;

- (ii) By telephone or email. If the passenger can receive the confirmation by this method, then the operator shall provide a unique confirmation number to the passenger when the request is made and provide a paper copy of the form when the passenger arrives for the requested trip; or
- (iii) By facsimile transmission. If the passenger can receive the confirmation by this method, then the operator shall transmit the form within twenty-four hours of the request for transportation.
- (3) The operator shall retain its copy of the completed form for five years. The operator shall make these forms available to Department of Transportation or Department of Justice officials at their request.
- (4) Beginning October 29, 2001, for large operators, and October 28, 2002, for small operators, and on the last Monday in October in each year thereafter, each operator shall submit a summary of its forms to the Department of Transportation. The summary shall state the number of requests for accessible bus service and the number of times these requests were met. It shall also include the name, address, telephone number, and contact person name for the operator.
- (b) This paragraph (b) applies to small fixed route operators who choose to provide equivalent service to passengers with disabilities under §37.183(b)(2).
- (1) The operator shall complete the Service Request Form in Appendix A to this subpart on every occasion on which a passenger with a disability needs equivalent service in order to be provided transportation.
- (2) The passenger shall be required to make only one request, which covers all legs of the requested trip (e.g., in the case of a round trip, both the outgoing and return legs of the trip; in the case of a multi-leg trip, all connecting legs). The operator shall transmit a copy of the form to the passenger, and whenever the equivalent service is not provided, in one of the following ways:
- (i) By first-class United States mail. The operator shall transmit the form no later than the end of the next business day following the request for equivalent service;
- (ii) By telephone or email. If the passenger can receive the confirmation by this method, then the operator shall provide a unique confirmation number to the passenger when the request for equivalent service is made and provide a paper copy of the form when the passenger arrives for the requested trip; or
- (iii) By facsimile transmission. If the passenger can receive the confirmation by this method, then the operator shall transmit the form within twenty-four hours of the request for equivalent service.
- (3) Beginning on October 28, 2002 and on the last Monday in October in each year therafter, each operator shall submit a summary of its forms to the Department of Transportation. The summary shall state the number of situations in which equivalent service was needed and the number of times such service was provided. It shall also include the name, address, telephone number, and contact person name for the operator.
- (c) This paragraph (c) applies to fixed-route operators.
- (1) On March 26, 2001, each fixed-route large operator shall submit to the Department a report on how many passengers with disabilities used the lift to board accessible buses for the period of October 1999 to October 2000. For fixed-route operators, the report shall reflect separately the data pertaining to 48-hour advance reservation service and other service.
- (2) Beginning on October 29, 2001 and on the last Monday in October in each year thereafter, each fixed-route operator shall submit to the Department, a report on how many passengers with disabilities used the lift to board accessible buses. For fixed-route operators, the report shall reflect separately the data pertaining to 48-hour advance reservation service and other service.
- (d) This paragraph (d) applies to each over the road bus operator.
- (1) On March 26, 2001, each operator shall submit to the Department, a summary report listing the number of new buses and used buses it has purchased or leased for the period of October 1998 through October 2000, and how many buses in each category are accessible. It shall also include the total number of buses in the operator's fleet and the name, address, telephone number, and contact person

name for the operator.

- (2) Beginning on October 29, 2001 and on the last Monday in October in each year thereafter, each operator shall submit to the Department, a summary report listing the number of new buses and used buses it has purchased or leased during the preceding year, and how many buses in each category are accessible. It shall also include the total number of buses in the operator's fleet and the name, address, telephone number, and contact person name for the operator.
- (e) The information required to be submitted to the Department shall be sent to the following address: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Office of Data Analysis & Information System 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, D.C. 20590.

[66 FR 9053, Feb. 6, 2001, as amended at 69 FR 40796, July 7, 2004; 73 FR 33329, June 12, 2008]

§ 37.215 Review of requirements.

- (a) Beginning October 28, 2005, the Department will review the requirements of §37.189 and their implementation. The Department will complete this review by October 30, 2006.
- (1) As part of this review, the Department will consider factors including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
- (i) The percentage of accessible buses in the demand-responsive fleets of large and small demand-responsive operators.
- (ii) The success of small and large demand-responsive operators' service at meeting the requests of passengers with disabilities for accessible buses in a timely manner.
- (iii) The ridership of small and large operators' demand-responsive service by passengers with disabilities.
- (iv) The volume of complaints by passengers with disabilities.
- (v) Cost and service impacts of implementation of the requirements of §37.189.
- (2) The Department will make one of the following decisions on the basis of the review:
- (i) Retain §37.189 without change; or
- (ii) Modify the requirements of §37.189 for large and/or small demand-responsive operators.
- (b) Beginning October 30, 2006, the Department will review the requirements of §§37.183, 37.185, 37.187, 37.191 and 37.193(a) and their implementation. The Department will complete this review by October 29, 2007.
- (1) As part of this review, the Department will consider factors including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
- (i) The percentage of accessible buses in the fixed-route fleets of large and small fixed-route operators.
- (ii) The success of small and large fixed-route operators' interim or equivalent service at meeting the requests of passengers with disabilities for accessible buses in a timely manner.
- (iii) The ridership of small and large operators' fixed-route service by passengers with disabilities.
- (iv) The volume of complaints by passengers with disabilities.
- (v) Cost and service impacts of implementation of the requirements of these sections.
- (2) The Department will make one of the following decisions on the basis of the review:

- (i) Retain §§37.183, 37.185, 37.187, 37.191, 37.193(a) without change; or
- (ii) Modify the requirements of §§37.183, 37.185, 37.187, 37.191, 37.193(a) for large and/or small fixed-route operators.

Appendix A to Subpart H of Part 37—Service Request Form

Appendix A to Part 37—Modifications to Standards for Accessible Transportation Facilities

The Department of Transportation, in §37.9 of this part, adopts as its regulatory standards for accessible transportation facilities the revised Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines (ADAGG) issued by the Access Board on July 23, 2004. The ADAGG is codified in the Code of Federal Regulations in Appendices B and D of 36 CFR part 1191. Note the ADAAG may also be found via a hyperlink on the Internet at the following address: http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.htm. Like all regulations, the ADAAG also can be found by using the electronic Code of Federal Regulations at http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr. Because the ADAAG has been established as a Federal consensus standard by the Access Board, the Department is not republishing the regulations in their entirety, but is adopting them by cross-reference as permitted under 1 CFR 21.21(c)(4). In a few instances, the Department has modified the language of the ADAAG as it applies to entities subject to 49 CFR part 37. These entities must comply with the modified language in this Appendix rather than the language of Appendices B and D to 36 CFR part 1191.

206.3 Location-Modification to 206.3 of Appendix B to 36 CFR Part 1191

Accessible routes shall coincide with, or be located in the same area as general *circulation paths*. Where *circulation paths* are interior, required *accessible* routes shall also be interior. Elements such as ramps, elevators, or other circulation devices, fare vending or other ticketing areas, and fare collection areas shall be placed to minimize the distance which wheelchair users and other persons who cannot negotiate steps may have to travel compared to the general public.

406.8-Modification to 406 of Appendix D to 36 CFR Part 1191

[66 FR 9054, Feb. 6, 2001]

A curb ramp shall have a detectable warning complying with 705. The detectable warning shall extend the full width of the curb ramp (exclusive of flared sides) and shall extend either the full depth of the curb ramp or 24 inches (610 mm) deep minimum measured from the back of the curb on the ramp surface.

810.2.2 Dimensions—Modification to 810.2.2 of Appendix D to 36 CFR Part 1191