



**Estuary Transit District
Rider's Guide**

3/2009

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Introduction

9 Town Transit Services

Estuary Transit District operates the 9 Town Transit services that serve the estuary region. These services include Transit-On-Call/Dial-A-Ride, fixed-route Shuttles, and off-route shuttle service.

Shuttles run on a published schedule and may be used by waiting anywhere along the shuttle route and flagging down the bus as it nears. No reservations are required for on-route pick-ups. All shuttles connect at the Old Saybrook train station, where connections can be made between shuttle routes. Some routes connect at additional locations, such as shopping centers, where transfers may also be made. Shuttle routes and schedules are available on-line, on the bus, and at many public locations throughout the region.

In addition to catching a shuttle on the published route, 9 Town Transit routes also offer off-route service up to 1 mile off of the published route (south of I-95 only for Shoreline Shuttle). All off-route stops must be scheduled by calling ETD's dispatcher at 510-0429 at least 24 hours in advance and making a reservation. Due to schedule constraints, off-route stops may be limited.

In areas of the region not served by shuttles, 9 Town Transit offers Transit-On-Call/Dial-A-Ride (TOC). TOC service provides door to door shared ride transit service to and from anywhere in the estuary region. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance by calling 510-0429.

Service Area:

9 Town Transit Transit-On-Call/Dial-A-Ride (TOC) service operates Monday through Friday. Some shuttle routes also operate on Saturdays. The service area includes all areas within the city limits of the towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook.

A trip may require more than one-half hour from origin to destination due to the size of the ETD service area. To get more information regarding the ETD service area, please call and speak with one of our customer service representatives.

Important Phone Numbers

Reservations/Information

(860) 510-0429

TTD (800) 842-9710

Fax

(860) 395-0248

Eligibility

All Estuary Transit District services are open to the general public, with no age or disability limitations. This includes all 9 Town Transit shuttle routes, off-route services, Transit-on-Call, and Dial-A-Ride services.

Reservations

There are two types of reservations for TOC and off-route shuttle pick-ups that are offered by ETD:

Advanced Reservation service allows an individual rider to make a reservation for a trip anywhere from two weeks up to the day before they wish to travel. There is no limit to the number of non-subscription trips that a passenger can book on any given service day. Multiple trips may be reserved during one telephone call.

Subscription Service is offered to ETD customers who have travel patterns to and from the same destinations, during the same days and hours. Individuals who have schedules that change frequently are not eligible for subscription service.

Subscription service is offered Monday through Saturday and is restricted to work, medical and educational trips. When a person is approved for subscription service it is necessary for that person to contact the scheduler to confirm the desired days and times of travel. Once a subscription schedule is confirmed by ETD, the customer does not have to make any further reservation calls except to cancel any trip you do not plan to take.

Long term or permanent changes to a rider's subscription service must be submitted to ETD at least one week prior to the date when the change will take effect. ETD cannot guarantee that changes in subscription service can be accommodated. Temporary changes to subscription service must be in effect for a minimum of two weeks and be submitted one week in advance of the effective date.

The regular subscription service can be reinstated with as little as one day's notice. Unfortunately, same day changes cannot be accommodated. Subscription service is offered as a convenience to our customers. Availability is based upon a first come/first serve basis, and certain restrictions may apply due to capacity constraints.

Reservations are never needed for any shuttle trips where both the pick-up and drop-off are on-route.

Making A Reservation

To make a reservation please call our reservation agents at 510-0429 . All reservations must be made by calling this line and speaking with an agent. *Reservation requests cannot be called in to any other phone numbers or left on voicemail.*

Reservation Periods

Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

On Saturdays, when our reservation line is closed, you may still call 510-0429 for reservation confirmation or to change or cancel a trip.

Please remember, drivers cannot make, change, or cancel your reservations. In order to change your reservation you need to contact an ETD reservation agent.

Reservation Information:

Please have the following information available when making a reservation:

- Customer name.
- The exact street address (origin and destination).
- Names of complexes or subdivisions, as well as building, apartment, or suite numbers.
- Easily identified pick-up points should be communicated, where applicable, such as a hospital, shopping mall, or doctor's office.
- The appointment or the pick-up time. (Remember to indicate if the customer is traveling with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or any companions.)
- The return trip information, including pick-up time. If no return trip pick-up time is provided, then the trip will be scheduled as one-way.

A customer can make a reservation for a trip from one to three days in advance by calling 510-0429 Monday - Friday 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. ETD requires 24 hour advance notice for all trips, including return trips, however ETD may, at the discretion of the dispatcher, permit same day trips if the schedule allows.

The number of non-subscription trips that a passenger can book on any given service day is limited by capacity. On higher trip volume days, the number of trips one passenger can make may be restricted to accommodate all customers. Every effort will be made to accommodate the requested trip, however, please be aware that at times the requested trip may not be available. In those rare instances where demand goes beyond the available service, the ETD reservation agents will attempt to provide you with an alternate time as close to the original requested time as possible. ETD will make every effort to offer a pick-up time within one hour before and one hour after the requested pick-up time.

If your trip can be scheduled within 15 minutes (before or after) of the requested pick-up time, there will be no call back from ETD to inform you of the pick-up time. ETD agents will call, when practical, in cases where the vehicle is delayed 15 minutes or more to inform you of the delay and estimate the time the bus will arrive after attempting to dispatch another vehicle. If a passenger's pick-up trip is late and requires additional time, the rider may call to request a later return trip and the trip will not be charged as a no-show.

ETD customers may call at anytime to ask for an estimated time of arrival (ETA). To get specific information on when the scheduled vehicle is expected to arrive by calling 510-0429. Please try to limit your calls to when the vehicle is more than 15 minutes late.

Please remember that you are responsible for making arrangements for the vehicle to gain access to gated

communities or secured complexes. A driver cannot be delayed trying to locate personnel to provide access to a complex.

Will Calls

ETD requires a return trip pick-up time for most trip purposes, however ETD will allow “will calls” for medical trips. You must inform the reservation agent when you schedule the trip that you will call for the return trip. Will calls will not be permitted for any other trip purpose.

Cancellations & No Shows

To cancel a scheduled trip, call ETD Reservations at 510-0429. Trips must be canceled no later than 5 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled pickup. This call can be made 24 hours a day by voicemail.

A customer who demonstrates a pattern of missing scheduled trips creates problems for all transit patrons since scheduled but not taken trips lower the capacity of the ETD services. The term for this practice is "No Show" and is further defined for ETD services as a person who cancels a reserved trip too late for the trip to be reassigned to another patron or who fails to be at the pick-up point when the ETD vehicle arrives.

If the rider gives notice by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled ride, the trip is canceled without penalty.

The ETD has a No Show policy based upon the fact that once the reservation process is closed for the day, any cancellation is considered a "No Show" to the system since it takes away the ability to serve a greater number of passengers. While all "No Shows" negatively affect system productivity to some degree, there is a tiered impact on the ETD as to when the "No Show" occurs. The ETD defines "No Show" within five categories depending on the time that the notification is received and assigns points for each event as shown below.

Time of Cancellation & Points Assessed

Limited Notice - Any ride canceled between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled pick up. **One point assessed.**

Early Notice - Any ride canceled after 7 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled pick up until four hours prior to the pick-up time. **Two points assessed.**

Late Notice - Any ride canceled from within four hours to 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the pick-up window (15 minutes before and 15 minutes after). **Three points assessed.**

Notice at Door - Any ride canceled by notice from the customer to the driver within the 30-minute pick-up window (15 minutes before and 15 minutes after). **Five points assessed.**

No Notice - Any ride canceled by telephone from 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the pick-up window (15 minutes before and 15 minutes after). **Five points assessed.**

In the event you are a no show for a ride, the return ride or any additional ride(s) scheduled for that day will be automatically canceled and the trip cannot be rescheduled. Both cancellations and no shows may result in a suspension of service as outlined below.

No-Show Point Value	Within Period of	Suspension Period
18	30 Days	7 Day
36	60 Days	14 Day
54	120 Days	28 Day
90	180 Days	6 Month

In addition to having points assessed, customers will be required to pay the fare for any Notice at Door or No Notice No-Shows. The fare will be collected at the next pick-up. Service may not be provided if the no-show fare is not paid.

Emergency Cancellations

Cancellations that occur because of an emergency situation beyond the customer’s control will be considered a “non-chargeable” late cancellation, provided the customer can offer an explanation with documentation.

Appeals

Customers have the right to appeal any written notification they receive from ETD relating to their eligibility. The customer must appeal the notification within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notification. Appeals must be in writing and forwarded to:

**Estuary Transit District
455 Boston Post Road, Suite 202B
Old Saybrook, CT 06475**

ETD will respond to all customer appeals in writing within fourteen (14) days of the receipt. If a customer chooses not to appeal the warning or the suspension notification letter then sanctions will occur and become effective on the date stated in the notification letter.

Pick-up Procedures

TOC and Off-Route Shuttle

In order for us to provide you with safe, on-time service you must specifically designate a location and inform us where you will be waiting for your pick-up. ETD has developed the following procedures for all TOC and off-route shuttle pick-ups to ensure safe vehicle movement and standardized connecting point guidelines:

Customers living in a large, multiple unit apartment complexes must meet the paratransit vehicle either the curb closest to their address or at the curb closest to the main lobby, unless instructed otherwise.

If the apartment complex is inaccessible to an ETD vehicle, the customer must meet the vehicle at the main entrance to the complex. A customer traveling from a large office complex, medical facility, or other similar area must meet the vehicle at the curb closest to the main reception desk or main lobby entrance.

Before any ETD vehicle can enter apartment complexes that are not easily accessible, the location must be inspected. If the facility has a guarded gate or limited access, the customer of the scheduled pick-up and return times should inform the security staff. It is your responsibility to notify ETD of security procedures when the reservation is made and to arrange access for the vehicle. The vehicle cannot be delayed due to complicated access requirements.

Customers are also responsible for ensuring that driveways and/or walkways are cleared of snow and ice. ETD drivers may not enter un-cleared driveways or use un-cleared walkways. If the driveway and/or walkway is not cleared, the customer will be required to meet the vehicle at the curb.

ETD will make every effort to arrive within the 30-minute pick-up window (15 minutes before or after the scheduled time). If the customer is not at the proper pick-up location within the designated pick-up window and the five-minute grace period has expired, the vehicle will depart and the customer will be declared a "No-Show". Out of courtesy for other ETD customers who are scheduled on the same vehicle, the driver will wait no longer than a five-minute grace period. Customers must be ready to depart at any time during the 30-minute window described when reservations are made.

If a customer has not boarded the vehicle within the five-minute grace period, the vehicle will depart. *The dispatcher will not call the customer by telephone to advise that the vehicle has arrived.* ETD, however, will call by telephone any customer that is sight-impaired or hearing-impaired to notify them that the vehicle has arrived. It is the customer's responsibility to be within viewing distance of the driver when the vehicle arrives. ETD operators are not responsible for going inside of establishments to look for passengers.

Please note that for your and other customer's convenience the ETD vehicle *cannot wait* while customers conduct business at their destination.

On-Route Shuttle Pick-Ups

For on-route shuttle pick-ups, customers must refer to the printed timetables to determine when the bus will be arriving. Customers must refer to the nearest timepoint on the timetable to estimate the arrival time at the pick-up location. Always plan to be at the pick-up point at least five minutes prior to the buses scheduled arrival.

ETD has limited designated bus stops along shuttle routes. Most stops are made by simply standing in a safe location on the route and waving down the vehicle as it approaches. For any pick-up, the customer must be at the curb and signaling to the driver. Since the shuttle buses must stay on the published schedule, they cannot stop and wait for customers to come out of a building or vehicle.

As you near your stop, inform the driver that you wish to exit the bus. He/she will stop at the nearest safe location. For your safety, please do not stand until the vehicle has completely stopped. Use caution as you

exit the vehicle. Always wait for the bus to leave the stop before crossing the street. Never attempt to cross in front of the bus.

Boarding the ETD Vehicle:

ETD customers are required to have the correct fare in cash or authorized ETD fare tickets when boarding the vehicle. *Drivers cannot make change, nor get change for passengers.* Fares are to be paid as the customer boards the vehicle, prior to sitting down.

Customers are only to pay for the current one-way trip, since the customer may ride with a different driver on the return trip. Each time the customer boards the vehicle, a cash fare or ticket is required. ETD cannot be held responsible for any overpayment of fare.

Driver Assistance:

Drivers will assist the customer on or off the vehicle on any 9 Town Transit service. TOC offers door-to-door service, meaning the driver will assist a customer from the outermost door of a building to the outermost door of the destination. All shuttle services offer only curb-to-curb service. Shuttle drivers cannot assist customers from or to the building. Safety concerns and time constraints do not allow the shuttle drivers to assist customers beyond the curb.

ETD drivers are strictly prohibited from entering any building. Drivers are not permitted to leave their vehicles unattended to assist customers in getting from the door of their drop-off or pick-up location.

PCA's

When you are unable to travel alone, ETD encourages you to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). Authorized PCA's can travel with ETD customers at no cost on all 9 Town Transit services. A PCA may include a friend, family member, or a paid employee who will assist you.

When using TOC or Off-Route Shuttle, you must inform the reservation agent at the time of the reservation whether a guest or PCA will be accompanying you to ensure an accurate count of individuals traveling on a vehicle. ETD reserves the right to require documentation of the need for a PCA at ETD's discretion.

ETD Fare

The cash fare to ride ETD's Dial-A-Ride and Off-Route Shuttles is \$2.50 per one-way trip, on-route shuttle fare is \$1.25 per one-way trip. Exact cash fare or ETD ticket is required, no change will be provided. A fare is required upon each boarding of the vehicle. Authorized personal care attendants and children age four and under accompanied by an adult ride free.

ETD also offers ticket books at a discounted rate of \$11.50 for ten \$1.25 value tickets. Tickets may be purchased at the ETD office or by mail by sending your payment to:

**Estuary Transit District
455 Boston Post Road, Suite 202B**

Old Saybrook, CT 06475

Failure to pay a fare will result in denial of service and will be considered a Notice at Door No-Show. Customers with a pattern of failing to pay fares are subject to suspension of service.

Using 9 Town Transit

Ambulatory Customers:

Customers unable to use the steps to enter the vehicle may request the ramp or wheelchair lift be extended to board the vehicle. Ambulatory customers who use the lift must be able to stand without assistance to hold onto the handrails.

Wheelchairs:

ETD will transport all types of “Common Wheelchairs” as defined by the ADA regulations. Common Wheelchairs are defined as:

“A wheelchair that does not exceed 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length measured two inches above the ground, and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied.”

There are many types of wheelchairs, and it is often difficult to identify the main-frame of a wheelchair. ETD cannot transport customers with inoperative mobility devices or with inoperative locking brakes.

Wheelchair Securement / Seat Belts:

It is the responsibility of your ETD driver to see that mobility devices are properly secured prior to transporting you. Passengers using wheelchairs or scooters are required to be secured, using a four-point tie down system at all times while riding the vehicle. ETD policy recommends for your safety that the operators to secure the lap belt. Failure to cooperate with safety related policies may result in loss of service privileges.

Transporting Packages:

Each passenger is allowed up to three packages (plastic grocery or shopping bags). Customers should make other arrangements for packages exceeding three parcels. Excessive luggage and large boxes cannot be accommodated.

Customers may be required to secure their packages at their seats, as storage space on the vehicle is limited. The maximum combined weight of all packages cannot exceed 25 pounds. Drivers are only allowed to load a maximum of three bags onto the vehicle. Shuttle operators are not allowed to carry packages to/from the vehicle.

Animals:

Service animals and service animals in-training are allowed on all ETD vehicles without being caged. ETD will transport other animals if they are caged and small enough to be kept in the customer’s lap. For safety reasons, drivers are not allowed to carry cages or handle the service animals.

Your Responsibility when Riding an ETD Vehicle:

The following rules of conduct are provided for your safety and comfort as well as all ETD customers:

- Each customer must comply with the rules of conduct. Actions of misconduct, including illegal, violent or seriously disruptive behavior, will be grounds for suspension of service for the customer. Anyone found acting in an unsafe manner, which may endanger other customers, the driver, or the vehicle, may be terminated from service immediately. ETD will consider an appeal for such suspension of services on a case-by-case basis.
- Customers requiring physical assistance beyond that described in “Driver Assistance” must have a PCA or a guest accompany them on the vehicle. The PCA will be responsible for providing the physical assistance the customer requires. Paratransit Operators will assist you on or off the bus; however, ETD drivers are not allowed to leave their vehicle unattended. It is the responsibility of the customer to watch for the bus.
- Customers requiring medication or oxygen at regular intervals should be advised that travel time on the paratransit vehicle is comparable to that of the fixed-route system. Rides are subject to delays that may result in a customer’s on-board time being longer than 60 minutes. Public transportation is subject to unpredictable conditions such as traffic delays and mechanical problems.
- ETD operators cannot be held responsible for the administration of medications. The administration of medication when in an ETD vehicle is the customer’s responsibility. Any customer requiring assistance in the administration of medication or oxygen while on the vehicle must travel with a PCA or companion. Should the administration of medications or oxygen become necessary while on the vehicle, ETD will contact emergency medical assistance to administer the required medication at the customer’s expense. Repeated incidents in which medication schedules disrupt or delay other ETD customers may result in the evaluation of the individual’s suitability to use ETD services.
- ETD has a no smoking policy throughout the transit system.
- Customers are prohibited from eating or drinking on the vehicle unless a documented medical problem exists that requires eating or drinking at specified time periods. In such cases, the customer must advise the driver of this fact.
- The use of alcoholic beverages or riding under the influence of intoxicating drugs or alcohol is prohibited at all times.
- Customers are prohibited from playing radios without the use of headphones.
- Customers must be respectful of other customers and refrain from being loud and/or disruptive. This includes cell phone conversations. The use of foul language is prohibited.
- Customers may not operate or tamper with any equipment while on the vehicle. This rule includes the operation of the hydraulic lift, ramp and attempts to remove wheelchair tie-downs or passenger seat belts.

Failure to adhere to these regulations may result in the loss of riding privileges.

Driver’s Responsibilities:

Drivers are expected to obey the same rules as our customers. The following additional rules also apply:

- Drivers can assist with no more than three packages per customer.
- Drivers do not accept tips or gratuities or act in a manner that would suggest that tipping is

appropriate.

- Drivers are responsible for the operation of the hydraulic lift, ramp and securing mobility devices safely in the vehicle.
- Drivers cannot leave their vehicle unattended.
- Drivers cannot handle fares or cash unless the customer is unable to insert the fare in the farebox without assistance.
- Drivers cannot make unscheduled stops or deviations without the permission of dispatch.
- Drivers cannot make change.

Lost & Found Procedure:

Any article left on an ETD vehicle will be stored at the ETD office located at 455 Boston Post Road, Suite 202B, Old Saybrook. Articles will be held for 10 days. To claim a lost article, please call 510-0429. Customers are responsible for claiming lost articles.

Suggestions, Comments & Complaints

ETD seeks to provide its customers with safe, reliable, and customer-oriented service. We look forward to working with you to provide the best service possible. If you have a suggestion, comment or a complaint about our services, please call our Lead Dispatcher at (860) 510-0429 or write to:

**Estuary Transit District
455 Boston Post Road, Suite 202B
Old Saybrook, CT 06475**

Specific details will help ETD thoroughly address your suggestions, complaints or comments in an expeditious fashion. If your complaint is not addressed to your satisfaction by the Lead Dispatcher, you may call the Operations Manager at 510-0429. If the complaint is still not addressed, the Executive Director may be contacted at the same number.

Senior citizens utilizing the Senior Resources Agency on Aging grant may appeal to Senior Resources Agency on Aging for assistance in resolving the grievance. The full grievance procedure is available on request.