

The best way to protect yourself from discrimination and from complaints is to know and respect **The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.**



Provincial Paratransit Standards

“...every person is free and equal in dignity and rights...”
(Section 3, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*)

1. Background

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has a history of working to remove barriers to public transportation for people with disabilities. This includes access to taxi services, conventional transit, and paratransit.

In 2013, the Commission identified the limited availability of public transportation as an issue that perpetuates inequity for historically marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Since that time, the Commission has worked with service providers in Saskatchewan’s largest cities, Regina and Saskatoon, to establish equivalent, comparable, and accessible transportation services.

Further to the work of the Commission, several members of the provincial paratransit operators’ group from larger municipalities spoke of the need for clear province-wide standards for paratransit service. As a result of this discussion, these service providers created a draft set of standards.

2. Province-Wide Standards

In 2016, the Commission met with provincial paratransit service providers at their annual meeting. At that event, 5 targets for equitable service were presented. These guidelines received initial support and were later improved by incorporating feedback from service providers.

A revised version of the standards was circulated to all 78 recipients of the Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities (TAPD) program. Feedback on compliance was received from approximately 20% of the municipalities. The responses from a diverse group of municipalities, including, but not restricted to Swift Current, Yorkton, the Town of Whitewood, Saskatoon and Regina were largely positive.

The majority of municipalities reported they were fully compliant; others indicated partial compliance but indicated that steps were being taken towards full compliance.

As part of the feedback process, TAPD representatives offered statistical information that provided context for the standards, including the number of properties that are part of the TAPD program, fleet size, and total number of accessible units active within the province.

There are also municipalities in the province that operate paratransit services but do not participate in the TAPD program. These standards were further discussed at the 2018 Provincial Paratransit meeting in the context of implementation, and no additional feedback was received.



3. Using the Provincial Standards

It is anticipated that municipalities and/or service providers will adopt the standards for their paratransit service. The TAPD program will support the adoption of the standards by sharing the standards with TAPD program participants and collecting statistics on trip denials as defined by the standards for program purposes. These statistics will help inform the TAPD program.

As municipalities and service providers begin to use the guidelines for identifying and tracking trip denials they can begin to identify and implement any necessary adjustments to their paratransit services to reach the goal of accommodating 99% of service requests.

The standards will also provide a benchmark for accessible transportation throughout the province. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission will use these guidelines when assessing the provision of accessible public transportation.

4. The Provincial Paratransit Standards

1. Trips that are requested after 12:00 noon for the next day, and same-day trip requests, will be accommodated to the best of the service provider's ability, but will not be considered a denial if they cannot be accommodated.

For example, if a person calls Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. and requests a one-way trip for Wednesday (the next day), which is denied, it would not be counted as a denial because it was requested later than 12:00 noon the day prior.

2. Trips that are requested before 12:00 noon the day prior to the trip, but that cannot be initially accommodated, will be placed on a standby list. These trip requests will

be accommodated if an opening occurs. If they cannot be accommodated, they will be counted as a denial.

For example, if a person calls Monday and requests a one-way trip for Thursday but no trip is available, the trip would be recorded on a standby list.

If a cancellation occurs and a spot opens up for the Thursday standby trip, the customer would be notified that their trip has been accommodated and no denial would be recorded. If a spot does not open up, the trip would be recorded as a denial.

3. Multiple requests for the same trip that cannot be accommodated will only be counted as one denial. A one-way trip shall be counted as one denial and a two-way trip as two denials.

For example, if a person calls Monday and requests a trip for Saturday and no trip is available as per #2, they would be placed on a standby list. If the person also calls Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday requesting the same trip, but the trip is still not available, the trip would be placed on the standby list only once.

The one-way trip would only be counted as one denial even though the person has called in multiple times for the same trip.



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4. When a specific appointment or arrival time is disclosed by the customer, a time of no more than 90 minutes prior to the appointment time can be offered otherwise it will be counted as a denial (unless the customer requests an earlier time).

paratransit will not record this request as denials.

The person may still call in advance to request these trips and if the trips are not accommodated, they will be counted as denials.

*For example, if a person has a medical appointment at 9:00 a.m. and a 7:30 a.m. pick-up time is offered, but they do not want the trip time, it would **not** be recorded as a denial because the trip is within the 90-minute window.*

Goal: The goal of the above standards is to accommodate 99% of all trips requested before 12:00 noon the day prior to the trip being taken.

If a person has a haircut appointment at 2:00 p.m. and no trip is available between 12:30-2:00 p.m., and the person offers to go earlier, this would not be counted as a denial even though the trip window is more than 90 minutes because the trip time is agreeable to the customer.

5. Subscription trip requests that cannot be accommodated will not be counted as a denial because the customer will be required to book these trips on an ongoing daily basis where the denials will be recorded on a per trip basis.

For example, if a person requests a regular ongoing subscription trip such as Monday-Friday work trips with regular start and end times, and paratransit does not have the capacity to provide these trips,

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