

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT PLAN – OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This Accessible Public Transport policy / procedure has been designed in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and related guidelines / standards.

It is the intent of this policy to ensure that our services are not discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, by ensuring compliance to the relative standards of accessibility within the time frames set.

Where compliance is unable to be achieved as a result of design restrictions or other circumstances beyond our control equivalent access will be provided with direct assistance if necessary.

ADOPTION

The following standards apply from the date they come into effect under section 31 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Our industry being Public Transport is primarily expected to become accessible by replacement or upgrading of conveyances, premises and infrastructure at the end of their service lives.

It is the intention of this company to fully comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport within the time frames set. The action plan below clearly outlines time frames for compliance and the present compliance of this company for all relevant sections.

Many of the standards apply to infrastructure and premises which interlink with our services, but are not under our direct control. In these situations management will liaise with the other companies / authorities concerned and offer assistance where possible to help those companies / authorities adhere to the required standards.

COMPLIANCE

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 provides compliance targets in relation to services and standards. The respective services which apply to our operation are listed individually in this policy. Attached to each section is the percentage of compliance required by 31 December 2012.

While the company reserves the right to decide the order in which accessibility is implemented, we will give priority to what we believe to be main routes hence maximising short-term community benefits.

EQUIVALENT ACCESS

Equivalent Access is an alternative method of assisting passengers with disabilities to use public transport (our services) where there are unavoidable constraints on unassisted access. Equivalent access must provide the equivalents of amenity, availability, comfort, convenience, dignity, price and safety.

As far as possible, we must be able to demonstrate that any equivalent access provides public transport 'without discrimination'. For example we are unable to use the services of an accessible taxi as a substitute for an inaccessible bus service (segregated or parallel service).

DIRECT ASSISTANCE

The Disability Standards do not prevent any company from offering assistance directly to passengers as a means of providing equivalent access in situations where the standards have not been met.

Direct Assistance can be provided before and after travel, during travel and during boarding and alighting.

Premier TfNSW or Service has accessible coaches, however, it is our policy to encourage passengers with disabilities requiring direct assistance to travel in the company of a trained carer. Carers travel at the concession rate unless they are providing direct assistance in which case they are permitted to travel free of charge.

ACCESS PATHS

Access path is used in the standards to specify requirements for independent movement of passengers through premises and infrastructure.

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In relation to our operations, both coach and local route services, reference to access paths relates mainly to offices and other premises utilised by our passengers (meal break locations etc).

Action Plan

- Conduct an inspection of all offices and meal break locations to ensure access paths comply with standards.
- As the standard relates to infrastructure, liaise with landlords and proprietors of these premises in relation to compliance.

MANOEUVRING AREAS

Local Route Service

Passengers with mobility aids or in wheelchairs must be able to enter and exit a conveyance and position their aids in the allocated space. If it is not practicable, equivalent access is to be provided by direct assistance. This could be with the assistance of a carer or other trained person.

Company employees do not possess the required training and as such must not provide direct assistance as injury could result.

The allocated space on compliant vehicles can be used for other purposes as long as they remain available for use, if required, by passengers using mobility aids.

Action Plan

- All buses operating public transport services, excluding dedicated school buses, must comply with standards pertaining to allocated space and manoeuvring areas

PASSING AREAS

Passing areas refer primarily to infrastructure and as such the standards apply to owners of our offices / meal break locations.

Action Plan

- Liaise with owners / landlords of offices / meal break proprietors to ensure they comply with the applicable standards.

RAMPS

Where boarding ramps are utilised (either internal or external) to assist passengers with disabilities to board and alight our vehicles they must comply with the correct Australian Standards.

All ramps presently used by this company are part of the bus as supplied by the bus builder.

Action Plan

- Liaise with bus builder to ensure that all boarding ramps comply with the relevant standards

WAITING AREAS

In any office / terminal where a waiting area is provided there must be a minimum of 2 seats or 5% of the seats identified as available for passengers with disabilities.

In the same area there must be a minimum of 2 allocated spaces or 5% of the area must be available for passengers with disabilities.

Action Plan

- Liaise with owners / landlords of all offices / terminals to ascertain plans for compliance.

BOARDING

If the disability standards are observed, passengers with disabilities will be able to board and alight from conveyances without assistance. With low floor buses this should be possible where there is kerb and guttering.

However, at other locations this may prove difficult depending on the surface at the boarding point. Where no kerb and gutter is provided the boarding point should be at the very least flat and stable.

Action Plan

- Boarding devices must comply with standards; eg. Boarding device must be able to support a minimum weight of passenger and mobility aid of 200kg

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- Labelling of boarding devices must comply with standards
- List of nominated boarding locations is to be designed and available to public
- Any vehicles purchased with boarding devices must comply with the relevant standards
- Investigate boarding systems for coaches with various manufacturers

ALLOCATED SPACE

Allocated spaces are to comply with the applicable standards pertaining to dimensions, minimum number allowable and signage.

One allocated space is to be provided on conveyances with less than 32 fixed seats and 2 allocated spaces on conveyances with more than 32 fixed seats.

Allocated spaces can be used for other purposes, however, must be made available for passengers with disabilities if required.

Where possible allocated spaces are to be consolidated (together) to create a larger manoeuvring area, also permitting companions to be seated together.

Action Plan

- Ensure all vehicles (buses) have appropriate number of allocated spaces as per standards
- Ensure allocated spaces on vehicles comply with standards for dimensions, access and signage
- Investigate new options for coaches with manufacturers

SURFACES

The surfaces of conveyances must comply with the disability standards which require them to be stable, level across width and slip resistant.

The surface of access paths must also comply with these standards and as such the company will liaise with various landlords and authorities regarding premises not within our direct control.

Action Plan

- Ensure all conveyances comply with the standards pertaining to surfaces
- Liaise with owners / landlords regarding premises not under our direct control

HANDRAILS AND GRABRAILS

Handrails (if fitted) and / or grabrails are to comply with the appropriate standards.

It is expected that the bus / coach builder will ensure that any new vehicle purchased with disabled access will comply with these standards.

Action Plan

- Check existing vehicles with disability access comply to standards
- Ensure any new disability access vehicles purchased will comply with standards

DOORWAYS AND DOORS

An inspection of all conveyances with disability access appears to confirm that all vehicles concerned comply with the standards for door access and activation.

Premises such as meal locations, offices and coach terminals are not within our direct control.

Action Plan

- Ensure all new conveyances purchased with disability access comply with the standards
- Regularly inspect existing disability access vehicles to ensure they continue to comply

STAIRS

It is the intent of the disability standards that stairs should not be the only means of access to a conveyance. This does not pose a problem for route bus services with the introduction of low floor disability access buses.

With the introduction of new Wheel Chair Accessible Coaches we now have the capability to enable passengers to board without the necessity to negotiate the coach stairs.

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Action Plan

- Ensure compliance with accessible buses on route services
- Ensure compliance with accessible coaches on long distance services

SYMBOLS

All conveyances with disability access must have the correct symbols for accessibility and deafness attached as per the standards.

Standard symbols also apply to offices / meal break locations where we have no direct control. Management will liaise with the relevant owners / authorities in regards to this issue.

Action Plan

- Ensure symbols on all accessible vehicles comply with the standards
- Liaise with landlords / authorities regarding symbols at offices and other locations

SIGNS

All signs on conveyances including destinations signs must comply with the relevant standards of dimension, location, illumination, visibility and lettering.

Action Plan

- Ensure all signage complies with the standards
- Liaise with landlords / authorities in relation to signs and compliance

TACTILE GROUND SURFACE INDICATORS

Tactile surface indicators are to be used to define key areas on access paths / entrances for people with vision impairment. Location, style and dimensions are to comply with the standards.

Action Plan

- Ensure compliance with standards for access paths / vehicle entrances.
- Liaise with landlords etc regarding compliance

ALARMS

Emergency warning systems and / or alarms if fitted must comply with the relevant standards i.e. visual and sound alarms.

This section applies mainly to locations such as offices, terminals and meal break locations which are not under our direct control.

Action Plan

- Liaise with landlords regarding compliance
- Ensure any emergency warning systems / fire alarms comply with standards, if fitted

CONTROLS

Controls for opening and locking passenger operated doors are to comply with the relevant standards. On our conveyances this would only appear to relate to the toilet doors in the coaches as all other doors are operated by the driver.

Signalling devices on buses (stop buttons) must comply with the standards.

Action Plan

- Ensure signalling devices (stop buttons) comply with standards

PAYMENT OF FARES

The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport state that all passengers must be prepared to pay fares.

The method of paying fares and validating tickets must not require actions from passengers with disabilities that exceed requirements of other passengers.

HEARING AUGMENTATION – LISTENING SYSTEMS

This section applies to public address systems if installed. At our terminals and depots any public address systems are installed and maintained by the landlord / owner hence it would appear to be their responsibility to ensure systems comply with the standards.

Action Plan

- Liaise with landlords / owners regarding compliance of terminals / offices

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INFORMATION

It is the policy of this company to provide all passengers with information necessary to use our transport service. This is achieved by providing access to printed service schedules, internet website, information in person at our offices or from service drivers / inspectors and by contacting our staff via the telephone.

This company does assume that passengers have a minimum level of literacy and language skills and also acknowledges that not all information can be provided in certain formats from certain outlets i.e. drivers may only be able to provide oral information.

This company will endeavour to provide information in a variety of formats. Where we cannot supply information in a passenger's preferred format equivalent access will be given using direct assistance if necessary.

Action Plan

- To the best of our ability provide information in accordance with the disability standards
- Where this is not possible ensure equivalent access is provided

PRIORITY

On all unbooked services there will be two priority seats set aside for passengers with disabilities and other groups in need of assistance.

These seats (including allocated spaces) can be used by other passengers on the understanding that they must be vacated if required by passengers with disabilities.

Action Plan

- Ensure 2 seats are allocated for priority seating on all non-booked services
- Ensure applicable signage accompanies these seats

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In addition to imposing responsibilities on operators of services and providers of infrastructure, the Guidelines to the Standards indicate that passengers must also be able to:-

- Understand information given in spoken, written, tactile or diagrammatic form
- Have the capacity to use a mass transit system
- Select their destinations, modes and times of travel, and
- Communicate their destinations where necessary

Although this would mean that some persons with more severe physical and intellectual disabilities may not be able to access the public transport system, Premier Motor Service concurs with the Standard's aim of eliminating discrimination 'as far as possible' against people with disabilities.