

• **CATS Travel Training** •

CATS Travel Training teaches customers with disabilities the fundamental skills to navigate fixed route bus and light rail transit services. The program is designed for first time riders and also those who have tried riding, but need more help. CATS provides the training to persons with a wide range of disabilities; however, CATS does not offer orientation and mobility instruction for customers with visual impairments. Instruction for clients with visual disabilities to ride CATS' fixed route buses and LYNX light rail is provided by qualified professionals and organizations such as Metrolina Association for the Blind (MAB).

CATS Travel Training program works in conjunction with established travel training programs offered by:

MAB
(704-887-5123)

Goodwill Industries
(704-372-3434)

Charlotte Institute of
Rehabilitation
(704-355-6515)

These programs currently provide transit skills instruction to groups or individuals with disabilities. A client's disability and needs would determine which program would be best qualified to provide the travel training.

• **Travel Training Criteria** •

Candidates for CATS Travel Training include persons who:

- Have been denied full or partial eligibility to ride CATS' paratransit system, Special Transportation Service (STS)
- Possess one or more cognitive or physical disabilities
- Use supplemental aids, devices or services
- Are regular fixed route riders and now must travel with a mobility aid
- Because of disability may be unfamiliar with or reluctant to use fixed route

• Travel Buddies •

Travel Buddies is an extension of CATS Travel Training that pairs an experienced bus or light rail rider with a novice to help the new rider overcome his/her fears of riding public transportation. Persons with similar disabilities are paired. For example, a person who uses a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, but has never ridden a bus or light rail will be matched with an experienced rider who uses the same type of mobility aid. When coaching the novice to use CATS' services, the veteran rider will not only teach basic Travel Training skills, but also share personal experiences, techniques and advice.

• **Settings for Training** •

- Actual boarding and departure locations
- Charlotte Transportation Center for bays and transfer instruction
- LYNX light rail stations

• **Skills that are Taught** •

- How to get from point A to point B, *i.e.* home to work or school and back
- Recognizing bus stops or LYNX light rail stations
- How to get to and from appropriate bus stops or LYNX stations
- Recognizing the correct bus route or LYNX direction
- Waiting safely at LYNX stations

- Choosing methods of paying fare/use of farebox and ticket vending machine
- Transferring
- Vehicle familiarization
- Maneuvering on and off vehicle



- Navigating the Charlotte Transportation Center safely and efficiently
- Appropriate behavior on the bus and light rail
- Signaling to get on and off the bus

- Reading transit schedules
- Dealing with unexpected or dangerous situations
- Rider's rights (to speak up, provide comments and report problems, to be treated respectfully, strapped in properly, to request stop announcements)
- Customer service options such as www.ridetransit.org, Tell Transit, 704-336-RIDE, etc.

• **Training Time Frame** •

- Preferably half day (no more than four hours)
- Depending on disability, training may require more than one day
- Retraining is available if changes to destinations, route/schedule, fares or bays occur

• Training Tools •

- Packet with schedules
- Riders' Guide map
- Complimentary pass
- Consent/liability form
- Training contact information



• **Benefits** •

- Increased mobility independence, with ability to travel when and where you choose
- Ability to use public transportation with confidence
- Greater opportunities for employment
- Increased access to the community, activities, etc.
- Monetary savings to both customer, CATS, taxpayers

Customers who participate in CATS Travel Training are supplied with schedules, maps, a complimentary pass and other information. Customers or legal guardian must sign a consent form prior to training. To learn more about CATS Travel Training or to sign up for the training, please call 704-336-RIDE or 704-336-2233.