

Equal Access

Meeting the needs of customers with disabilities and ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be challenging. The *Equal Access* program outlines what is necessary for Operators to comply with ADA and also provides simple directions for delivering superior service to customers with special needs. Students will learn how to safely and efficiently board and alight customers with special needs; secure wheelchairs, communicate effectively, and to understand exactly what assistance is expected when providing service to customers with disabilities. *Equal Access* presents information in a manner that will encourage operators to empathize with the challenges that some customers experience and to make extra efforts to ensure that all customers have safe and comfortable transit experiences.

Audience

New and veteran operators will benefit from *Equal Access*. Supervisors and management personnel will also benefit from reviewing ADA requirements.

Program Topics

Major Topics include:

- An overview of requirements and guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
 - Particular needs of elderly transit customers;
 - How to provide the most effective service to elderly customers;
 - Recognizing disabilities that do not have obvious physical characteristics;
 - Being sensitive to the special needs of customers with disabilities;
 - Providing effective service to customers with disabilities; and
 - Using special ADA equipment..
- Repeat the agency's policy for boarding customers in wheelchairs;
 - Describe the three general points of travel, which must be announced;
 - Understand how to combine a general greeting with an offer for boarding assistance;
 - Understand how to politely keep priority seating open for customers with special needs;
 - Describe three principle challenges of elderly transit customers;
 - Discuss why providing more time to customers with special needs is important;
 - Identify recognizable signs of disabilities;
 - Discuss why some disabilities are not readily identified;
 - Describe how to use ADA-specific equipment such as lifts, ramps, and electronic announcement systems; and
 - Provide examples of ways operators can exceed minimum requirements.

Program Objectives

Equal Access will enable operators to:

- Provide a general description of ADA and the reasons the legislation was adopted;
- Explain the term disability and define eligibility under ADA;
- Discuss which customers should use the bus lift or ramp;

Meets Requirements

Equal Access satisfies ADA requirements for sensitivity training and providing service to customers with special needs.