

SECTION 1: Welcome to your Riders' Guide!

Introduction-

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (County Connection for short) is your transit agency provider within central Contra Costa County. County Connection serves Clayton, Concord, Danville, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and unincorporated areas of central Contra Costa County.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires all public transit agencies like County Connection and BART to make their bus and rail services user-friendly for people with disabilities. The ADA also requires us to provide a paratransit service. In Central Contra Costa County, ADA paratransit services are provided by County Connection Link.

Who is this Riders' Guide for?

This guide is for County Connection Link riders and their families, friends, and caregivers. We hope you find it helpful and easy to use. This guide is specifically written as if the rider were reading it.

For caregivers and Social Service agencies, although you may take the responsibility of booking and cancelling rides, all the guidelines will be the responsibility of the riders to adhere to. Please read this guide carefully on their behalf.

What information can I find in this Riders' Guide?

In this guide, we will tell you:

- How County Connection Link service works and what you can expect when you ride County Connection Link.
- How to find out whether you are eligible to ride County Connection Link.
- How to reserve and cancel rides on County Connection Link.
- How to ride County Connection Link on the day of your trip.

- What to do when you have a problem with County Connection Link.

This guide covers the basics of County Connection Link, but it does not describe every detail of the program. If you would like more information, visit our website www.countyconnection.com or call County Connection Link at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Can I read this guide in other languages or an accessible format?

Yes. This guide is available in Spanish and can be accessed via the County Connection Link Website. You can also call XXX-XXX-XXXX and request a Spanish Riders' Guide to be mailed to you. Alternative accessible formats are available upon request. Please contact County Connection Link to speak to a representative or email ADALinkParatransit@cccta.org. County Connection Link Paratransit will do its best to provide the requested alternative format within a reasonable time.

Commented [SMvH1]: Say where to find /how to access these alternative formats

SECTION 2: Applying for County Connection Link Service

This section tells you more about how to apply for County Connection Link and how you may qualify based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligibility standards.

Am I eligible to ride Link?

To be eligible for County Connection Link, it must be determined that you are eligible for paratransit services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). You are eligible for Link only if you have a disabling health condition that prevents you from independently using the regular fixed route County Connection buses or BART trains for **some** or **all** your trips. Determinations are made by trained professionals who are familiar with the fixed route system as well as the ADA guidelines. Eligibility is not a medical decision.

How do I apply?

Please follow these steps to apply to be a County Connection Link rider:

1. Request an application form by:
 - Calling County Connection Link eligibility department at (925) 680-2066 or (925) 680-2067
 - Visiting our website www.countyconnection.com and downloading an application
 - Visiting in person to request a paper application:
Link Office
2477 Arnold Industrial Way, Concord
2. When you complete the application form, please fill out the application completely including:

- whether or not you travel with an attendant or a service animal (i.e., guide dog)
 - provide signatures on Applicant Certification Form and Authorization to Release Medical Information
3. Have your licensed health care professional who is familiar with your disability or disabling health condition complete the pages at the end of the packet related to the Medical/Mental Health Verification Form.
 4. Once both sections have been completed send the application via mail or fax to:
County Connection-ADA Certification
2477 Arnold Industrial Way
Concord, CA 94520
Fax: 925-852-6719
 5. After we receive and review your application, you may receive a phone call for additional information. You may also be called to come down to our office for an in-person interview and/or your application may be sent to your doctor for additional information on your disability and how it prevents you from taking public transportation. In the event that County Connection Link requests your participation in an in-person interview, please note that a ride to and from the interview location will be provided free of charge.

You will be notified by mail of your eligibility status within 21 days of receipt of your **completed** application.

When can I use County Connection Link services?

This depends on your ADA paratransit certification. Your eligibility determination letter from County Connection Link's office should indicate if you were unconditionally or conditionally eligible.

If you are unable to use County Connection buses or BART trains without having another person there to help you, you will have **unconditional (full) eligibility**

for County Connection Link. Any time you need to take public transit, you can book your trip on County Connection Link.

If the eligibility process determines that you can use County Connection fixed route buses or BART independently for some trips, but not others, you will be given **conditional eligibility**. You will be allowed to take some of your trips using County Connection Link service. As an example, you may feel fine going to dialysis and can take a fixed route County Connection bus or BART train, but experience weakness upon completing dialysis and will need to use County Connection Link service on your return trip home.

It may also be determined that you are able to take the regular public County Connection bus or BART train service for all your trips. In that case, you would not be eligible for County Connection Link services. The basis for the denial will be noted in the determination letter sent to you.

What if I disagree with my eligibility decision? What do I do?

You have the right to appeal a denial of eligibility or a condition of your eligibility to ride County Connection Link. Instructions on how to do so will be included in your determination letter. If your disability or health related conditions change in the future, you may reapply for the service based on the current information.

How long am I eligible for County Connection Link?

Once we have determined you are eligible and you receive your determination letter, this decision is valid for up to three years. An eligibility expiration date will be included in your determination letter. Please note County Connection Link's office will mail a recertification notice at least 60 days in advance before your eligibility will expire. If your disability is temporary or your health is expected to improve, you may be given eligibility for a more limited time, after which you are expected to return to using regular County Connection fixed route buses or BART.

Can I travel outside of Central Costa County?

Once you are determined to be eligible for County Connection Link, you may also access the following counties' ADA Paratransit Programs for the duration of your County Connection Link eligibility: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Solano, San Mateo and Sonoma County. Please see section on Regional Transfer Trips/One Seat Rider Program for more details or call **925-XXX-XXXX** for more information.

Commented [SMvH2]: Not San Mateo?

What if I need to travel outside the San Francisco Bay Area and need paratransit service?

Once approved to use County Connection Link, you are also eligible to receive paratransit services in other cities and states for up to 21 days in a 12-month period. Conversely, accessing County Connection Link for passengers visiting our service area is extremely easy. Visitors who are ADA eligible for paratransit in their home jurisdictions may use County Connection Link service for up to 21 days in a 12-month period after presenting either a valid ADA Paratransit card or other paperwork showing their certification for ADA Paratransit services. They may also provide us with a contact name and number of their Paratransit services so we may contact them directly to verify their ADA status. All visitor eligibility requests are handled by County Connection Link's Eligibility Department.

Presumptive Eligibility

We may also grant presumptive eligibility for 30 days if a person needs to use Paratransit service immediately because of an emergency, or if we are unable to make a determination within a 21-day period. This type of eligibility is not for hospital discharges or transportation home after minor surgery.

Fixed Route Buses

You will be happy to know that you may obtain a reduced fare on **fixed route** buses by presenting any one of the following documents: your ADA paratransit eligibility letter, your Documentation of ADA paratransit eligibility form (both of these items will be mailed to you when you are certified), your ADA paratransit eligibility ID card, a Medicare card, or any proof of being age 65 or older.

Commented [SMvH3]: Not a big deal, but the document uses "fixed route" and "fixed-route" inconsistently – that could be cleaned up

ADA Eligibility Card

The ADA paratransit eligibility card is used to identify you as someone who has been certified to use paratransit service. You may need this card if you travel outside of the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition, you may use card to travel at a discount on County Connection fixed route buses.

SECTION 3: Planning your travel

Where and when can I go on County Connection Link?

County Connection Link can pick you up and drop you off almost anywhere a County Connection bus or BART station operates at that time and on that day of the week.

County Connection Link riders go grocery shopping, to work and school, to get their hair cut or check in with their doctor, meet up with friends, or to enjoy a local park. You can go anyplace – as long as the bus goes there or there is BART station nearby.

County Connection Link service is specifically available within 1.5 miles of a County Connection fixed route bus or within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a BART station when

County Connection fixed route buses are not in operation. Both the origin and destination addresses must meet these standards. (When County Connection fixed route buses are not in operation, then County Connection Link service is strictly limited to trips with pick-up and drop-off locations that are both within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of an operating BART station.)

County Connection Link provides ADA service during the following hours:

- Monday – Friday, 4:00am–12:00am
- Saturday, 6:00am–12:00am
- Sunday, 6:30am–12:00am

When you call to book your ride, the reservationist can tell you if your ride request falls within the operating hours of the fixed route Bus or BART station.

County Connection Link observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

County Connection Link service is limited to pick-ups and drop-offs within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of an operating BART station on such holidays. Please note that all subscription rides are cancelled on these days.

What Can I Expect County Connection Link Driver To Do?

County Connection Link drivers are required to:

- Get out of the vehicle and let you know they have arrived.
- Offer assistance such as pushing your wheelchair, offering a steadying arm to help you walk safely and assisting you to get in and out of the vehicle safely.
- Carry a small load of packages to and from the vehicle (see package limitations on page ??).
- Operate the vehicle and lift in a safe manner and safely secure your wheelchair or other mobility device.

- Remind you to wear your seatbelt.
- Keep within sight of their vehicles when passengers are on board.
- Collect the fare listed on their manifest.
- Carry only the riders assigned to them along with their attendants and approved companions.
- Go only to the destinations listed on the manifest or as notified by the dispatcher.
- Wear a uniform and a name tag.
- Be courteous at all times.

Drivers are not allowed to:

- Enter a rider's residence or go past the main lobby of a public building.
- Leave riders in the vehicle unattended.
- Perform any personal care assistance such as assisting riders to dress or go to the bathroom.
- Smoke, eat or drink in the vehicle.
- Use a cell phone while driving, play loud music or wear headphones.
- Take information from the rider such as cancellations, changes in reservations, or taking a different route other than the one provided on the driver's tablet.
- Accept tips.
- Lift or carry riders or carry wheelchairs up and down stairs.
- Administer medication

All drivers are familiar with basic first aid, but are not medical professionals. If there is a medical or health emergency on-board such as a rider having a seizure or experiencing excessive bleeding after a dialysis treatment, the driver will pull over, call 911 and wait for trained help.

What is expected of me as a County Connection Link rider?

Riders, their companions, and their personal care attendants must be responsible in their use of County Connection Link service and follow all of its rules and expectations (detailed in Section 6).

Riders, companions, and personal care attendants should expect to:

- Be ready at the start of their pick-up window. (This is a curb-to-curb service, with door-to-door service provided upon request only. Drivers must remain within eyesight of their vehicles.)
- Always pay a fare when applicable.
- Avoid no-shows and late or excessive cancellation of reservations.
- Refrain from carrying fireworks, flammable liquids, or weapons that threaten the safety of the driver and other passengers.
- Refrain from using abusive, threatening, obscene and/or racially offensive language.
- Not litter on or soil the vehicles during their ride.
- Refrain from using the service fraudulently (e.g. intentionally allowing someone else to use County Connection Link under your **name**).

To ensure the safety of the riders and the driver, we ask that riders adhere to a set of minimum required Rider Behavior Rules which include the following:

- Enter and exit the vehicle voluntarily. This means the rider should not require an inordinate amount of coaxing from the driver. This could cause delays.
- The rider must be able to follow the driver's instructions.
- Stay buckled in the seat or wheelchair while the vehicle is moving. The rider must not attempt to get up out of their seat while the vehicle is in motion. This is unsafe.

Commented [SMvH4]: Note: These two lists of behaviors/rules don't align perfectly with the list in Section 6. If you want to be able to penalize riders for certain behaviors, they should be listed in both places.

- Not attempt to exit the vehicle while it is in motion, at stop signs, stop lights, while in traffic or while picking up other passengers.
- Refrain from hitting or touching other riders or the driver.
- Not invite/engage sexual attention from other riders or the driver.
- Refrain from abusing, physically and/or verbally, the driver and/or other passengers.

More information on the County Connection Link Rider Behavior Rules, including penalties for violating them, is provided in Section 6.

Caregiver Responsibility

County Connection Link drivers cannot act as attendants for Paratransit riders. Cognitively impaired riders may ride without attendants as long as they exhibit safe behaviors in the vehicle. It may be necessary for the caregiver to accompany an individual with a cognitive impairment or to provide a personal care attendant.

Riders with mental or cognitive impairments, or with severe memory loss, that prohibits them from being safely left on their own at the pick-up or drop-off point must have an attendant or caregiver present at both locations. If a responsible attendant or caregiver is not present when the driver attempts to drop-off these riders, dispatch will call the emergency contact person from the individual's application. If a responsible attendant or caregiver is not located, the individual will be brought to the closest police station and the situation will be reported to adult protective services.

Who can I bring with me?

ADA eligible riders, their personal care attendants and companions are allowed to use County Connection Link service. Both personal care attendants and companions must travel to and from the same destination as the eligible rider. You must inform the reservationist at the time you book your ride if you will have someone travelling with you.

- Your personal care attendant (PCA) who will be assisting you during your trip **will not** have to pay a fare. (If you need assistance during your trips, please provide that information during your application process so

a personal care attendant will be added to your file. County Connection Link reserves the right to contact your health care professional to verify your need for an attendant.)

- A companion, friend or relative (who is not your PCA) may travel with you but must pay the same fare. Only one companion can be scheduled to ride with you. Additional companions can be added on the day of service based on availability ONLY.

If you use a PCA and are not currently certified to bring a PCA on County Connection Link, call the Link office at XXX-XXX-XXXX and we will mail you the necessary paperwork, which may include a recertification. It is your responsibility to find a PCA for your trip. County Connection Link does not provide a PCA.

Fraudulently claiming to travel with an attendant to avoid paying a fare for a companion may result in suspension of service.

Can Children travel on County Connection Link Service?

Yes. All children until the age of 8, or until they reach a height of 4 feet 9 inches, must travel in a car seat. Parents/guardians must provide and install their own car seats. Drivers can help you carry the car seat but are not permitted to carry the children. County Connection Link **does not** provide car seats and will not transport children without the appropriate car seat.

Children as eligible riders

Children whose disability (as opposed to their age) would prevent them from using the fixed route bus and trains by themselves may be eligible for County Connection Link. Very few children under the age of 5 meet this requirement. Children who are under the age of 6 must travel with a Personal care attendant (like a parent or guardian). If an older child exhibits seriously disruptive behavior and/or poses safety concerns for themselves or others as a result of such behavior, the child must travel with a personal care attendant.

Children as companions

Commented [SMvH5]: Are you saying that only the parent/guardian can be a PCA? This isn't particularly clear.

Each eligible rider may bring one child as a companion and may request on the day of service to bring additional children. If space is available, the request will be granted. The eligible rider must be able to manage the child on their own or with the help of a personal care attendant. The drivers cannot assist with managing children.

Children as attendants

Children above the age of 6 may travel as personal care attendants as long as they act in that capacity. The driver cannot perform personal duties for a rider or his/her child.

What Mobility Devices can I use on County Connection Link?

All County Connection fixed route buses and paratransit vehicles are equipped with rider lifts or ramps that meet ADA accessible vehicle specifications. All ramps will accommodate mobility devices such as wheelchairs and three-wheeled scooters up to 48" long by 30" wide with a combined weight up to 800 pounds (including the passenger). Mobility devices that exceed these specifications may not be able to be accommodated. We do not transport gurneys.

For safety reasons it is suggested that all mobility devices be free of bags, baskets and any other attachments that may interfere with the securement system. Additionally, all passengers are required to wear a seatbelt. Lap belts will be provided to passengers in mobility devices that don't have their own lap belt. Finally, please be aware that passengers in scooter type mobility devices may be asked to move to a seat. Shopping carts and strollers must fit under the seat or be secured so as to not pose a safety hazard.

Life Support Equipment

You can bring your respirator, portable oxygen or other life support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials. Your equipment must be small enough to fit into the paratransit vehicle and be managed by you or your personal care attendant.

Commented [SMvH6]: Do you want to say anything about strollers, shopping carts, etc.?

Commented [SMvH7]: Add here info re: oxygen tanks?

Can I bring a service animal or a pet?

You may bring your guide dog or other service animal that has been trained to help you with your disability. The service animal must be under your direct supervision at all times. It must not soil or damage the vehicle, bark, growl or act in an aggressive manner. You may travel with a small pet as long as the animal is fully enclosed in a secure pet carrier that you can manage and hold on your lap or place securely at your feet.

Please tell the Reservationist if you intend to travel with a pet or service animal during your trip and please note no fare is charged for either the service animal or the small pet enclosed in pet carrier.

How Do I Pay For My Ride?

County Connection Link accepts cash and ticket vouchers.

- One-way fare for any Link trip is \$5.00
- Eligible personal care attendants ride free
- A companion is required to pay the \$5.00 one-way fare

Please note that drivers do not carry change and cannot make unscheduled stops to make change. You are encouraged to carry exact fare.

Advance Fare Payment System

You may wish to take advantage of County Connection Link's Advance Fare Payment System designed to simplify your travel by allowing you to prepay for your trips.

How does it work?

Mail a check to:
*County Connection Link
2477 Arnold Industrial Way
Concord, CA 94520.*

Commented [SMvH8]: What about Clipper?

Commented [RK9R8]: Not yet. We have a few months to go before that is introduced.

A \$50.00 minimum is required to establish an account. Make the check payable to County Connection Link and state the name of the County Connection Link client on the check.

Your County Connection Link trips will be automatically deducted from your account for the amount of your trip. If the balance in your account decreases to \$25.00 or less, you will be notified by phone or mail. If your account reaches a "0" balance, you will be required to pay the cash/tuseicket fare for each scheduled pick-up until such time as your County Connection Link account has sufficient funds.

If you have any questions regarding this information and/or the balance of your existing account, please contact County Connection Link, Monday through Friday, from 8:00am to 5:00pm at (925) 938-7433.

The Advance Fare Payment System is offered as a convenience by County Connection. Individuals who fail to provide sufficient funds to cover their trips and fall into arrears will be required to pay for their trips as they board and reimburse any funds in arrears. Individuals whose checks bounce will be required to pay by money order or cash for future trips.

How Do I Purchase Tickets?

You may buy a book of tickets by sending or taking a check to the County Connection Link office. Tickets come in \$5.00 increments. Each book of tickets costs \$50 and contains 10 tickets. For an additional \$5.00, you may insure your tickets. Each ticket will have a unique identifying serial number so it can be accounted for when used.

Please note: A returned check fee will be assessed at \$15.00. Continuous use of checks that bounce, will result in Link only accepting cash/tickets for each trip.

Commented [SMvH10]: Do you mean continuous use of checks that bounce? This isn't clear.

SECTION 4: Booking Trips

Things To Know Before You Schedule a Ride...

You must call between one and seven days in advance to book your trips. Please bear in mind that ADA paratransit is a “shared-ride” service, and that trips on County Connection Link take about the same amount of time as similar trips taken using County Connection bus service, including transfers and the time to walk to and from the bus stop. Same-day reservations are extremely limited and based on driver availability only.

Types of Reservations

You have the option of requesting a reservation based on either a specific pick-up time or an appointment time to arrive at your destination.

Pickup times are subject to negotiation – the reservationist will offer you one or more options within one hour (before or after) of your requested pickup time.

You can also schedule trips by appointment time. If you are traveling to an appointment (for example, a doctor’s appointment), please tell the reservationist what time you need to arrive at your destination. They will tell you what time you need to be picked up to ensure that you arrive on time at your destination.

The reservationist will attempt to give you the best time possible but cannot make more than two attempts to schedule a specific time.

How Do I Make a Reservation?

Reservations may be made over the phone. Reservation calls are accepted from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm every day including weekends and holidays. You may call our reservations department at:

Reservations number (925) 938-7433

When booking your trip, please provide the following information:

- Your Client Number- provided in your determination letter.
- Your name, home address and phone number.
- The address where we will pick you up from.
- The address where we will take you to.
- Any special instructions that the driver may need, such as gate codes, directions to hard-to-find places, specific areas in a mall or shopping center, etc.
- The date you want to travel.
- The time you want to be picked up **or** the time you want to be dropped off at your destination.
- Whether you will be travelling with an attendant, companion, or service animal.
- The type of mobility aids you and your companion will be using, like a wheelchair, walker, cane, or scooter.

Pick-up Window

When you make your reservation, you will be given a 30-minute range of time in which to expect the driver. This range of time is called a pick-up window. Your driver may arrive anytime within this pick-up window. You are asked to be ready at the beginning of this 30-minute window of time. If you are not visible when the driver arrives, the driver will attempt to contact you as a courtesy. If you fail to board the vehicle after 5 minutes of its arrival, the driver will have to leave to pick-up other passengers. ****This is called the 5-minute rule!****

Shared rides

County Connection Link is a shared ride service. This means, just like public transportation, County Connection Link picks up other riders going to similar destinations as you. The direction of your trip may not be linear. Your ride may take a similar amount of time as the same trip would take on regular fixed route including transfers and wait times. To see how long a paratransit trip may take,

you can compare travel times using fixed-route buses by visiting our website at www.countyconnection.com. Enter the required information, including if you want to be picked up at a specific time or have an appointment time.

Can I change my reservation?

The Dispatch Department is open 7 days a week and during all hours of operation, roughly from 4:30am to 12midnight. You may call during those times with questions about your ride. You may not book rides outside of normal reservation hours, but you may cancel and or add instructions to your existing rides. You can contact the Dispatch Department at (925) 943-1829.

Requests for changes on the day of your trip most likely cannot be accommodated. Please do not ask the drivers to make changes to your pick-up or drop-off destinations. Call the Customer Service department at (925) 943-7433 if it is an emergency and they will try their best to assist you.

How do I cancel my trip?

Call County Connection Link to cancel as soon as you know you can't take a trip. You must cancel your trip at least one hour before your pick-up window begins or we will record that you cancelled late or were a 'no-show'. If you don't need your trip, we can offer the space to another rider. We schedule your ride with other riders, so canceling your ride the day before gives us more time to change the schedule to make sure the vehicle is not too early or too late for other customers.

Penalties for late cancellations are addressed in Section 6.

What is a No-show?

A no-show is a failure to meet your scheduled ride within 5 minutes of its arrival, failure to cancel a ride with at least 1 hours' notice, or failure to cancel the ride altogether. A pattern of no-show violations may lead to penalties. (Please refer to section 6 for more information on penalties).

It is your responsibility to wait where the driver can see you. The driver is not allowed to leave sight of his or her vehicle and can only go in the main lobby of a building. At most they can announce their arrival at the door. Service is curb-to-curb with door-to-door services available only for special circumstances. The driver will attempt to find you but will leave after 5 minutes. To help expedite matters, please provide a good cell phone number where dispatch can reach you. If the driver leaves, and another ride has to be scheduled, there may be significant delays, up to 1 hour.

Early Pick-up

Sometimes the driver will arrive before your pick-up window because of light traffic or a cancellation before your trip. You are not obligated to board before your window, but the driver may inform you of that choice.

Late Pick-ups

If your driver does not arrive by the end of your 30-minute pick-up window, you may call the County Connection Link call center at (925) 943-1829 to find out where your driver is, or you may locate your driver using the [MyTransit app](#) (see page XX). If your driver arrives later than your 30-minute pick-up window, you may decline the ride without penalty.

Commented [SMvH11]: This is the first mention of the app. Should it be described earlier? What else does it do?

What should I do before the 30-minute window begins?

Before your 30-minute pick-up window begins, take time to prepare for your trip.

- Check the weather forecast and dress for it. Carry water on hot days and a coat on cold or rainy days. Bring [medications](#) and any snacks you need.
- Take a restroom break before boarding the vehicle. There is no restroom on County Connection Link vehicles and drivers cannot stop.
- Take important phone numbers with you, including the County Connection Link number for Dispatch.
- Make sure your mobility device is in good working order and your battery is charged.

Commented [SMvH12]: We don't say above that drivers won't administer meds

- If you use oxygen, take a full tank in case your ride is longer than expected.
- Make sure you have your County Connection Link fare with you if you have not already paid in advance.

The 30-minute window is starting. What should I do?

Be ready with your coat at the beginning of your 30-minute pick-up window. Link can come at any time within that window. If possible, wait at a place where you can see the vehicle arrive.

How can I find out if the County Connection Link vehicle is running on time?

County Connection Link currently offers three ways to get information on your rides estimated time of arrival (ETA). Link’s Dispatch Department is available throughout the day to answer calls including your “where’s my ride” questions. Using all available information, Link’s Dispatch Department will be able to estimate your driver’s arrival at the pre-specified location.

My Transit App is a mobile application designed to specifically help you and your caregiver stay in touch with County Connection Link service, by using any mobile device. The application provides you and your caregiver with:

- Immediate access to real-time information
- Trip notification such as estimated arrival times
- Information on future scheduled trips
- Quick links for direct access to the call center and County Connection offices
- Ability to transmit your current location for assisting the drivers in locating you more quickly
- The ability to provide feedback or rate your trip experience once your trip is completed

Facility Transit Manager System

Your dialysis center, adult day center, group workshop and other similar facilities can be issued a web-based login to see all pick-up and drop-offs scheduled to a specific facility and the current estimated time of the vehicle's arrival. With the

Commented [SMvH13]: Aha! I think you may want to move this up to earlier in the Guide.

Commented [SMvH14]: I wouldn't mention this if it isn't available!!

Commented [SMvH15]: vehicle location?

Commented [SMvH16]: Not at all a legal issue, but you may want to move this up, too

Facility Transit Manager system, once the estimated time is within an hour of the current time, the facility can link directly to the vehicle location and track where the vehicle is located.

What if I reserve a lot of trips to the same places?

Standing reservations (also known as Subscription Service) are available on a limited basis for trips going to the same places at the same times.

Consider requesting a standing ride if you have a trip that fits all the following requirements:

- Trip is taken at least once each week on the same day.
- Trip is between the same locations and at the same time.
- Trip has been taken consistently over the previous 30-day period.
- Trip is expected to continue for at least 60 days or more.

You only need to call once to request a Standing Reservation ride. It takes approximately seven days to go into effect if we have space available.

It is important to remember that standing reservations are NOT guaranteed and may be capped at no more than 50% of all rides in any given period. If space is not available for your requested standing trip, you may ask to be placed on a waiting list, which is reviewed regularly. If you are unable to secure a standing ride trip, you may still call the day before, or up to seven days before, for each individual trip.

To avoid no-show associated penalties, it is important to cancel your Standing Order, such as if you are in the hospital or will be away for a certain period of time. We can pause your Standing Order for up to two weeks. After two weeks, we must allow others the opportunity to book Standing Order rides. You may continue to make reservations up to 7 days in advance for each trip. County Connection Link will review your request again after 30 days.

What if I need to travel outside of Central Contra Costa County?

County Connection Link provides service primarily to Central Costa County. However, we do offer two additional options to ADA Paratransit riders who need to travel within the Bay Area but outside of Central Contra Costa County. The options available depend on where the destination is located. These options include the **One Seat Regional Ride** and **Regional Transfer Trips**.

One Seat Regional Ride

County Connection Link offers a user-friendly service for all its ADA eligible riders travelling outside of Central Contra Costa County but still within Contra Costa County or to the Livermore-Amador Valley Transportation Authority Service Area (including cities such as Livermore, Dublin, and Pleasanton). The One Seat Regional Ride program allows you to be picked up from one service area and taken to another service area without being transferred to another transit agency. You will experience only one ride for your entire trip. Your One Seat Regional Ride trip can be booked directly through County Connection Link Reservations department using our Regional Transfer Booking line **925-555-5555**. We encourage riders to plan ahead and call with several days' notice when possible. You may still experience a shared ride during your One Seat Regional Ride trip. For "where is my ride" calls, please call our customer service department at **555-555-5555**.

Regional Transfer Trips

If you need a ride to **Alameda** (not including the Livermore-Amador Valley area), Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, or Solano counties, we will provide a Regional Transfer Trip. This means that you will ride Link for the Central Contra Costa County part of your trip, and then another paratransit provider will meet you at a transfer location to take you the rest of the way. To assure that we can accommodate the coordination of your transfer trip with another agency, please call 5-7 days in advance of the transfer trip. The

Commented [SMvH17]: What about other parts of CoCo County?

reservationist will make the arrangements with the other paratransit provider and confirm your trip one or two days before the scheduled trip.

Section 6: When Something Goes Wrong, including Penalties for Violations of the Rules, Late Cancellations and Missed Trips

This section will tell you more about some of the things that can go wrong on County Connection Link and some of the violations that can cause you to lose your ability to book a standing order or to ride Link.

I cancelled a trip late, or I missed a trip and did not cancel. What will happen?

County Connection Link is an advance booking system. Trips are booked and space is reserved for each trip booked. Booking rides that you do not take prevents others from booking and getting the rides that they desire.

If you will miss a trip for any reason, call County Connection Link at XXX-XXX-XXXX as soon as you know you can't take the trip. If no one is available to take your call please leave a message including your name, client ID, date and time(s) of trip(s) you wish to cancel.

You must cancel at least one hour before your pick-up window begins. If you cancel too late or miss the trip and do not call to cancel, we will record a 'no-show'.

A no-show will be recorded:

- If the ride is cancelled less than one hour before it is scheduled to begin.
- If the customer is not at the agreed-upon pick-up spot during the 30-minute pick-up window.
- If the customer doesn't board within five minutes from when the Link vehicle arrives during the 30-minute pickup window.

- If the customer has hand-to-hand service (for passengers who cannot be left unattended), but a responsible person was not present for the handoff.

Please note that if you "no show" any trip throughout the day, all subsequent trips will remain scheduled until County Connection Link can confirm that these other trips will need to be cancelled.

Excused No-Shows: Passengers will not be penalized for no-shows or late cancellations that are beyond their control. Passengers are encouraged to communicate to Link staff as soon as possible if their no-show is a result of something completely beyond their control (e.g., a County Connection Link error, delayed medical appointment, medical emergency, death or family emergency).

Suspension for Excessive No-shows: All riders will receive a **warning letter** if and when they no-show 4 of their total scheduled rides in a calendar quarter (as defined below). All riders will receive a **suspension letter** if and when they meet **both** of the following thresholds:

- 6 No-shows in a calendar quarter; **and**
- No-shows for 30% of their total scheduled rides in a calendar quarter.

No rider will be suspended without (a) receiving a warning letter and then (b) accumulating 2 or more additional No-shows.

Calendar quarters are three-month periods defined as:

- January – March
- April – June
- July – September
- October – December

Passengers who habitually violate the No-show Policy are subject to progressive penalties within a two-year period.

- First violation: 7-day (1-week) suspension
- Second violation: 14-day (2-week) suspension
- Third violation: 21-day (3-week) suspension
- Fourth and subsequent violations: 28-day (4-week) suspension

Impact on Standing Orders Rides:

County Connection Link is not obligated to provide Standing Order rides but does so as a courtesy and convenience to its passengers.

You must use your standing ride at least 50% of the time. If you cancel more than half of your standing ride trips in any 30-day period, we will stop providing the standing ride.

If your Standing Order is cancelled, you may follow the normal reservation process to book your rides.

What are County Connection Link's Rider Behavior Rules and what happens if I do not follow them?

Link's Rider Behavior Rules are a set of rules that we ask all customers to follow in order to ensure a safe and pleasant ride for all passengers. They include the following:

- Enter and exit the vehicle voluntarily. This means the rider should not require an inordinate amount of coaxing from the driver. This could cause delays.
- The rider must be able to follow the driver's instructions.
- Stay buckled in the seat or wheelchair while the vehicle is moving. The rider must not attempt to get up out of their seat while the vehicle is in motion. This is unsafe.
- Not attempt to exit the vehicle while it is in motion, at stop signs, stop lights, while in traffic or while picking up other passengers.
- Refrain from hitting or touching other riders or the driver.
- Not invite/engage sexual attention from other riders or the driver.

- Refrain from abusing, physically and/or verbally, the driver and/or other passengers.

If you do not follow the Rider Behavior Rules, County Connection Link will work with you, or your caregiver, to change the behavior. If the violations continue or if they are threatening to others, you may be suspended from County Connection Link service.

A first suspension will be for no more than 30 days. If a rider has had a prior suspension within the last (1-3 years?) or is being suspended for severe misconduct, the suspension may be longer than 30 days. In case of extremely unsafe behavior, a rider may be suspended indefinitely.

What if I do not agree with a decision to suspend my services?

It is your right to appeal penalty decisions made by County Connection Link.

Decisions that you may appeal are:

- Suspensions for no-shows.
- Suspensions for violation of Rider Behavior Rules.
- Determinations of eligibility-please. (See section 2.)

Instructions to appeal a County Connection Link decision are included in eligibility and denial letters as well as all suspension notices.

Appeals are heard by a panel consisting of a Link staff person, a rider advocate and/or a medical professional.

Riders who appeal a suspension for violation of the No-show Policy may continue riding County Connection Link service pending the outcome of the appeals hearing.

You may bring anyone you wish to an appeal hearing to speak on your behalf. County Connection Link will provide free transportation for you to and from the appeal hearing. County Connection Link will also provide necessary

aids/accommodations (including sign language and/or foreign language interpretation) that you request for the appeal hearing, if you request them at least one week in advance.

After the hearing, the panel will decide on whether to uphold the decision or overturn it. The decision of the panel is final. County Connection will notify you of the panel's decision in writing within five (5) business days of the hearing.

What will County Connection Link do if there is an earthquake or another disaster?

Most if not all paratransit providers will look to the county or governing agencies for guidelines regarding the emergency, before picking up passengers. Sometimes, County Connection Link may have to limit trips to essential functions or life sustaining trips only. This will include, but may not be limited to, trips to and from:

- Dialysis
- Grocery stores
- Chemotherapy appointments
- Medical facilities
- Essential job locations

You can bring your respirator, portable oxygen or other life support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials. Your equipment must be small enough to fit into the paratransit vehicle and be managed by you or your personal care attendant.

Commented [SMvH18]: This isn't just for emergencies – should it be moved up to discussion of service animals?

What will County Connection Link do if there is a medical emergency on board?

All drivers are familiar with basic first aid and CPR, but are not medical professionals. If there is a medical or health emergency on board such as a rider having a seizure or experiencing excessive bleeding after a dialysis treatment, the driver will pull over, call 911 and wait for trained help.

I lost something on the Link vehicle. What do I do?

Riders, personal care attendants and companions are responsible for keeping track of their personal possessions while on County Connection Link. If you discover that you have left something on a vehicle, call (925) 938-7433 to report it. If the item is found, you will be contacted and told where the item is being stored. You will have up to 30 days to retrieve it before it is donated to charity. If you take County Connection Link to pick up the item, you will be charged the regular fare.

If you find a lost item on the vehicle, please give it to the driver.

Section 7: Feedback? We want to hear from you!

Submitting a Complaint or Commendation

County Connection Link uses communication from our riders to keep track of how the paratransit system is working. To provide feedback, please tell us with the name of the rider, the day and time of the trip, and the reservation agent that took the call or the driver that provided the ride. You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- Rate your trip on the MyTransit mobile App.
- Call the customer service department at 925-676-7500 between 6:30am and 6:30pm Monday through Friday and give us the information.
- Email us at customerservice@countyconnection.com and give us the information.
- Write to us at County Connection Link Service, 2477 Arnold Industrial Way, Concord, CA 94520.

All complaints are acted on. You will receive a letter, email or phone call regarding your complaint and any updates associated with it.

It is important to also let staff know when things are going well. Use any of the above methods to communicate your positive experiences. Your praise will be forwarded to drivers or other staff persons.

Reasonable Modification

County Connection Link services is fully compliant with the Paratransit requirements of the ADA. We are committed to making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure County Connection Link services are accessible to everyone who is eligible. To make a request for a reasonable modification, you may contact County Connection Link service's Manager of Accessible Services at (925) 680-2098 or dial 711 for the California Relay Services. You can also visit our website at www.CountyConnection.com. Please note, a request for a reasonable modification will not be considered if it would:

- Fundamentally alter County Connection's services or programs.
- Create a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- Not be necessary to use County Connection services.
- Cause an undue financial or administrative burden for County Connection.

Persons who wish to file a complaint regarding a request for Reasonable Modification that was denied, or alleging any action prohibited by the ADA, may obtain an Appeals form from Customer Service by phone, fax, email or in writing to:

Customer Service, County Connection
2477 Arnold Industrial Drive
Concord CA 94520
Phone: (925) 676-7500
Fax: (925) 687-7306

email: customerservice@countyconnection.com

Forms can also be downloaded from our website at www.CountyConnection.com.

ADA Compliance Complaint

To file an ADA complaint, please contact the Manager of Accessible services at (925) 680-2098 or online at our website www.countyconnection.com under ADA complaint.

Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) County

Connection's County Connection Link Services are committed to ensuring no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services, on the basis of race, color or national origin as protected by Title VI. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination by County Connection Link services under Title VI, you may file a written complaint or call County Connection Link services at (925) 680-2098.

Title VI complaints should be filed as close as possible to when the alleged discrimination occurred and no later than 180 days after the alleged incident. Complaint forms are also available online at www.countyconnection.com.

Advisory Committee

The County Connection Advisory Committee meets every other month and advises the Board of Directors on matters pertaining to fixed route and paratransit services. The Advisory Committee is made up of both fixed route and paratransit users who represent each of the jurisdictions served by the County Connection system. **For information on meeting times, membership or to contact a representative, call (925) 680-2098.**

