

METRO ParaCruz

Customer Guide

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's
Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA) Complementary Paratransit Service



Quick Start Guide

1. Call ParaCruz to reserve a ride one to three days in advance. Have your ride information ready.
2. Reservation lines are open daily from 8:00am to 5:00pm.
ParaCruz Reservations:
(831) 425-4664
TTY 1-800-735-2929
3. Be ready to board the ParaCruz vehicle at any time during the **Ready Window**. The **Ready Window** begins ten minutes before your scheduled pick-up time, and ends twenty minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. A driver will wait up to five minutes for you to board the ParaCruz vehicle.
4. Pay for your ride before boarding the METRO ParaCruz vehicle. Remember to have exact fare, drivers do not make change.
5. Like METRO's fixed route bus service, ParaCruz is a shared-ride service. Expect stops along the way to pick up and drop off other clients before reaching your destination.
6. If your appointment is running late, call **ParaCruz** as soon as possible. If a ParaCruz vehicle has not yet been dispatched for your ride, the dispatcher will reschedule the pick up for a later time at no additional fare cost. If you do not call to reschedule your ride, you may be charged the premium fare for a re-dispatched ride (\$16)
7. Cancel rides you will not be taking. Call **ParaCruz** at least one hour prior to your scheduled ride to avoid a "no-show."

METRO ParaCruz Customer Guide

| Table of Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| MEETING OUR CUSTOMERS' TRAVEL NEEDS | 5 |
| METRO'S ACCESSIBLE SERVICES PROGRAM..... | 5 |
| APPLYING FOR METRO PARACRUZ SERVICE | 6 |
| VISITORS..... | 7 |
| SERVICE AREA AND SERVICE HOURS | 7 |
| FARES..... | 8 |
| PREMIUM FARES..... | 8 |
| RIDE INFORMATION | 9 |
| IF YOUR APPOINTMENT IS RUNNING LATE | 11 |
| NO-SHOWS..... | 12 |
| WHEN THE VEHICLE ARRIVES | 13 |
| PASSENGER INFORMATION | 13 |
| ADDITIONAL INFORMATION..... | 14 |

METRO ParaCruz Contact Numbers

Hearing/Speech impaired: please connect through the California Relay Service by telephoning 711.

METRO ParaCruz _____(831)425-4664

METRO ParaCruz FAX_____ (831)464-5400

Paratransit Users Advocate

Central Coast Center for Independent Living _____(831)462-8720

METRO's Accessible Services Program

(Mobility Training) _____(831)423-3868

METRO Ticket and Coupon Program Specialist

(Pre-paid ParaCruz coupons)_____ (831) 425-3822

METRO Fixed Route Customer Service _____(831)425-8600

Meeting Our Customers' Travel Needs

The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) provides mass public transit within Santa Cruz County. METRO operates a fleet of safe, clean, modern and accessible buses connecting people with educational, business, medical, shopping and social destinations. People with physical, cognitive and psychiatric disabilities that prevent them from using the fixed route bus system for some or all of their transportation needs may qualify for ADA complementary paratransit service (METRO ParaCruz).

Fixed Route Bus Service

All METRO buses are accessible to better serve riders who use wheelchairs or scooters, or have difficulty getting up and down the bus steps. All major stops, intersections, and connecting points are announced to help riders recognize their bus stop or points of transfer. A limited number of seats near the front of the bus are designated as priority seating for seniors and people with disabilities. Every bus is equipped with specialized equipment to securely transport customers using wheeled mobility devices. Drivers are trained to assist with securing wheeled mobility devices.

For route and schedule information and any questions about using METRO's bus service, call METRO Customer Service at **425-8600** Monday through Friday from 7:00AM to 6:00PM.

METRO's Accessible Services Program

Many customers find that our fixed route buses provide greater flexibility and independence while being less expensive than our paratransit service. Santa Cruz METRO's **Accessible Services Program** provides free individualized instruction to older adults and people with disabilities of all ages who want to learn how to:

- Ride the bus safely and confidently
- Use passenger lifts, ramps, kneeling bus steps, and other bus features
- Handle unique mobility situations
- Make connections between buses
- Obtain a **METRO Discount Photo ID Card**
- Purchase discount fare passes
- Read the **Headways Bus Rider's Guide**
- Plan your trip using METRO's website (<http://scmtd.com>)

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

For more information or to schedule training to use the bus, call the Accessible Services Coordinator at **423-3868**.

METRO ParaCruz Service

METRO ParaCruz operates to insure that people who have a physical, cognitive, or psychiatric disability that **prevents** them from making some or all of their trips on fixed route buses have equivalent access to mass public transportation comparable to our fixed route service, as required by the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA).

METRO ParaCruz is a shared ride service provided with accessible minivans and small buses. METRO ParaCruz service operates in the same areas and during the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service. Rides must be reserved at least one day in advance of the intended trip.

Applying for METRO ParaCruz Service

To apply, call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 and request an appointment for a transit evaluation with METRO's Eligibility Coordinator. Transit evaluations normally take about 30 minutes. If you need transportation to and from the evaluation, ParaCruz will provide a ride at no charge to you. The ride must start and end within our service area. The person who interviews you will discuss your travel abilities and needs, and answer questions you may have. METRO ParaCruz service is limited to people who have been certified as meeting the strict eligibility criteria described in the ADA. If, as a result of a disability, you can never use the fixed route bus service under any conditions, your status will be determined as **"unrestricted."**

If you can use fixed route buses for some trips, you may be determined eligible but **"restricted"** from those trips that you could make using the fixed route bus system.

If, due to unforeseeable circumstances you may need transportation before completing the eligibility process, you may be provided **"immediate need"** eligibility for up to fourteen days.

If you have a limited term condition that prevents you from using METRO's fixed route bus system, **"temporary"** eligibility is available.

For a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to ride free with you, your need for a PCA must be determined necessary during your transit evaluation.

If your condition has changed since your eligibility certification and you now require an attendant, call the ParaCruz Eligibility Coordinator for more information.

Once approved to use ParaCruz, a letter and ID card will be sent to you. Your ParaCruz ID card may be used when riding on METRO's fixed route bus service. Like METRO's Senior and Disabled Discount Card, a ParaCruz ID card entitles you to a discounted fare on METRO's fixed route buses.

METRO ParaCruz eligibility is good for a maximum of three years. Prior to your expiration date, you will be asked to verify:

- If your condition still prevents you from using the fixed route bus
- your contact information
- your mobility device(s).

Customers who indicate that they have had a change in their mobility or mobility device may be asked to attend another transit evaluation.

If you wish to appeal your eligibility determination for any reason, you may initiate an appeal in writing (forms are included with eligibility denials) within 60 days of the determination. Address the appeal to:

**METRO ParaCruz Eligibility Department
2880 Research Park Dr, Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073**

Visitors

If you are eligible for ADA complementary paratransit services in another part of the country, you can use METRO ParaCruz for up to 21 days within a 365-day period. If you do not have this kind of eligibility because you live in an area without public transit service, you will be asked for documentation of your disability and verification of your place of residence.

Visitors seeking to ride more than 21 days within a 365-day period will need to participate in our evaluation process to continue to ride.

METRO ParaCruz Service Area and Service Hours

METRO ParaCruz service mirrors the fixed route bus service. ParaCruz operates in the same geographical areas, on the same days, and at the same time of day as the fixed route bus service operates.

METRO ParaCruz rides **must** begin and end within our service area, which is ¾ mile around a fixed route bus line (Commuter lines exempted)

See METRO's HEADWAYS for the most current information regarding when and where specific routes operate. <http://www.scmttd.com> .

During the summer months, METRO ParaCruz operates complementary paratransit service adjacent to fixed routes #33 and #34 on **weekdays** only, and only during the times the bus normally runs when school is in session.

You may be eligible for ParaCruz service if you live outside our service area, however, you will have to make other arrangements to travel into our service area to access ParaCruz.

METRO ParaCruz does not operate on the following holidays:

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Memorial Day | Labor Day | Independence Day |
| Thanksgiving Day | Christmas Day | New Years Day |

Fares

The one-way fare for METRO ParaCruz service is \$4.00 or \$6.00, depending on the origin and destination of your paratransit trip.

Fares are based on a 'full fare' concept, which means if a fixed route rider needed to take more than one bus to get from their origin to their destination, they would pay more than one full fare. (METRO does not provide transfers) For a paratransit trip of equal length, a second fare of \$2.00 would be paid. As such, your ride may cost up to \$6.00.

A Customer Service Representative will inform you of the fare for each ride you reserve at the time of the ride booking. Please see Premium Fares for fare information regarding will call returns and re-dispatched vehicles.

Premium Fares

- Will Call Returns - \$8.00 (See page 10 for more information)
- Re-dispatched Vehicle* - \$16.00 (See 'If Your Appointment is Running Late' on page 11 for more information)

*ParaCruz will **not** re-dispatch a vehicle for a missed trip that originates at a client's residence.

Fare must be paid each time, before you board the vehicle. Customers who do not pay the fare may not be transported. Fares can be paid as:

- **Cash.** Exact fare only. **Drivers cannot make change.**
- **Pre-paid METRO ParaCruz Coupons.**
- **Combination of cash and coupons.**

Coupons are available in denominations of \$2.00 and \$4.00.

Coupons may be purchased at the METRO Center Information Booth, by mail, or from our website (mail order, credit cards only):

<http://scmttd.com/fares/buy-passes-online>

METRO ParaCruz Coupons
METRO Center
920 Pacific Avenue, Suite 21
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Reserving Rides on METRO ParaCruz

You can reserve a METRO ParaCruz ride one to three days in advance of your trip. Reservation telephones are open seven days a week from 8:00AM until 5:00PM (except holidays). Call ParaCruz at (831) 425-4664 or connect through the California Relay Service (711)

If you **must** call on a holiday to request a ride for the **next day**, you may leave a message with your ride request and the scheduler will call you back that evening between 5:00PM and 9:00PM to confirm your ride.

A Customer Service Representative will guide you through the reservation process. Please have the following information ready when you call to make a reservation:

1. Your first and last name.
2. The date and day of the week you need to ride.
3. The street address where you need to be picked up.
4. The street address or a known landmark where you are going and the telephone number (if you have it) or your cell phone number. If you will be going to a large facility with several entrances), please specify the entrance where you would like to be dropped off or picked up at.
5. The time you would like to arrive.
6. The time you will be ready to be picked up for a return trip

If you need to telephone METRO ParaCruz for any reason, call (831) 425-4664.

Additional information may be requested by the Customer Service Representative.

The “Ready Window”

The ‘**Ready Window**’ is a 30-minute period of time that begins ten (10) minutes before your scheduled pick up time, and ends twenty minutes after your scheduled pick up time. After you have requested your trip(s), the Customer Service Representative will read your request back to you and inform you of your ready window for each one-way trip. Keep in mind when scheduling a ride, that **like the bus, METRO ParaCruz is a *shared-ride service***. The driver may pick up and drop off other passengers while you are on board, which will take more time than a direct ride to your destination. ***The ParaCruz vehicle may arrive any time within your Ready Window.***

Will-Call Returns

Please *schedule* your return trip times whenever possible. If you are taking a trip for an appointment and you do not know when you will be ready for your return trip, you may request a Will-Call return. (for a different option see ‘If Your Appointment is Running Late’ page 10) To activate your will call you will need to call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 when you are ready for your next ride. You may have to wait up to an hour or longer for the vehicle to arrive. Will-Call returns are only available until 7:00P.M. All return trips after 7:00P.M. require a definite pickup time that coincides with the fixed route times serving the return address location.

The fare for a will call return is \$8.00. A Customer Service Representative will notify you of the fare when you call to reserve your ride.

Scheduling Multiple Trips

You may request up to three (3) round-trips per telephone call. If you have more than three trips you need to schedule, please call again later to schedule the additional trips.

Subscription Service

If you need a ride to the ***same place***, at the ***same time***, at least once a week “Subscription Service” may be a good option for you. Your rides will be automatically placed on the schedule each week with the same ready window, pick up location, and destination location.

If you are receiving Subscription Service, it is important to ***let us know in advance if you don't need a ride on a particular day***. Call ParaCruz to cancel unneeded rides. Subscription rides for days ParaCruz does not operate will automatically be cancelled. On all other days, if you don't cancel you may be charged with a "no show".

Excessive cancellations or changes to subscription rides may result in removal from the subscription list.

How to Change a Scheduled Ride

If your plans change and you need to adjust your ride times, destinations, seating type or other aspects of your trip, call METRO ParaCruz ***before*** 5:00P.M. the day prior to your trip. The Customer Service Representative will try to accommodate your needs. Changes to your original ride request may result in adjustment to your ready window and ride time, subject to schedule availability.

If there are circumstances beyond your control, you may request METRO ParaCruz to change pick-up times or pick-up/drop-off locations or your seating type on the day of your ride upon request.

If Your Appointment is Running Late

ParaCruz encourages clients to reserve adequate time for their errands and appointments. However, If you are still running late and do not think that you will be ready when ParaCruz is scheduled to arrive for pick-up, call ParaCruz immediately. Every effort will be made to locate the driver who has been assigned your ride, and if the driver has not been dispatched for your ride yet, dispatch will re-direct the driver in order to accommodate a later return for you.

Because schedules are set the day before, there may be **a delay of an hour or more before another vehicle is available** to accommodate your trip. ParaCruz recommends calling at least 20 to 30 minutes before the beginning of your Ready Window. If you call before the ParaCruz vehicle has been dispatched for your original scheduled time, you will not be charged the premium fare for a re-dispatched vehicle (\$16.00)Rescheduling shall be made at the discretion of ParaCruz, within it's operating restrictions.

To Check on Your Ride

If a ParaCruz vehicle has not arrived by the end of your Ready Window, please call METRO ParaCruz and request an estimated arrival time. The dispatcher will contact the driver for you.

How to Cancel a Scheduled Ride

Call METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664 between 5:00AM and 10:30PM.

If you need to cancel a trip on the day of your ride, please call at least one hour before the beginning of your Ready Window. It is important to notify METRO ParaCruz in time so that the driver does not make an unnecessary trip, and so you are not considered a no-show.

No-Shows

No-shows occur when:

1. After scheduling a trip, you no longer need the ride and you fail to call and cancel at least one (1) hour before the start of your Ready Window
2. The ParaCruz vehicle arrives within the Ready Window, but the Operator cannot locate you at the requested pick-up location within five (5) minutes; or
3. The vehicle arrives within your Ready Window but you are not ready to go within five (5) minutes and you do not board the vehicle.

If you “No-Show” for the first leg of a trip, any subsequent leg or return trip will **not** be canceled automatically and may result in an **additional** “No-Show” assessment if not canceled.

ParaCruz service may be suspended for establishing a “pattern or practice” of missing scheduled trips which result in assessed “no-shows”. For additional information, go to <http://paracruz.com>

If a customer takes twenty-four (24) rides or more within a twelve (12) month period without being assessed a “No-Show”, he/she shall be allowed one round-trip ride free of charge.

Door-to-Door service

Door-to-door service means that the driver will escort you from the entrance of the building you are being picked up from to the entrance of your destination.

Door-to-Curb service- upon request

Door-to-curb service means that the driver will escort you from the entrance of the building you are being picked up from, to the **curb** as close as possible to the designated entrance of your destination. Door-to-Curb service **must** be requested at the time you book your ride. If the driver has concerns about your ability to get to the door of your destination, the driver may elect to escort you.

What the Driver Will Do:

- Arrive at your pick up location and wait for up to five minutes.
- Provide assistance from your front door to the vehicle. (If your pick up is from a skilled nursing or group facility, drivers will meet you in the main lobby.)
- Provide assistance into and out of the vehicle.
- Operate the wheelchair ramp or lift.
- Assist with all necessary securement systems
- Provide assistance with packages up to 30 pounds total. Driver must be able to load and unload them in one trip, without delaying the vehicle.
- Provide you with assistance to the street level entrance of your destination.

What the Driver Will Not Do:

- Drivers are not permitted to escort you beyond the entrance to any building
- Drivers will not go beyond the lobby of a skilled nursing or group facility
- Drivers may not go into your purse or wallet to get your fare.
- Drivers do not provide assistance loading or unloading objects over 30 pounds.
- Drivers are not allowed to lift passengers under any circumstances.
- Drivers are not permitted to take wheelchairs (over 30 pounds) up stairs or excessively steep ramps or driveways.
- ***Drivers do not accept tips.***

Personal Care Attendants

Some people need a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to assist with personal care or tasks. Your PCA must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you, and is not required to pay a fare. The driver does not provide assistance to the PCA beyond boarding and alighting from the vehicle. Some of the duties expected from a PCA are:

- Escort you to/from the door of your destination to/from the ParaCruz vehicle.

- Assist you in loading and unloading packages in excess of thirty (30) pounds without delaying the vehicle
- Assist you with portable life support equipment

Guests

A guest is someone you want to bring along to share the trip, not someone you must bring to assist you with personal care or tasks. You must arrange for guests at the time you book your ride. Guests must pay the same fare as you when accompanying you, and must get on and off the vehicle at the same place and time as you. You may bring one guest with you. However, any additional guests will be accommodated only if there is enough space on the vehicle.

Children

When an eligible child is traveling with an adult (who is serving as a PCA), a fare must be paid for the child and the PCA rides free. All children less than 46 inches tall must be accompanied by an adult. If traveling with an eligible fare-paying adult, children under 46 inches tall ride for free. Not more than 3 children less than 46 inches may ride free with one fare paying adult.

The California Vehicle Code requires that children under eight (8) years of age (or under four feet 9 inches (57) inches tall) must travel in an **approved child car seat or booster seat**. METRO ParaCruz has a limited number of child car seats and booster seats available. Please let the Customer Service Representative know if you need one when booking your trip. If you choose to travel using your personal car seat, METRO ParaCruz will contact you to ensure it meets the Code standards. ***An adult accompanying a child on METRO ParaCruz is responsible for the child.*** Drivers can assist with securing child car or booster seats.

Wheelchairs and Mobility Devices

METRO ParaCruz vehicles are designed to accommodate most wheelchairs and mobility aids. Wheelchairs and scooters will be secured upright in a non-reclining position, facing forward. Santa Cruz METRO allows for all mobility devices to access our vehicles regardless of weight or size, and will attempt to carry any wheelchair or mobility device that can physically and safely be accommodated on either our fixed route or paratransit equipment. As long as the device can maneuver the ramp or be picked up by the lift, and the customer can maneuver the device into the passenger area in a forward facing position for securement, boarding is permitted.

Respirators and Portable Oxygen Equipment

Portable oxygen equipment and portable respirators are permitted on METRO ParaCruz. The driver will assist you in securing this equipment on the vehicle. Drivers are not permitted to assist you in using this equipment.

Service Animals

Service Animals are welcome on METRO ParaCruz vehicles. Service animals include any dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability, including psychiatric, cognitive or mental disabilities. Service Animals must be under the full control of the owner at all times. Service Animals shall not occupy vehicles seats and must ride on the floor in either a sit or “down” position.

Pets and Companion Animals

Pets and companion animals may ride on METRO ParaCruz if they are in a carrier specifically designed for that purpose and under the full control of their owner. Drivers are not permitted to carry carriers (including the animal) heavier than 30 pounds on or off of METRO ParaCruz vehicles.

Safety Belts and Securement Devices

For your safety and security, the California Vehicle Code requires that all passengers use available restraint equipment and remain seated while riding on ParaCruz vehicles.

Packages and Personal Items

You may bring packages or personal items with you on METRO ParaCruz. No item may be greater than five (5) feet in any dimension. Drivers will assist with packages and personal items weighing no more than 30 pounds, but they must maintain sight of their vehicle. You may bring packages in excess of this limit onboard the vehicle, but you and/or your PCA or guest must be able to load and unload them in one trip and without delaying the vehicle. You may bring packages on-board in personal two-wheeled, collapsible carts.

Lost and Found Items

Lost and found items may be inquired for by calling METRO ParaCruz at 425-4664. Dispatch will update you on the status of your item.

Inclement Weather and Natural Disasters

METRO reserves the right to suspend, modify or cancel service during times of hazardous weather conditions or natural disasters which may jeopardize the safety of our passengers and employees. If service is suspended METRO ParaCruz will make every effort to contact you to advise you of service suspension.

Rider Courtesy

METRO has a list of common-sense rules to ensure the safety and comfort of all riders and drivers. We ask that you observe the following Rules of Conduct:

- Smoking is not permitted on, or within forty (40) feet of, the vehicles.
- Please travel fragrance free.
- No abusive, threatening, or obscene language or actions.
- No playing of radios, cassette tape players, mp3 players, or compact disc players (without earphones), or other noisy equipment while on-board.
- No operating or tampering with any vehicle equipment while on-board.

Suggestions, Comments, Compliments and Complaints

Feedback about METRO ParaCruz service is encouraged. If you have a comment or complaint about a particular trip or reservation experience, please call and ask to file a Customer Service Report. Comments about service policies may be directed to the Paratransit Superintendent by phone (831.425.4664), email (paracruz@scmtd.com) , or in writing to:

**Paratransit Superintendent
2880 Research Park Dr, Suite 160
Soquel, CA 95073**

To allow us to follow-up on your comments or suggestions, please be specific and provide us with the following information:

- Your name, mailing address, and telephone number.
- The date, time, and location of the incident.
- An account of your concern

All Customer Service Reports will be investigated and you will be provided with the findings of your report within thirty (30) days.

Advisory Bodies and Public Participation

The METRO Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&DTAC) are the officially recognized advisory bodies for METRO ParaCruz service.

MAC meetings are held once a month and are open to the public. For more information, contact the Executive Assistant at (831) 426-6080.

E&DTAC meetings meet on the second Tuesday of even numbered months. For more information, contact the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission by phone at (831) 460-3200 or email – info@sccrtc.org

Paratransit Users Advocate

The Paratransit Users Advocate is available to assist customers with addressing METRO ParaCruz service issues.

If you require assistance, you may contact the Paratransit Users Advocate at:

Central Coast Center for Independent Living (CCCIL)

1395 41st Avenue, Suite B

Capitola, CA 95010

Email: CCCIL@cccil.org

Website: www.cccil.org

Phone: 831-462-8720

Santa Cruz METRO's Mission Statement:

To provide a public transportation service that enhances personal mobility and creates a sustainable transportation option in Santa Cruz County through a cost-effective, reliable, accessible, safe, clean and courteous transit service.