



All the news on Access-A-Ride

Congestion Relief Zone Toll Starts January 5

Governor Hochul and the MTA announced that congestion pricing will begin January 5, 2025. That means that most vehicles entering the Congestion Relief Zone in Manhattan — local streets and avenues at or below 60 Street — will be charged a toll. The toll will result in 80,000 fewer vehicles entering the zone every day, relieving crowding and bringing safer streets and cleaner air, in what is today the most congested district in the United States. The toll revenue will also fund \$15 billion in capital improvements across the MTA network, including critical subway accessibility projects.

This program will reduce congestion, speeding up our congested streets for all users - including AAR customers. Organizational vehicles transporting people with disabilities are exempt from the toll, and that includes all AAR trips. If you also travel in a private vehicle, you can learn more about the individual disability exemption here <https://new.mta.info/tolls/congestion-relief-zone/discounts-exemptions>.

Following an MTA Board vote last week, the toll will now be ramped in over time starting at \$9 for passenger vehicles entering the zone in the daytime. You can find all the details on the program and toll structure at <https://congestionreliefzone.mta.info/>.

Preparing for the Holiday Season's Traffic Delays

Did you know that Gridlock Alerts in Manhattan can affect traffic throughout the 5 boroughs?

The Department of Transportation (DOT) identifies Gridlock Alert Days throughout the holiday season when heavy traffic is expected in Manhattan. While we understand the need for our customers to travel every day of the year, it is important to be aware of Gridlock Alert Days when scheduling your trips. Frequent street closures and heavy traffic volume affect every form of traffic flow throughout the 5 boroughs, even if you are not traveling in and out of Manhattan. Visit the DOT website to see the latest list of [Gridlock Alert Days](#) and sign up for [weekly alerts](#) which we also share on social media @nyctAAR.

Do you travel with your cell phone?

Cell phones can be the key to that important connection with your ride, especially when you are waiting at your pickup location away from your landline.

If you travel with a cell phone, Access-A-Ride can update you on your vehicle arrival on the day of your trip by either voice call, text message, or both. You can update your cell phone number and enable text message notifications through the [MY AAR app](#) (click on menu bar to update contact info in “My Account”), or by sending us an email 24/7 via <https://contact.mta.info/s/customer-feedback> or calling AAR Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM and pressing option #4.

Please make sure your cell phone is fully charged the evening before your trip and set at a volume that is easy for you to hear. Cold weather can drain your cell phone's charge so consider traveling with a compact power bank.

Do we have your correct contact details?

Giving your contact information for a specific trip to an agent during a reservation is helpful, but it does not update your phone number or address in your AAR records. We use contact information (including your email address) in your AAR records to communicate not only weather alerts, but important AAR information that impacts your use of the service such as expiration notices, new publications, policies, and program initiatives. To update your contact information, use the MY AAR app, send us an email 24/7 via <https://contact.mta.info/s/customer-feedback> or call AAR Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM and press option #4.

What is the difference between a pickup and appointment time?

Many of us often say to friends when planning a trip, pick me up or let's leave (depart) at a certain time. That is a natural thing to say, and one might think the same when using AAR. However, because this is a shared ride service and traffic delays are common, we recommend considering scheduling trips as an appointment/ arrival time. On appointment time trips, the trip is scheduled to ensure you arrive at your destination no later than the requested time. Customers may want to request a drop-off (arrive by time or appointment) earlier than the actual destination appointment to allow for security check points, elevators and other unforeseen delays.

“Arrive By” or “Appointment” time is the requested time a customer would like AAR to arrive at their destination. “Depart” or “Pickup” time is the requested time a customer would like to be picked up to travel to their destination.

When is the best time to call AAR to make a reservation?

We encourage all customers to use [MY AAR](#) to book their AAR trip or secure a taxi authorization. Using your computer, tablet or smart phone, allows you to book your trip 1-2 days before your trip up until 5 PM the day before your trip. There is no waiting to speak with an agent when you use MY AAR.

When calling AAR to book your trips or secure a taxi authorization, agents are available 7 days a week, from 7 AM – 5 PM, however our busiest time is from 3 PM – 5 PM. If you call and you are in the queue, please hold on and your call will be answered in the order it is received.

Does AAR give taxi authorizations to and from the airport?

Taxi Authorization is currently permitted for those trips with pickup and drop-off locations that are within the same borough, except on Staten Island. Taxi Authorizations between boroughs are allowed only when scheduling trips to or from John F. Kennedy Airport, LaGuardia Airport, Penn Station, Grand Central Terminal, Brooklyn Cruise Terminal, and Manhattan Cruise Terminal. Customers looking to travel to or from Port Authority Bus Terminal via taxi must call AAR directly to make travel arrangements. Taxi Authorization may be subject to some additional restrictions on specific locations. For more information, see the [October 2024 special issue of OTM](#) or visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride/policies-and-forms/taxicab-car-service-reimbursement-policy>.

Wheelchair users granted a taxi authorization can call 311 and ask for Accessible Dispatch or call the Dispatcher directly at 646-599-9999 for a wheelchair accessible taxi to travel in any of the five boroughs for the metered rate.

What do I do if my vehicle hasn't arrived, and it is after 5 PM?

While our reservations and business office closes at 5 PM, AAR's Contingency Desk operates 24/7 to assist customers on the day of their trips. If you encounter any delays or problems, please contact AAR to speak with an agent 24/7 (see option # 3 in the AAR telephone directory). Please refrain from calling the carriers directly. AAR has the resources to help you immediately while recording your requests and documenting actions taken.

You can also track your trip with your smart phone using [MY AAR](#).

How do I commend my driver or agents who went above and beyond?

Tis the season of good cheer and gratitude, so please consider sending us your commendations online at <https://contact.mta.info/s/customer-feedback>

For more information about how AAR responds to and utilizes feedback visit [volume 31 of OTM](#) (pages 4 and 5).



Safe Travels this Holiday Season

How to Submit Authorized Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Requests

Reimbursement Requests are required to:

- Be submitted within 60 days from the trip date.
- Have a completed taxi reimbursement form for each reimbursement request.
- Have required documentation, including: – meter taxi receipts. – complete receipts from car service. – ride-hailing service receipt with detailed information regarding pickup and drop off addresses and trip date as authorized by AAR along with fare, tolls, and tip break down.

Receipts that appear altered may be rejected. Receipts that are mailed to AAR without a completed taxi reimbursement form may be rejected. The reimbursement amount may be limited if a request is determined to be excessive.

Fastest Way to Submit Authorized Taxi/Car Reimbursement Requests: Online!!

- Go to the AAR website: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride>
- Scroll down to **Policies and Forms** to find the “Online Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Request” link.

- Complete the form and attach a PDF (Scan) or Photo (JPEG) of the receipt and press “submit.”
- Approved reimbursements (minus AAR Fare) may be issued in 30 days or less!

For those who prefer to mail the request/receipt to AAR, that option is still available. However, you must submit a separate form for each taxi receipt. [Taxi reimbursement forms are available online](#) to print or contact AAR (option 6) if you would like a copy of the form mailed to you. We suggest that you make copies of the form for your records and in case you need to resubmit at any time. Please remember, the Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Policy still applies whether submitting by mail or online. For more information visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride/policies-and-forms/taxicab-car-service-reimbursement-policy>

The Convenience of Subscription Service AAR

Customers who travel at least one day a week, on the same day, at the same time and to the same place each week may want to consider signing up for AAR Subscription Service. Subscription trips are automatically scheduled each week unless they are canceled or put on hold, so you do not need to call or go online to request your trip. This is a great convenience for trips to work, school, day programs, senior centers, or recurring appointments such as dialysis or physical therapy. You can request Subscription Trips with [MY AAR](#) or call AAR and press option #5. Agents are available 7-days a week from 8 AM – 5 PM.

Subscription trips are automatically cancelled on the following holidays. If you would still like to travel on these days, you must reserve your trip 1 – 2 days in advance: New Year’s Eve,

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.



AAR fare is required at the time of your trip - Exact fare in cash (drivers do not make change). Fare evasion is illegal.



AAR Identification (ID) – For your safety, please travel with your AAR ID always. Your driver may request this ID (or any photo ID) at the start of your trip. Fraudulent use of the AAR services by anyone other than the customer is subject to possible suspension of service.



Fair Fares NYC program – The program is administered by NYC Department of Social Services / Human Resources Administration for those 18 -64 and below the federal poverty level. It is not a program of MTA NYC Transit Paratransit, but AAR will be notified by HRA of those AAR customers who are eligible for ½ fare on AAR. For more information please visit: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/fairfares/index.page>



Cutting of the ribbon for a new Paratransit Assessment Center in Lower Manhattan on October 30, 2024. (L to R) Representative Dan Goldman, Acting Vice President of Paratransit Rachel Cohen, AAR Customers and Disability Advocates Ann Mannino and, Debra Greif, Paratransit Director of Eligibility Determination Samson Onilude (standing behind Debra), Paratransit Advisory Committee Chair RueZalia Watkins, MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber, and MTA Chief Accessibility Officer Quemuel Arroyo.

The new Manhattan AAR Assessment Center is the sixth center city wide (one in each borough with two in Brooklyn) providing eligibility determination process for new Access-A-Ride (AAR) customers and those looking to recertify their eligibility. This new center provides a more convenient assessment location for paratransit applicants who live or work in Manhattan (easily accessible by bus or subway) and increases capacity across the system of AAR Assessment Centers

that serve thousands of paratransit customers each month.

Paratransit provides free trips to and from assessment appointments to all applicants who request this service. So far in 2024, paratransit has processed 32,680 applications and 8,130 recertifications, making nearly an 11% increase from 2023.

More about this event, including photos and video may be found at: <https://new.mta.info/press-release/mta-announces-opening-of-paratransit-assessment-center-lower-manhattan-amid-high>

Access-A-Ride (AAR) Telephone Directory

Call 877-337-2017 toll-free from area codes in the NY Metro Area and adjacent counties / call 718-393-4999 from other area codes. Customers who are deaf/hard of hearing can use their preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service.

After an important announcement, callers will be guided to

- Press “1” for English (If “1” is not pressed, callers will hear choices in each of the respective languages):
- Press “2” for assistance in Spanish,
- Press “3” for assistance in Russian, Chinese, French Creole, Korean or Bengali, or
- Press “4” for all other languages,

Callers will then be directed to press one of the following options:

#1: To use our self-service system (automated 24/7) to check the status of your trip, cancel a reservation, or manage your subscription.

- #2: To speak with an agent to schedule a trip, cancel a trip, or change a trip that is one to two days in advance. Agents are available 7 days a week from 7 AM – 5 PM.
- #3: To speak with an agent 24/7 to check the status of today's trip(s), cancel a trip for today, or request a later pickup time for today.
- #4: To speak with an agent regarding eligibility, appeals, certification, or application questions. Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM.
- #5: To speak with an agent regarding subscription service setup, subscription changes or to place subscription on hold. Agents are available 7 days a week from 8 AM – 5 PM.
- #6: To give a compliment, make a complaint or comment, or if you have an inquiry or suggestion regarding AAR, go to mta.info and select "[Give Feedback](#)". You may also press 6 to speak with an in-take agent Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM.

Callers may repeat the prompt menu by pressing "0." They may also hold for assistance if they don't have a touch-tone phone. Conversations with AAR personnel are recorded and may be monitored.

AAR Resources

The AAR website has the most up to date AAR information, including [The 2024 Guide to AAR Paratransit Service](#). Go to MTA.INFO and click on MENU in the upper left corner to locate the link to Access-A-Ride Paratransit.

MY AAR is the fastest and most convenient way to book a trip, request an advanced taxi authorization to certain locations, create a subscription, and track your trips. A tutorial video and additional guidance can be found at <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride/booking-trips-with-my-aar>

Follow us on social media @nyctAAR.

[On the Move is posted online](#) quarterly. To ensure that you are alerted to postings and all other AAR updates, please provide AAR with a viable email address. If you don't have an email address, please consider sharing one of a trusted family member or friend who will alert you to these communications.