

Care-A-Van Service Guide

CARE-A-VAN SERVICE HOURS:

Monday to Friday
6:30am to 10:30pm

Saturday
8:00am to 10:30pm

Sunday
8:00am - 6:30pm



Table of Contents – Sarnia Care-A-Van: A Specialized Transit Service

Sarnia Care-A-Van: 4

A Specialized Transit Service 4

Background: Sarnia Care-A-Van Service..... 4

Eligibility Criteria/Guidelines 4

Service Guidelines: What We Do vs. What We Don’t Do 4

Passenger Responsibilities & General Booking Practices 5

Additional Support - Support Persons & Companions 7

Fares 8

 Transit Fare Smart Cards 8

Booking Trips - Request for Service 9

 Unaccommodated Requests/Trip Cancellations/ Changes10

 Automated Notification System11

 Automated Notification System – Review and/or Cancel your trips.....12

Vehicle Specific Information13

Care-A-Van Travel Guidelines14

 Carry-On Items (Packages, Parcels, Bundle Buggies, etc.14

 Awnings & Overhead Canopies.....14

 Private Driveways15

 Operation of Wheelchair Lift (Cutaway Vans **only**)15

 Seat Belts.....15

Sarnia Care-A-Van: **A Specialized Transit Service**

Background: Sarnia Care-A-Van Service

Sarnia Caravan is a division of Sarnia Transit, which means we operate with similar guidelines to conventional public transit within City of Sarnia. It is for this reason that trips are booked at a frequency of every 30 minutes (in line with conventional/fixed route service)

Sarnia Caravan provides transportation to eligible residents of Sarnia and Point Edward, who have a disability that prevents them from riding conventional transit all of the time or on occasion.

Sarnia Care-A-Van provides transportation services from accessible door to accessible door.

Eligibility Criteria/Guidelines

Care-A-Van services are for residents of the City of Sarnia who are unable to use conventional fixed-route transit as per the Integrated Regulations of the AODA.



***Did you know... that all of Sarnia Transit's
Conventional/Fixed Route buses are now fully accessible.***

Sarnia Care-A-Van is a registered service. Application forms are mandatory and must be renewed every 3 years.

Eligibility is considered on a case-by-case basis and is not based on a specific health condition but how a specific medical condition impacts mobility.

Service Guidelines: What We Do vs. What We Don't Do

✓ We Do: Provide transportation services (only)

- assist passengers from accessible door to accessible door. This includes assisting passengers, who use a wheelchair or mobility device, from an exterior door to an exterior door.
 - we provide assistance to ambulatory passengers who cannot board/alight steps by using our onboard wheelchairs to bring you onto and off the vehicle using our lift
 - we assist clients and their mobility devices on and off their vehicles to and from their destinations.

✗ We Do Not: Provide any additional service (other than transportation)

- provide any level of personal support services to passengers, personal or medical
- enter buildings in search of passengers, to collect passengers or to deliver passengers to appointments
- assist passengers with their carry-on items at any time. If you cannot manage your carry-on items on your own, you will need to ensure you are travelling with a support person or a companion to assist you.

Passenger Responsibilities & General Booking Practices

- 1) Medical trip bookings can be made up to 30 days in advance, non-medical trip bookings up to 7 days in advance

*****NEW: Effective January 15 2023 *****

Trips bookings can be made up to 14 days in advance, regardless of the purpose (medical vs non-medical)

Note: In previous years, recurring trips were accommodated within our service. To provide fair and equal access to service for all of our Care-A-Van clients, this option is no longer available.

- 2) Trips are **only** booked on the hour and half past the hour (example: 9:00a and 9:30a).
- 3) Passengers are required to be ready for the arrival of the Care-A-Van beginning 15 minutes prior up to 5 minutes after their scheduled booking time.

This is a 20-minute booking/arrival window, your Care-A-Van may arrive at any time during this window.

(example: Scheduled Time: 9:00a, Booking/Arrival Window: 8:45a-9:05a)

Your automated booking confirmation message (voice, SMS (text) or email) will indicate the 20 minute time frame you can expect the Care-A-Van to arrive.

Note: this window allows us the ability to co-ordinate shared trips on our service, which allows us to transport more passengers at one time

- 4) Sarnia Care-A-Van service is a shared ride service, which means you can expect to share your ride with other passengers. As a result, it may take you longer than previously anticipated from the time of pickup to the time you reach your final destination. The maximum duration for any trip is 40 minutes; the duration of your trip is dependent upon the distance of your journey as well as other passengers booked at the same time.
- 5) Upon arrival, the Care-A-Van will wait a maximum of 5 minutes for you to make your way outside and board the bus. If the 5-minute window has elapsed with no sign of a passenger, the driver will cancel the trip at the door and continue on to their next pickup. The return trip will also be cancelled. Our driver's schedules are restrictive, they do not have additional time to wait without causing delays to other passengers. Please be considerate of the driver's schedule as well as other passengers.
- 6) Please do not place any extra demands upon our drivers, by requesting the driver make additional stops that are not on their manifest. All additional stops and/or location changes must be made through the Passenger Portal or the CAV booking office. Note: location changes are

not guaranteed. Our booking system is not always able to accommodate location changes; drive time and distance plays a large factor in accommodating such changes.

- 7) Trip Cancellations: if you know in advance you do not plan to take scheduled trips, please call the Care-A-Van dispatch office or visit the online passenger portal to cancel your trips as soon as possible. We require at least 24 hours notice for cancellations by phone; cancellations made within 24 hours may be subject to a late cancellation fee.
- 8) All passengers travelling on Sarnia Care-A-Vans are required to be able to manage all carry-on items by themselves without assistance from the operator. This includes being able to safely load and unload your items on and off the vehicle. Limit shopping bags, packages and parcels to prevent impeding another person's seating & travel on the bus. If a walker is loaded with shopping or other personal belongings, it is up to the passenger to remove all of these before the driver is required to lift/stow etc.

Operators are not required to assist customers with their carry-on items at any time.

Should you choose to bring along a companion to assist you, please inform the dispatcher at the time of booking so that adequate seats on the van can be reserved. (See **Carry-on Items** under Travel Guidelines)

- 9) It is very common for buildings to have multiple entrances/exits; wherever possible, give specific location details to dispatch at the time of booking. These additional notes will be added to the trip booking notes (ie. back doors, side doors at wheelchair ramp, etc.)
- 10) Every passenger **MUST** wear a seat belt at all times. Passengers are required to buckle themselves in. Please report medical exemptions to the Care-A-Van Dispatcher, and your medical note will be documented in our system.
- 11) Report any updates to your address, phone number, Support Person designation and changes to your mobility devices directly to the dispatching office, so we can update your profile. Updates to your mobility device allows us to, potentially, make accommodations on specific styles of Care-A-Van vehicles
- 12) During the winter, please keep lanes, side walks, and especially steps, clear of snow and ice for your safety and ours.
- 13) Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted on any City vehicle.
- 14) Knowing the accessibility of destinations/locations is the client's responsibility.

Additional Support - Support Persons & Companions

During the application process, your health care professional will indicate whether a Support Person, as defined under the AODA, is required at all times (always), occasionally or not at all (never).

Your support person designation will be clearly marked on your Care-A-Van registration card.

Support Person – “Yes, always”

If you have been registered as requiring a Support Person ***at all times***, it is mandatory that a Support Person be present at the time of pick up and must accompany you for the duration of your trip. If a support person is not present at the time of pickup, Sarnia Care-A-Van will not be able to proceed with your trip(s) as planned. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Mandatory Support Person(s) travel free of charge on our buses when accompanying a registered passenger.

Support Person – “Occasionally, some of the time”

If you have been registered as requiring a Support Person ***occasionally***, it is your responsibility to inform dispatch at the time of booking that someone will be accompanying you. If a Support Person is not present at the time of pickup, your trip may continue as booked; no additional assistance will be provided by the driver due to the absence of support.

Occasional Support Person(s) travel free of charge on our buses when accompanying a registered passenger.

Support Person – “No, Never”

If you have been registered as ***never*** requiring a Support Person but you feel you need assistance on your trip, you may opt travel with a companion. Please inform dispatch at the time of booking to ensure there is enough space on the van for an additional passenger.

Companions must pay full fare for their trip(s), when accompanying registered passengers.

Companions

Companions may be added to your trips provided there is space available on the bus. Please inform dispatch at the time of booking to ensure there is enough space on the van for an additional passenger.

Companions must pay full fare for their trip(s), when accompanying registered passenger.

Fares

Fares must be paid at the time of boarding through the farebox or through our smartcard system; both of which are located at the front of every vehicle.

It is the passenger's responsibility to ensure they have exact change as our drivers do not have access to cash.

For our up-to-date fare structure:

- 1) Visit our website at <https://www.sarnia.ca/transit-fares/>
- 2) Call Sarnia Transit 519-336-3271

Transit Fare Smart Cards

In 2021, the City of Sarnia has launched a smart card system.

The system includes reloadable contactless cards that allows any transit fare to be loaded including cash, tickets, monthly passes and semester passes; they offer convenience as you can load them from the comfort of your own home.

If lost or stolen, these passes are replaceable.

Smart Cards can be used on conventional/fixed route Sarnia Transit buses and Sarnia Care-A-Van buses.

For more information:

Visit www.sarnia.ca

Email cav@sarnia.ca or transit@sarnia.ca

Booking Trips - Request for Service

1) Online Passenger Portal

Visit our Online passenger Portal at
<https://booksarniacareavan.tripsarkhost.com>

Refer to the instruction booklet sent in our registration package for instruction on how to register your account and begin booking trips

- Bookings can be made through the Passenger Portal 7 days a week, Sunday through Saturday from 5am - 12midnight
- Trip requests can be made in advance anywhere from 2 hours up to 14 days (including same day and next day trip requests)
- Allows you to view details of all your upcoming trips at your convenience
- Allows trip cancellations with at least 2 hours in advance penalty free

2) Telephone Care-A-Van Booking & Dispatch Office

Telephone the Dispatch Office at (519) 336-3789

Leave a voicemail message with the following information:

- your name
- the date of your request
- your destination location
- desired pickup time
- return destination location
- desired return time

Your booking will be scheduled and you will receive an automated notification via Voice Call, SMS(Text message) or Email message

Our automated notification system cannot process incomplete requests or requests lacking critical information.

- Bookings can be made through Care-A-Van Dispatch Office Monday-Friday 9am – 3pm
- Trip requests can be made in advance anywhere from 2 days up to 14 days
*Note: same day/next day trip requests can only be made through our online Passenger Portal
- Our new system automatically sends out automated notifications the day before your booking

PLEASE NOTE:

Our booking office will no longer re-confirm trips. It is the client's responsibility to record their bookings upon receiving their confirmations.

On days when we receive an increased number of booking requests by phone, it can take up to 48 hours to receive your trip notification (Weekends not included)

Unaccommodated Requests/Trip Cancellations/Time & Location Changes

If you know in advance you do not plan to take scheduled trips, please call the Care-A-Van dispatch office or visit the online passenger portal to cancel your trips as soon as possible. Cancelling your trips in advance allows other clients the opportunity to book those rides.

Trip cancellations must be called-in to the Care-A-Van Dispatch office at least 24-hours in advance. For cancellations made through the dispatching line at 519-336-3789; voicemail messages are date/time stamped, so you will not incur a penalty fee if the call is received in sufficient time.

Trip cancellations and location changes made through the passenger portal can be made at any time up to 2 hours prior to your trip.

Note: proposed location changes are not guaranteed. It is important to request a change to your booking through PP or dispatch office, as our booking system is not always able to accommodate location changes; drive time and distance plays a large factor in accommodating such changes.

Phone cancellations within 24 hours, cancellations at the door OR No Shows (you are not there to take your ride) will result in a penalty fee. The Penalty Fee is the equivalent of regular CASH FARE in effect at that time and is payable on your next Care-A-Van trip.

If the fee is not paid when you next board the bus you will not be allowed to book again until the fee is paid.

Consistently cancelled and/or truant trips will be monitored on a regular basis. Each situation will be assessed individually but may result in a discontinuation or limitation of service. We need to be respectful of everyone's schedules, including drivers as well as other passengers.

Automated Notification System

In 2022, we introduced our automated notification system.

This new system allows for more timely responses to your booking requests

There are 3 options available: Voice Call, SMS/Text Message, Email Message

Voice Calls

Voice Call for Trip Confirmations & Trip Cancellations

- **You will receive separate voice calls for each leg of a trip booked.**
- Each call will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival window, pickup location and drop off location

Voice Call for Trip Reminders

- **The day prior to your booked trip, you will receive one voice calls .**
- This call will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival windows, pickup locations and drop off locations
- It also provides you with the options of pressing 1 to confirm your trip, 2 to cancel your trip and * to repeat the message

SMS/Text Messages

SMS/Text Message for Trip Confirmations & Trip Cancellations

- **You will receive separate messages for each leg of a trip booked.**
- Each message will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival window, pickup location and drop off location

SMS/Text Message for Trip Reminders

- **The day prior to your booked trip, you will receive one message**
- This message will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival windows, pickup locations and drop off locations

Email Messages

Email Messages for Trip Confirmations & Trip Cancellations

- **You will receive separate messages for each leg of a trip booked.**
- Each message will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival window, pickup location and drop off location

Email Messages for Trip Reminders

- **The day prior to your booked trip, you will receive one message**
- This message will give you the following details of your trip: date, booking/arrival windows, pickup locations and drop off locations

You must select at least one of these methods; however, you can elect to have all of these options added to your passenger profile too. If you wish to make any changes to your notification preferences, please inform the Dispatch office.

Automated Notification System – How to Review and/or Cancel your trips

In addition to receiving notifications, you now have the ability of reviewing and cancelling your trips through this system. This system will respond instantly and be able to give you the information you are looking for at your convenience.

By calling or texting this number (226-784-5355), you can now review and/or cancel any of your upcoming trips at any time of the day, any day of the week.

Voice Calls

Dial 226-784-5355

- 1) You will be prompted to enter your **Client Code**, followed by #
Enter your Care-A-Van registration number (example: 11113#)
- 2) You will then be prompted to enter your **Password**, followed by #
Enter your Care-A-Van registration number (example: 11113#)

*** by default, your password is the same as your Client Code**

- 3) Follow through the telephone prompts to review or cancel any upcoming trips

Please see back cover of this guide for helpful tips on how to use this system

SMS/Text Messages

Text “Hi” to 226-784-5355

- 1) You will be prompted to enter your **Client Code**[space]**Password**
Enter your Care-A-Van registration number, space, password
(example: 1234 1234)

*** by default, all passwords are the same as your Client Code**

- 2) A message showing your next booked trip will appear
- 3) Follow through screen prompts for more information, to review or cancel any upcoming trips

Please see back cover of this guide for helpful tips on how to use this system

Vehicle Specific Information

Our Care-A-Van Vehicles include:

ProMasters/Arbocs

- Capacity for up to 10 ambulatory passengers and 2 passengers in wheelchairs.
- All of these vehicles have a ramp at the side and 1 style has a ramp at both the side and the rear of the bus.

Ford Cutaways

- Capacity for: 8 ambulatory passengers and 2 passengers in wheelchairs.
- These vehicles have a lift side/rear of the bus
- Lift capacity: accommodates wheelchairs up to 34" wide and up to 800lbs

Care-A-Van Travel Guidelines

Carry-On Items (Packages, Parcels, Bundle Buggies, Strollers and Large Items)

All persons travelling on Sarnia Care-A-Van are required to be able to manage all carry-on items, including all of those listed below, by themselves without assistance from the operator. This includes being able to safely load and unload your items on and off the vehicle.

Operators are not required to assist customers with their carry-on items at any time.

If you cannot manage your carry-on items on your own, you will need to ensure you are travelling with a support person or a companion to assist you.

Sarnia Transit has established maximums for each carry-on item:

Personal Item = 1 per customer

Shopping Bag = 4 per customer

Bundle Buggy = 1 per customer

Grand total of carry-on items per customer cannot exceed a total of 5 items from the above list.

Carry-on items are not permitted to protrude from a mobility aid or assistive device as this may interfere with the safe securement of the device.

Bundle buggies are permitted on Sarnia Care-A-Van services but must be able to be safely secured by the operator to ensure it is not restricting or impeding the space of other customers.

Shopping carts belonging to grocery stores or supermarkets will not be permitted on Sarnia Care-A-Van vehicles.

When travelling with a backpack, customers are asked to either place the backpack on their lap or the floor when travelling to minimize the space and impact to other customers.

Large or bulk items are not permitted on Sarnia Care-A-Van services as they may obstruct, interfere or present a safety risk. This may include appliances, large electronic devices such as TV's, large moving boxes, furniture, large carts, or any other bulky item that requires an amount of space equal to or larger than the space of one passenger.

If any item is identified by the operator as a potential safety risk, the operator has the right to refuse an item. The City of Sarnia (Sarnia Care-A-Van) is not responsible for any damages to carry-on items.

Awnings & Overhead Canopies

Sarnia Care-A-Van vehicles do not travel or stand under any overhead canopies or structures due to height restrictions (maximum headroom)

Private Driveways

We do not enter private driveways where there is nowhere to turn around. In cases where the customer is unable to walk from the residence to the vehicle, we can transport the customer from the residence to the vehicle in our wheelchair, as long as the way is clear to do so. This accommodation is only available on our lift-equipped vehicles. Please inform dispatch in advance if this special accommodation is required and we will make the appropriate changes to your client profile.

Operation of Wheelchair Lift (Cutaway Vans **only**)

Only the Driver/Operator will operate the lift of the vehicle under any circumstances.

No passenger is to be raised or lowered while standing on the lift platform. In the event that a passenger cannot climb the stairs of these vehicles, they are to be seated in our manual wheelchair and brought onto and off of the van using the lift.

The wheelchair lifts are designed to carry their maximum load at the rear of the ramp, at the pivot points. Excess weight in the frontal portion of the lift could cause lift failure, thereby dropping the passenger to the ground. Centre-weighted motorized wheelchairs can be driven onto the lift platform, ensuring the chair is as close to the vehicle as possible.

Rear-weighted wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs and scooters are always to be reversed onto the lift platform with the majority of the weight closest to the vehicle.

All passengers must always be in the forward-facing position for lowering and exiting the vehicle.

It is the client's responsibility to drive or reverse their motorized wheelchair/scooter onto the lift platform; the Driver/Operator may assist with this process only as a guide.

The safety belt will always be secured prior to operating the lift on all vehicles.

Seat Belts

All passengers are to be always properly seat-belted; this applies to **all** passengers, whether in a wheelchair/scooter and regular bus seats. It is the passenger's responsibility to buckle themselves in. The vehicle is not to be moved until all passengers are securely belted to their seats and the vehicle will be operated with the headlights on at all times. In addition, four-way flashers will be used when passengers are being loaded or unloaded from the vehicle. All wheelchairs will be secured prior to commencing the trip.

Sarnia Care-A-Van recommends that all passengers wear seat belts at all times.

If a passenger declines wearing a seat belt, the City of Sarnia (Sarnia Care-A-Van) will not be held responsible for any personal injury.

Notifications System Reference Sheet

Review and/or Cancel your trips
Call or Text 226-784-5355

From a TELEPHONE, dial **226-784-5355**

Enter your client code, followed by #
(this is your CAV registration number)

Enter your password, followed by #
(this is also your CAV registration number)

**Follow telephone prompts to review or cancel
upcoming trips**

From a CELL PHONE, text "**Hi**" to **226-784-5355**

Enter your client code followed by a space and your password
*your client code and password are the same as your CAV
registration number (**example: 1234 1234**)

Text: **info #** (example: info 2)... this will give you the
details of that trip

Text: **more** (example: more) ... this will give you details of
your next booking

Text: **list <date>** (example: list dec 19) ... this will show
you what trips you have booked on that date

Text: **?** (example: ?) ... this will give you a menu of options
to choose from