

New Accessible Taxis In RI Will Improve Mobility

Great News....in March and April of 2012, thirteen new accessible taxis will be introduced to RI, greatly improving access to transportation for people who are mobility impaired. Members of the RI Cross Disability Coalition have been advocating for accessible taxis in RI along with many families of individuals who are mobility impaired.

These vehicles have been purchased by local taxi companies, with support from the Federal Transit Administration's New Freedom program. The RI Public Transit Authority and the RI Division of Public Utilities and Carriers also provided support for these vehicles.



The taxis will serve seventeen communities in Rhode Island, including Providence, Newport and Woonsocket. T.F. Green Airport in Warwick will also be served.

The accessible taxis operate just like any other licensed taxicabs. Rides are arranged by calling the taxi company licensed to operate. Or, travelers may hail a cab on the street (*if one is available*). If a return trip begins outside the cab company's licensed territory, it must be arranged in advance and made within 24 hours. Passengers must have a return trip receipt in order to be picked up outside any company's service area.

The new taxis are modified mini-vans. Passengers board via a ramp which extends from the rear of the vehicle. Inside the taxi, the vehicle floor has been specially lowered to comfortably accommodate passengers seated in a wheelchair or scooter. All passengers ride in a forward-facing position.

Taxi drivers have been specially trained to assist you on the ramp, and to secure mobility devices within the vehicle to prevent movement during travel. Passengers using both motorized and non-motorized wheelchairs and scooters can board the taxis. The vehicle ramp and rear compartment can accommodate mobility devices up to 30 inches wide with a total weight of 750 pounds (passenger plus device). Seating for up to four additional taxi passengers is available on the second row bench seat and front passenger seat.

Standard Rhode Island taxi rates will apply to any service provided with these vehicles. For example, a five-mile trip will cost about \$12.00. There are no discounts, even if you are eligible for RIPTA ADA services or other transportation through The Ride Program.

Operating hours vary by company and the number of accessible taxis is limited, so it is best to call and reserve a vehicle in advance.

For more information, call Airport Taxi at 401-737-2868.