



## SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

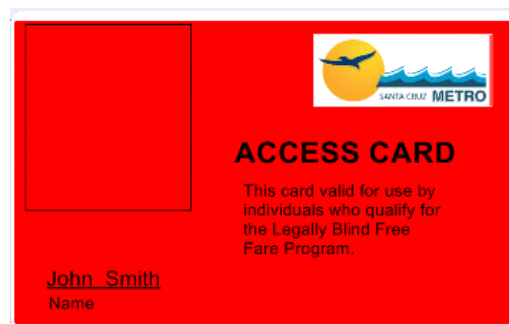
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Beginning on Friday, November 1, legally blind customers will be allowed to ride Santa Cruz METRO local and Highway 17 Express buses for free. This free fare will remain in place until METRO terminates the program.

- Customers who can easily be visually identified as blind (carry a white cane or use a guide dog) will **not** be required to obtain a special card verifying their eligibility for the Free Fare Program (though they can obtain a card if they wish to).
- Customers who do not present as blind or visually impaired on sight may request the Free Fare. The Bus Operator can
  1. allow them on based on their visual assessment.
  2. allow them on as an exception but advise them to obtain the Access Card before riding again
  3. refuse them service without payment - this option should be used as a last resort and only if an operator has already advised a customer to obtain an Access Card and that customer has failed to do so.

Customers who cannot be easily visually identified as blind will be politely asked to obtain an Access Card. This card may be obtained in the same way an Elderly and Disabled Discount Card is obtained.

An example of the Access Card is as shown:



To obtain an Access Card the customer should do the following things:

1. The customer may download the form from the website, contact Customer Service to pick up a copy of the form in person, or request that it be emailed to them.
2. Like the Discount certification form, the customer may take it to his or her medical provider to be completed before returning it to Customer Service to obtain his or her Access Card.
3. If the customer is unable to get to his or her medical provider, the customer may schedule an appointment with the Eligibility Coordinator for an assessment and certification.
4. If the customer is already eligible to use Paratransit Service due to a visual impairment, Customer Service can waive the form once confirming with ParaCruz.
5. Once the customer has been verified, Customer Service will print an Access Card.
6. There is no charge to obtain the card.



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### **Out of Service Area Customers**

Out-of-service area visitors may ride the system for free without obtaining an Access Card. Legally Blind Customers visiting from out of service area may also tell the bus operator they can ride free on the Free Fare Program. If the operator cannot visually confirm that they are legally blind (e.g. the out-of-service area visitor travels with guide dog or white cane), they may ask the customer to present the Discount card for the county/region they live in. That card will act as the customer's Access Card during their visit.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Q: Who is allowed to ride for free on Santa Cruz METRO's system?

A: Customers who are legally blind may ride for free anywhere Santa Cruz METRO operates. For a definition of legal blindness, please see Policy AR-1028 Discount Fare Program Policy, which can be found on METRO's website.

Q: Do you need a pass to ride for free?

A: If an operator can visually assess you to be blind (for example, you travel with a guide dog or carry a white cane) they can allow you on without the Access Card. If your visual impairment cannot be determined on sight, a bus operator may ask you to apply for an Access Card through Customer Service.

Q: How do I apply for a card?

A: The certification of legal blindness application can be downloaded on Santa Cruz METRO's website. Customers can also call or visit Customer Service to receive an application. The application can be certified by a medical provider (doctor, optometrist, ophthalmologist, occupational therapist, etc.), or by making an appointment with METRO's Eligibility Coordinator or other METRO Staff. Customers with visual impairments who are already eligible for ParaCruz Service can ask that the Eligibility Coordinator certify them automatically, eliminating the requirement for an in-person appointment.

Q: How do I get my card?

A: Once you have completed the eligibility certification, you will need to visit Santa Cruz METRO Customer Service at either the Downtown Santa Cruz METRO Pacific Center or the Watsonville Transit Center to receive your Access Card.

Q: What do I do when I board the bus?

A: Tell the operator that you are allowed to ride free as part of the Free Fare Program. If asked by the operator, present your Access Card. Then enjoy your ride!



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**ATTACHMENT C: CONFIRMATION OF LEGAL BLINDNESS**

The federal definition of "blindness" under Title XVI of the Social Security Act currently states:

(2)"An individual shall be considered to be blind for purposes of this title if he has central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens. An eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees shall be considered for purposes of the first sentence of this subsection as having a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less."

[http://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/ssact/title16/1614.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title16/1614.htm)

*Translation: If you wear your glasses or contacts (or both) and then are measured on an eye chart as seeing 20/200 or less, or if the width of vision for both your eyes totals an arc of 20 degrees or less, you are legally blind according to this federal definition.*

**APPLICANT:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Best corrected vision:**

OD (right eye) \_\_\_\_\_ OS (left eye) \_\_\_\_\_ OU (both eyes) \_\_\_\_\_

**Width of Visual Field (in degrees):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific eye condition(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFYING AUTHORITY:**

I certify that: \_\_\_\_\_ is legally blind in both eyes as specified in the federal definition quoted above.

(Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Title) \_\_\_\_\_