

14. HALF FARE

BASIC REQUIREMENT

For fixed route service supported with Section 5307 assistance, fares charged elderly persons, persons with disabilities or an individual presenting a Medicare card during off peak hours will not be more than half the peak hour fare.

AREAS TO BE EXAMINED

1. *Half Fares*
2. *Proof of Eligibility*
3. *Internal and Public Information*
4. *Oversight*

REFERENCES

1. [49 USC Chapter 53](#), Federal Transit Laws
2. [49 CFR Part 18](#), "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments"
3. [49 CFR Part 609](#), "Transportation for Elderly and Handicapped Persons"
3. [FTA Circular 9030.1D](#), "Urbanized Area Formula Program: Program Guidance and Application Instructions"

USEFUL WEB LINKS

[Medicare Eligibility](#)

QUESTIONS FOR THE REVIEW

1. *Does the grantee allow elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with a Medicare card to pay, during off peak hours, one half the fare generally paid during peak hours?*
2. *What is the full fare? What is the half fare? During what hours are half fares available (all hours or off peak hours only)? Are there any fixed route services not included in the half fare program?*

EXPLANATION

Fares charged elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders during off peak hours for Section 5307 funded fixed route transportation must not be more than half the peak hours fare. Though many do, grantees are not required to offer half fares on payment options such as monthly passes. If there are services such as neighborhood circulator and shuttle services with fares that are different from the grantee's fare for its regular local service, separate half fares are needed for each type of service.

The requirement is applicable to:

- All fixed route services, including service to sporting events, that operate in both peak and off peak hours and use or involve facilities and equipment financed with Section 5307 funds, whether the services are provided by the grantee directly, by a contractor, by a subrecipient, or by another entity that leases facilities and/or equipment from the grantee
- Any express and commuter service that operates beyond peak hours
- Fixed route services for which the grantee has not defined peak hours

This requirement is not applicable to:

- Demand responsive services, including route deviation services
- Services that operate only during peak hours, such as express and commuter routes
- Services that operate only in the off peak hours (e.g., lunchtime circulators and weekend routes to sporting events)
- Services funded with other FTA assistance that do not use Section 5307 funded equipment or are not operated out of Section 5307 funded facilities

"Elderly" by FTA regulations is to "at a minimum, include all persons 65 years of age or over." Grantees are permitted to use a definition that extends this fare to younger (e.g., 62 and over) persons. Persons with disabilities are defined by FTA as persons "who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including any individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capabilities), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, mass transportation service or a mass transportation facility."

Medicare is available for people age 65 or older, younger people with disabilities, and people with end stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure required dialysis or transplant).

The grantee determines its peak hours. Peak hours can be seasonal. If the grantee determines it is not large enough, or demand is not strong enough, to identify or justify peak hour service, then its entire service should be defined as "off peak." In this instance, the grantee has two options:

- Review ridership data and determine the peak ridership hours and develop a policy for half fare, or
- Choose not to determine a peak period and offer half fares during all hours.

REFERENCE

[49 USC Chapter 53](#), Section 5307 (d)(1)(D)
[49 CFR 609.23](#)
[FTA C 9030.1D](#), Ch. 1V, Section 8d

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

General public information that presents the grantee's fare structure will be examined. Common examples are the system map, pocket timetables, signs within the system (e.g., decals on fareboxes, ticket vending machine decals and menus, signs in stations, and car cards on vehicles) and the website. Other sources are brochures describing the fare structure and the reduced fare program, and application forms for the reduced fare program or special ID cards. Documents such as fare policies/tariffs and internal policy memoranda may also describe the program.

If the grantee limits half fares to off peak hours, the reviewer will verify that the definition of "off peak" is reasonable. For example, if the grantee has both peak and off peak fares in its overall fare structure, the off peak time periods for the general public and the half fare program should be defined consistently. The times should be consistent with the hours

reported to NTD. The reviewer also will ensure that the grantee has not limited acceptance of a Medicare card to seniors only.

DETERMINATION

The grantee is deficient if it charges more than one half the peak hour fare during off peak hours.

The grantee is deficient if it does not provide a half fare for a service that should be included.

SUGGESTED CORRECTIVE ACTION

The grantee will be directed to submit to the FTA regional office documentation that it has implemented a half fare program.

The grantee will be directed to provide the FTA regional office with a plan and schedule for correcting its half fare program.

- 3. For the half fare, what proof of eligibility is required at time of boarding for elderly persons? For persons with disabilities? For Medicare cardholders? If a special identification card is accepted as the sole basis for determining some or all eligibility, what are the procedures for obtaining the card? Does the grantee require any additional information from a Medicare cardholder? If yes, what?*

EXPLANATION

The half fare program, as applied, may require passengers to show proof of eligibility when they pay their fare in order to receive the half fare. Examples of proof of eligibility include a driver's license, Medicare card, special identification card, and ADA eligibility card. The grantee may require more than one piece of identification for determining age or disability-related qualifications.

A grantee may require passengers to obtain a special identification card as the sole basis for paying the half fare. A valid Medicare card must be considered sufficient proof of eligibility for obtaining the identification card. Obtaining a special identification card must be relatively easy. For example, though not strictly prohibited, requiring individuals to travel to a single office, which may be inconveniently located, is not consistent with the intent of this requirement.

In order to ensure that the person presenting a Medicare card is the authorized individual, the grantee may request proof of identity (another card with a photograph). There is no specific prohibition

against this, provided the grantee is not asking for further proof of eligibility from the Medicare cardholder but is only checking the validity of the Medicare card.

REFERENCE

[49 USC Chapter 53](#), Section 5307 (d)(1)(D)
[49 CFR 609.23](#)
[FTA C 9030.1D](#), Ch. IV, Section 8.d

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The reviewer will examine public informational materials (described above) and application materials for special identification cards for a description of the process and the identification necessary to qualify for half fare. The reviewer also will discuss the application procedures with the grantee to ascertain whether the program is implemented properly.

DETERMINATION

The grantee is deficient if the location(s) for obtaining a special identification card are not accessible by transit, open during convenient hours, and publicized.

The grantee is deficient if it does not accept a Medicare card as the basis for payment of half fare or as a means to obtain a special identification card. The grantee is deficient if it requires more than a Medicare card as proof of eligibility for half fares.

SUGGESTED CORRECTIVE ACTION

The grantee will be directed to submit a plan to the FTA regional office for making passengers aware of any need for a special identification card and enabling identification cards to be easily obtained.

The grantee will be directed to submit documentation to the FTA regional office that it accepts a Medicare card as proof of eligibility for the half fare program.

- 4. How has the grantee informed its employees and the public that half fares are available? Do internal and external materials describing fares show half fares and eligibility?*

EXPLANATION

A policy is not effective unless it is communicated to those who will carry it out and to those who can take advantage of it. Training documents and communication with operators and others responsible for implementing the fare program should demonstrate that the grantee has notified staff of the program and included the correct information. Public information should include half fare information, including Medicare eligibility, if it contains fare information. For example, if a brochure says the fare to ride the bus is \$1.00, it also should say that the fare

for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders is \$0.50 during off peak hours.

Though it is not necessary to have a separate fare category for Medicare cardholders, the grantee's readily available public information should be clear that Medicare cards are accepted as proof of eligibility for the half fare program, including for persons who are not elderly.

REFERENCE

[49 USC Chapter 53](#), Section 5307(d)(1)(D)
[49 CFR 609.23](#)
[FTA C 9030.1D](#), Ch. IV, Section 8.d

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Both internal and public information will be examined such as, training documents, communication with drivers (e.g., driver bulletins) and others responsible for implementing the fare program, system maps, route timetables, and general system fare brochures. Other common public information items that may be examined include the website, ticket vending machine decals and menus, station signs, and farebox decals to see that they include the proper information for half fares.

DETERMINATION

The grantee is deficient if internal or public information regarding half fares is incomplete or does not include half fare information.

The grantee is deficient if half fare information is included but Medicare eligibility is not mentioned.

SUGGESTED CORRECTIVE ACTION

The grantee will be directed to submit to the FTA regional office documentation that it has made complete information on the half fare program available where fare information is presented.

The grantee will be directed to submit to the FTA regional office the revised text for its public information (e.g., maps and timetables), for the next reprint. Give grantees up to a year to reprint materials.

The grantee will be directed to submit to the FTA regional office documentation that it has updated and redistributed the materials for drivers and other operating personnel which did not convey the current program requirements.

5. *Do subrecipients, contractors, and lessees operating fixed route service supported with Section 5307 funds allow elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with a Medicare card to pay, during off peak hours, one half the fare generally paid during peak hours? How does the grantee ensure that they comply with half fare requirements?*

EXPLANATION

The grantee is responsible for ensuring that subrecipients, contractors, and lessees that operate services to which the half fare requirement applies comply. The oversight program should ensure that a half fare is offered for applicable services during off peak hours, the definition of off peak hours is reasonable, identification requirements ensure that eligible persons can obtain the half fare, and internal and public fare information show the half fare and eligibility, including Medicare cardholder eligibility.

REFERENCE

[49 USC Ch. 53](#), Section 5307(d)(1)(D)
[49 CFR 18.37 and 18.40](#)
[49 CFR 609.23](#)
[FTA C 9030.1D](#), Ch. IV, Section 8.d

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The review will examine the grantee's monitoring tools, oversight files, and fare material for subrecipients, contractors, and lessees. During site visits, the half fare program will be discussed. The reviewer also will examine fare information on vehicles and stations, in employee training information, in brochures, and other printed information, and on the entity's website.

DETERMINATION

The grantee is deficient if procedures are inadequate to ensure that subrecipients, contractors, and lessees comply with half fare requirements.

SUGGESTED CORRECTIVE ACTION

The grantee will be directed to submit to the FTA regional office procedures for ensuring that subrecipients, contractors, and lessees comply with half fare requirements.