

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Revised Custom Registration Process

Why is BC Transit implementing a new registration process for handyDART service?

BC Transit is implementing the revised custom registration process in order to bring it into alignment with current best practices in use across Canada. This new process will enhance the quality and personalization of handyDART registration so that it is based on a conversation rather than a paper form.

As the population continues to grow, it is increasingly essential that handyDART resources are focused on the customers who require this specialized service, and that fully accessible conventional transit buses are used to their full capabilities. The revised custom registration process includes the use of an in-person assessment with a mobility coordinator, and it is designed to match the applicant's needs with the most appropriate type of transit services available.

Is this type of process being used in other transit systems?

Yes. An increasing number of transit systems across North America are moving away from a paper-based application to a more accurate and personalized method of registering custom transit riders. The revised custom registration process was successfully piloted in two of BC Transit's systems – Vernon Regional and the Comox Valley – in 2014.

Why do I need to be assessed?

There are several reasons why BC Transit has chosen to use in-person assessments for customers applying for handyDART services.

1. To make sure that you are matched with the public transit option(s) that best meet your needs.

Some customers may not be aware of the full scope of accessible services offered in their transit system. These assessments are intended to determine your abilities related to the use of public transit and also to provide you with information about the variety of transit options that may be open to you.

2. To provide you with individualized education about how to safely use BC Transit's systems (including handyDART).

It is important that handyDART customers understand how to use the system. During the assessment, the therapist will talk with you about things such as:

- How to book a handyDART trip

- How to wait for your ride
- How the system works and what to expect on board the bus
- The roles and responsibilities of a handyDART driver
- The full range of transit options available, including fully accessible conventional transit buses

The therapist will also spend time answering any questions you may have.

3. To ensure your safety by assessing the equipment you may use on handyDART.

We ask that customers bring their mobility equipment (walker, wheelchair, scooter or cane) with them to the appointment. The therapist will check your equipment and make sure that it is safe to be used while traveling on public transit.

How long is the assessment?

Most assessments take less than one hour.

What does the assessment cost?

The assessment is free of charge to anyone who has applied for handyDART services.

Can I bring a family member or caregiver?

We encourage you to bring a family member, friend or caregiver to the assessment with you, especially if that person would be helpful in providing relevant information.

What should I bring to the assessment?

- You should bring all the mobility equipment that you use when out in the community (i.e. walker, cane, power or electric wheelchair, scooter).
- Wear or bring clothes that are suitable for going outdoors.

What will happen at the assessment?

The therapist will spend time talking with you about the difficulties that you experience getting around in the community. You may be asked about relevant medical diagnoses (that might make it difficult for you to access the regular transit system). You may be asked about changes in your physical or

cognitive (thinking) abilities. If you wish, you may invite a family member or caregiver to attend and help to provide this information.

If you have physical difficulties, there will be an assessment of your mobility. The therapist will observe how you get around (standing up/sitting down, walking, using your mobility aid(s) or using your wheelchair or scooter).

If you have cognitive or emotional difficulties that affect your ability to get around in the community, the therapist may use some special tests designed to assess whether you can safely use the bus.

Generally the assessments also include a walk/roll outdoors so that the therapist can see how you manage getting around in the community. Make sure that you bring clothing appropriate for the weather on the day of your assessment.

Will it be unpleasant?

No! The therapists are there to make the experience a pleasant one. Based on follow-up telephone surveys with applicants who participated in an in-person assessment in Vernon Regional, all those surveyed found it to be a positive and respectful experience.

Is there an option for the therapist to assess me in my home or residential care facility?

We understand that a trip to and from the assessment can be inconvenient for some people; however, as this is an assessment that directly relates to accessing the community (through the use of public transit), it is most appropriate to have an assessment within the community. If you do not have a ride to and from the clinic, handyDART will provide the transportation free-of-charge. This provides you with an opportunity to trial the system that you are applying to use, and discuss any questions or challenges with the therapist once you arrive.

I live in an assisted living facility and have already had an assessment done by a medical practitioner, so why do I need an assessment for handyDART services?

The assessments for handyDART service are transit-specific and focus on mobility needs related to public transportation. This assessment process also reviews safety and suitability of mobility aids on public transit and includes education about all local transit service available in your area.

What if I'm having a better day than usual on my assessment day?

The therapists responsible for conducting the assessments have extensive experience and education regarding assessment and treatment of individuals with a wide variety of conditions and impairments. All of the therapists have Masters Degrees in occupational therapy, and specialize in

understanding how a condition, disease or impairment affects a person's function. When assessing function, the full picture is always considered. The OTs rely heavily on information that you provide us with during the interview, and they are aware of the typical functional difficulties (and fluctuations in function) that occur with many medical conditions.

When will I hear back?

BC Transit will make every effort to ensure that you receive a letter outlining your eligibility for handyDART service within 14 days of your assessment.