



Procedures for Investigating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complaints

Background:

The COMET has established a process for investigating and resolving complaints alleging discrimination based on disability regarding The COMET's public transportation services pursuant to 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, 38 and 39. These regulations implement provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Copies of these procedures are available at The COMET's main office, on the website and the Downtown Transit Center.

ADA Coordinator

The COMET's ADA Coordinator (currently the Compliance and Civil Rights Officer) or his/her designee shall be responsible for overseeing investigations and responses to complaints of discrimination based on disability. Upon request, The COMET shall provide complainants the name and phone number of The COMET employee responsible for investigating the complaint.

Filing a Complaint

Complaints regarding prohibited discrimination based on disability must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged incident using the attached Complaint Form or using another format to provide the information below:

- Complainant's name, address, phone number,
- Route number, date, time, location, direction and details.

Complaints with incomplete information may result in delayed investigations and responses. The COMET is unable to respond to complaints without the complainant's mailing address. All information should be submitted to The COMET as follows:

- a. By Telephone to The COMET: 803-255-7129
- b. In Writing to the ADA Coordinator, The COMET, 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC, 29201.
Complaints may also be faxed to 803-255-7113.
- c. In Person at The COMET's main office, 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC, 29201, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is advisable to call The COMET in advance to schedule an appointment. The COMET's Compliance and Civil Rights Officer will take complaints from the public by phone or in person. If assistance is needed in preparing the written complaint, the representative assisting with gathering information will ask if the complainant wishes to have the information reviewed for accuracy and will make any requested corrections.

Acknowledgement of Complaint

Within seven calendar days after receipt of the complaint, a letter will be sent to the complainant that includes the following:

- a. Acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and forwarded for investigation.
- b. The date by which a response will be sent to the complainant.
- c. How to contact The COMET if the complainant does not receive a response by that date.

Investigation of Complaint

The COMET designated employee will investigate the complaint and respond in writing within a reasonable time, not to exceed 30 calendar days from receipt of the complaint. The response will include a resolution for the

complaint. The response will state the reasons for the decision and procedures if the complainant is not satisfied with the decision and decides to appeal the decision.

Appeal of Decision

If the complainant wishes to appeal The COMET's decision, the complainant shall make a request for a hearing in writing or other alternative and/or accessible format within 30 calendar days from receipt of the response. The complainant shall submit the request for a hearing to The COMET's Executive Director /CEO either by mail to The COMET at 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC, 29201 or in person at same.

Appeal Process

Within 15 calendar days from receipt of the request for Hearing, the Executive Director/CEO or his/her designee (who has not previously been involved in the investigation of the original complaint) shall schedule a meeting to hear the complaint. The meeting shall be held at an accessible location within 30 calendar days from receipt of the request for the Hearing. If desired, the complainant may be represented by a person of his/her choice. The Executive Director/CEO or his/her designee shall issue a final determination in writing within 21 days after the meeting.

Time Limits

The parties may extend any time limit set out above by written agreement.

Accessible Format

This document is available in accessible formats upon request. To obtain paper copies of these procedures as well as information regarding these accessible formats, call The COMET at 803-255-7129. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact 711 through the Relay Service for assistance.



ADA Complaint Form

Please use this form for submitting an ADA complaint. You may also call us at 803-255-7129 or contact us by email at arlene.prince@catchthecomet.org or US Postal Mail at 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201.

SECTION I: CONTACT INFORMATION				
Salutation [Mr./Mrs./Ms., etc.]:				
Name:				
Street Address:				
City, State, Zip code:				
Phone:		Email:		
Accessible Format Requirements:	Large Print__	TDD/Relay__	Audio Recording__	Other_____
SECTION II: COMPLAINT DETAILS				
Transit Service (Choose One) [as applicable] [Bus/Paratransit]				
Date of Occurrence:		Time of Occurrence:		
Name/ID of Employee(s) or Others Involved:				
Vehicle ID/Route Name or Number:				
Direction of Travel:				
Location of Incident:				
Description of Incident: (Please use extra sheets is more spacing is needed)				
SECTION III: FOLLOW UP				
May we contact you if we need more details or information?		Yes	No	
What is the best way to reach you? (Choose One)	Phone	Email	Mail	
If a phone call is preferred, what is the best day and time to reach you?				