

FTA Definitions of Mass Transportation, Charter and Sightseeing

Quick Reference Guide

MASS TRANSPORTATION

- Agency sets schedule and routes
 - Single tickets are sold to individuals or passengers
 - “Open door” policy. Service is operating for the benefit of the general public
 - Market rate fares paid for each individual passenger
 - May not avoid Charter restrictions by offering free services to passengers.
 - Routes, schedules, and rates are made available to the general public and not just a specific group
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CHARTER SERVICE

- Customer determines when service operates over certain days, hours, and certain routes.
 - A single contract is sold for the entire bus or service
 - Transportation is limited for the benefit of a private group of individuals
 - Service offered free of charge generally considered charter service
 - “Closed door” policy. Transportation is not available to the general public
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SIGHTSEEING SERVICE

Difference between Charter Transportation and Sightseeing Transportation:

- Charter: If a customer comes to the operator and contracts for the exclusive use of the vehicle
- Sightseeing: If the operator offers individual contracts to anyone for riding to an event or special destination that the operator has selected

Difference between Sightseeing and Mass Transportation:

- Mass Transportation: For the benefit of the general public
 - Sightseeing: Service is not for the benefit of the general public; rather it is limited to a specific group that wants transportation to an event or special destination.
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INCIDENTAL SERVICE

- Incidental charter service is when a mass transportation operator provides charter service as so long as that operator is still able to perform its duty as a federally funded public transportation entity (not compromising the integrity of the equipment, facilities, etc.).
- Incidental charter service is allowed only to the extent that there are no private charter service operators willing and able to provide the charter service (49 CFR 604.7)
- Although sightseeing service is excluded from the statutory definition of mass transportation, transit agencies may provide incidental sightseeing service without restrictions and without violating.