



## Frequently Asked Questions on SMRT Wheelchair Accessible Bus (WAB) Services

### On WAB Services

#### **1. Why were these seven services selected as WAB services?**

A: Yishun, Choa Chu Kang and Bukit Batok are the first three interchanges under SMRT which has undergone modification so that the necessary infrastructure is in place for passengers-in-wheelchairs to use. The seven services that originate from these three interchanges are a mix of trunk and feeder services which call at key medical facilities in the areas they serve.

#### **2. Why did SMRT implement WAB services only in 2009?**

A: For a bus service to be designed as WAB service, some factors need to be in place:  
(a) the buses have to be designed to accommodate wheelchair users;  
(b) at least 80 percent of the bus stops need to be wheelchair accessible.

SMRT Buses introduced the environmentally friendly Euro V WAB buses in April 2008 as part of fleet renewal and to support SMRT's philosophy to be green in our business dealings. These buses are wheelchair-friendly, with low floorboards and a kneeling device that can lower the front entrance of the bus or the whole bus, making it easier for boarding activities.

We have spent considerable time, investment and effort to ensure that all necessary infrastructure are in place to support WAB services. We modified our existing infrastructure at the bus interchanges with ramps and guard rails for wheelchair bound users, installing call buttons so that our staff can be readily available to assist passengers-in-wheelchairs, putting in the necessary signage so that users can be directed to the correct boarding location for WAB service.

We hope these measures will provide passengers-in-wheelchairs with a pleasant travel experience when they use our WAB services.

#### **3. How many bus interchange staff and Service Leaders have been trained for the WAB? How were they trained?**

A: SMRT Service Leaders put on duty on the WAB service routes and interchange staff are trained to assist passengers-in-wheelchairs. They know how to operate the ramp and the Service Leaders have been briefed on the procedures for boarding and alighting during the journey.

#### **4. How are you publicising these WAB services?**

A: We are putting up posters publicising these new WAB services at the originating bus interchanges, all MRT and LRT stations as well as major medical facilities along the WAB service routes, such as restructured hospitals and polyclinics.

We are also publicising these new services through the mass media. Information will also be available on the SMRT eBus Guide at SMRT's corporate website, and Transitlink's Public Transport Journey Planner and PublicTransport@SG website.

## **Boarding and alighting a WAB service**

### **5. What should a passenger-in-wheelchair do if he intends to board a WAB service at the interchange?**

A: A passenger-in-wheelchair can locate the special boarding berth at the interchange by following directional signs with the blue icon of passenger-in-wheelchair. Upon reaching the special boarding berth, the passenger should use the call button to speak to interchange staff for assistance. The passenger should indicate which WAB service he wishes to board, and staff would assist him to board the bus when it calls at the berth.

### **6. How does a passenger-in-wheelchair board the WAB from a bus stop?**

A: The commuter will be able to board the bus with the help of our Service Leader.

Our Service Leader will do the following, come rain or shine:

- (a) Stop the bus closer to the kerb at the bus stop.
- (b) Allow other passengers on board to alight first.
- (c) Bring down the ramp at the exit door for the passenger-in-wheelchair to board the bus.
- (d) Ensure passenger-in-wheelchair is secured in his seat.
- (e) Help the passenger-in-wheelchair to tap his ez-link card or slot the fare into the coin box then stow the ramp to its original position.

The Service Leader will then open the front door to allow other passengers to board the bus, and continue the journey.

### **7. If a WAB service is crowded, how can a passenger-in-wheelchair get on the bus?**

A: We seek the cooperation of passengers on board to make space for the passenger-in-wheelchair. We also seek the understanding of our passenger-in-wheelchair to wait for the next WAB should the bus be too crowded to board.

### **8. What do passengers-in-wheelchairs do when they wish to alight from the bus?**

A: A passenger-in-wheelchair should press the blue button located at the left hand side bar in the bus to signal to the Service Leader that he wishes to alight.

### **9. Can other passengers on board help to operate the ramp?**

A: No. We advise other passengers to seek help from Service Leaders or our interchange staff to assist the passenger-in-wheelchair to alight. This is because Service Leaders and interchange staff are trained to operate the ramp on the bus.

### **10. How do commuters obtain information on the estimated arrival time of WAB service?**

A: As far as it is operationally possible, we will ensure that every alternate bus on a WAB service will be wheelchair accessible. For frequency of services, please refer to Transitlink guide or SMRT eBus guide at <http://www.smrtbuses.com.sg/ebusguide/busguide.asp>.

**11. What if more than one passenger-in-wheelchair wants to board the same WAB service?**

A: Each of our WAB can accommodate two passengers-in-wheelchairs at a time. For safety reasons, we seek the understanding of the third passenger-in-wheelchair to wait for the next WAB. As far as it is operationally possible, we will ensure that every alternate bus on a WAB service will be wheelchair accessible.

**12. Are all bus stops along the WAB service routes wheelchair accessible?**

A: More than 90 percent of the bus stops along the WAB service routes are wheelchair accessible. For more information about the accessibility of the bus stops, please refer to <http://www.smrtbuses.com.sg/ebusguide/busguide.asp>.

**13. Will the WABs be plying non-WAB service route? If so, how do passenger-in-wheelchairs distinguish if they can board the WAB?**

A: Yes our WABs may ply non-WAB service routes. However, we will distinguish WAB on WAB services with a blue decal of passenger-in-wheelchair hung at the front of the bus. These decals will be removed from a WAB that is running on a non-WAB service route.

There are a few ways that passengers can find out more about SMRT WAB services that are available.

At the bus interchanges:

- (a) Refer to information available at the interchange.
- (b) Refer to our bus interchange staff for assistance; or
- (c) Proceed directly to the special boarding berth by following the blue icon.  
Information about WAB services departing from the interchange is available there.

Online:

- (a) SMRT e-Bus Guide: <http://www.smrtbuses.com.sg/ebusguide/busguide.asp>  
The e-Bus Guide also provides information on wheelchair accessibility of bus stops along the route.
- (b) Transitlink's Public Transport Journey Planner: <http://transitlink.com.sg>
- (c) Public Transport@SG: [www.publictransport.com.sg](http://www.publictransport.com.sg)

**Other commuters using WAB services**

**14. How long does it take for a passenger-in-wheelchair to board or alight a WAB?**

A: Typically, it takes about four minutes for a Service Leader to assist a passenger-in-wheelchair to board or alight from the bus. We appeal to commuters on board and at the bus stop waiting to board the bus to be patient while our Service Leader attends to the passenger-in-wheelchair.

**15. Will this affect the arrival times of the bus service?**

A: Bus schedules will not be affected as we have made provisions for passenger-in-wheelchair activities. However, we appeal to the passenger's understanding that if passenger activities are heavier than usual, slight delays may occur.

**16. Can commuters with pram, trolley use the ramp on a WAB service?**

A: The ramp in our WAB is designed specifically to accommodate passengers-in-wheelchairs. As our WABs are designed with low floor boards, they should be able to accommodate the needs of commuters with prams or trolleys without the need to use the ramp. We seek the understanding of our passengers to ensure that their prams or trolleys are folded and stored away properly so that they do not block the aisle of the bus.

**WAB buses**

**17. How many WABs does SMRT have in its fleet now?**

A: Currently, SMRT has 67 WABs in its fleet of over 880 buses.

**18. How long does it take for all your existing buses to be replaced with WABs?**

A: In line with the government's plan to have all bus services wheelchair accessible by 2020, we expect that all our buses to be WAB by then.

**19. How much does each WAB costs?**

A: Each WAB bus costs about \$360,000.

**20. How many more WAB buses is SMRT planning to purchase? When will the new batch be launched on the roads?**

A: We have purchased another 66 WABs and these should begin plying the roads by Dec 2009.

**21. Why is there a step at the rear of WAB? Isn't dangerous? Can't you replace it with a slope instead**

A: The new WABs have a low floorboard and flat surface in the front portion to facilitate the boarding of passengers-in-wheelchairs. Our WABs are also designed with a kneeling device that can lower the front entrance of the bus or the whole bus, making it easier for the elderly to board.

Due to the design of such low floorboard buses, it is necessary to include a step at the rear of the bus to accommodate the engine compartment.

We would like to assure you that our buses are in compliance to the necessary regulations and had undergone stringent checks.

**General**

**21. Will fares be increased as a result of these new buses?**

A: Fares are regulated by the Public Transport Council. The fare formula takes into account current economic factors, average wages and productivity gains. As such, it is not a cost-plus formula where any increase in operating costs is directly met by higher fares.

The purchase of WAB buses is part of our fleet renewal process and has nothing to do with the fare formula.