

SMAT Non-Discrimination (Title VI) Policy

Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT), operated by the City of Santa Maria, California as a recipient of Federal funds, will fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. City of Santa Maria is committed to ensuring that no person using SMAT or its paratransit services is discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, low income, or limited English proficiency, particularly in the following service areas:

- Scheduling
- Quality of service
- Frequency of service
- Age and quality of vehicles assigned to routes
- Location of routes

Who can complain?

Anyone who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, low income, or limited English proficiency while using SMAT or its paratransit services may file a Title VI complaint with SMAT.

How to file a discrimination (Title VI) complaint

If a person believes he or she has been discriminated against in using the SMAT Bus or its paratransit services, below is the procedure to file a complaint:

1. **Complete** the Complaint Form. The Complaint Form is available at the SMAT office or on the transit webpage.
2. **Sign** the completed Complaint Form
3. **Submit** the Complaint Form within one hundred eighty (180) days of the date of alleged discrimination.

Tips on filing a complaint

- Be sure to complete the Complaint Form. Only complete Complaint Forms will be accepted.
- If the complainant is unable to write a complaint, SMAT will provide assistance.
- Complaint Form should have following information:
 1. Complainant's name, address, and contact information (telephone number, email address, etc.).
 2. How, when, where, and why the complainant believes he or she was discriminated against
 3. Location, names, and contact information of any witnesses

File the complaint in writing with SMAT:

Title VI Complaints may be filed to one of the following:

1. City of Santa Maria
Department of Public Works, Transit Division
110 S. Pine St, Suite 101
Santa Maria, CA 93458
Email: aodell@cityofsantamaria.org
Phone: (805) 925-0951 ext. 225
2. U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Office of Civil Rights, Region IX
201 Mission Street, Suite 1650
San Francisco, California 94105-1839

How SMAT handles complaints

The following steps summarize the complaint procedure:

1. Complaints will be recorded and immediately assigned a complaint number by SMAT.
2. Once the complaint is received, SMAT will send the complainant an acknowledgement letter informing the complainant them whether the complaint will be investigated by SMAT.
3. SMAT will investigate the Title VI Complaint within thirty (30) days of receiving the complaint.
4. SMAT may contact the complainant if more information is needed to resolve the case. The complainant has thirty (30) days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case. If SMAT's investigator (from the Transit Services Manager) is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within thirty (30) days, SMAT can administratively close the case. Also, a case can be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.
5. SMAT will review the complaint and make a finding.

How SMAT notifies complainant of the outcome

After the investigator reviews the complaint, one of the following letters will be issued to the complainant:

1. Closure Letter. Closure letter summarizes the allegations and states that there was not a Title VI violation and that the case will be closed.

2. Letter of Finding. Letter of Finding summarizes the allegations and the interviews regarding the alleged incident, and explains whether any disciplinary action, additional training of the staff member, or other action will occur.

If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has ten (10) days after the date of the Closer Letter or Letter of Finding.