



Medical Transportation Assistance Program Escort Guide

This guide explains when the Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) may help with travel costs for an escort.

MTAP will only consider escort assistance when the escort is needed for medical reasons. Escort assistance is not available for emotional support, convenience or personal preference alone.

When an escort may be approved

MTAP may approve funding for **one escort** when:

- a physician or nurse practitioner confirms an escort is medically required;
- the patient is under 18 years of age;
- the patient is 80 years of age or older; or
- existing documentation for the fiscal year confirms an ongoing need for an escort.

Existing documentation for the current fiscal year may include:

- a previously approved escort for a series of treatments; or
- a permanent medical condition that affects the patient's cognitive or physical ability and requires ongoing travel support.

When a medical note is required

A medical note or other supporting documentation is required when escort assistance is being requested based on medical need.

The documentation must:

- be provided by a physician, nurse practitioner, or through an official appointment letter from the treatment provider;
- clearly state that an escort is required for medical reasons; and
- support the reason the escort is being requested.

Examples of when a medical escort may be needed

Escort coverage may be approved when the patient:

- needs legal consent or immediate decision-making that cannot be handled remotely;
- needs help with daily activities such as dressing, eating, or bathing while receiving outpatient care;
- is having a procedure that involves general anesthesia;

- has a diagnosed cognitive or physical impairment that makes travel support necessary;
- needs the escort to receive important medical or nursing instructions that cannot reasonably be given to the patient alone; or
- is pregnant and travelling for childbirth or must remain closer to care while awaiting childbirth for medical reasons.

If the escort is needed to receive essential medical or nursing instructions, escort coverage may begin:

- one day before discharge, or
- up to three days before discharge with senior management approval.

When a medical note is not required

A medical note is not required when:

- the patient is under 18 years of age;
- the patient is 80 years of age or older; or
- documentation already on file for the current fiscal year confirms an ongoing escort need.

When escort assistance will not be approved

Escort assistance will not be approved when:

- the escort is requested only for emotional support;
- the patient does not have a valid driver's licence or cannot drive for reasons not related to a medical condition; or
- the escort is requested for convenience, companionship, or personal preference rather than medical necessity.

Special rules for medivac and ambulance transport

Escort assistance is generally not available when a patient:

- is transported by medivac or road ambulance to and from an in-province medical facility; and
- remains an inpatient for the full stay.

This applies even if the escort also travelled by medivac or road ambulance.

Exception: this rule does not apply when the patient is under 18 years of age.

Escort duties

To qualify for funding, the escort must:

- travel with the patient to and from the patient's place of residence in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- be able and willing to support the patient for the full length of the eligible trip; and
- be able to help as needed, including:
 - signing consent forms or providing relevant medical history;
 - helping with physical or personal care;
 - driving, if necessary; and
 - sharing seating or accommodations with the patient, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Exceptions to the requirement to travel with the patient may be considered on a case-by-case basis. In those cases, assistance may be limited to eligible meal allowances and accommodations, where appropriate.

Costs related to the escort's own medical needs, accessibility needs, or special accommodation requirements are not eligible for assistance.

What travel may be covered

Escort assistance only applies to travel that is directly related to the patient's approved medical travel.

In general, escort travel must be between:

- the patient's place of residence in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- the treatment facility.

Eligible escort costs may include approved:

- transportation;
- accommodations; and
- meal allowances.

Extended hospital stays

If a patient is unexpectedly hospitalized or remains in hospital for an extended period, MTAP may consider helping with the escort's accommodations and meals for up to seven (7) days.

This will depend on:

- a case-by-case review;
- cost-effectiveness; and

- confirmation that the escort originally travelled with the patient.

Fewer than seven (7) days may be approved depending on the circumstances.

For extended inpatient stays, escort assistance may also be limited to transportation only between the patient's place of residence and the treatment facility.

Changing or rotating escorts

MTAP does not provide assistance for the travel costs of changing or rotating escorts during one episode of care. Escort assistance is limited to the individual who travels with the patient.

Cost-effective travel arrangements

In some cases, it may be more cost-effective for the escort to return home and later travel back to accompany the patient at discharge.

An exception may be considered for certain out-of-province patient groups where an escort is mandatory, such as some transplant patients.

Key points to remember

- MTAP may help with costs for **one escort only**.
- Escort assistance must be based on medical need.
- A medical note is required unless an exception applies.
- Escort travel must relate directly to the patient's approved medical trip.
- Emotional support alone is not enough to qualify.
- Assistance may be limited when the patient is hospitalized for an extended period.