

# Wheel Chair Passenger Handling

Risktopic - November 2012

## Introduction

Para-transit or non-emergency medical transportation fleets service a wide range of customers and geographic locations. Many patients receiving outpatient medical services rely on community and privately funded companies for transportation. The most commonly used vehicles are vans, mini-buses, sprinters and specially equipped vehicles for wheelchair passengers.

## Discussion

One of the most common types of loss involves injuries to passengers. These injuries are often the result of slips, trips or falls, entering or exiting the vehicle and while the vehicle is moving. Many of these passengers require some assistance, especially wheelchair passengers. The most common types of injuries are the result of injuries to wheel chair passengers either during the loading or unloading process and improper securement during transport. This paper will review the best practices for safe transportation of wheel chair passengers.

## Guidance

### **Wheel Chair Passenger Handling**

Wheelchair securement that is inadequate is the most common cause of injuries to patients. Use the following practices to ensure proper securement:

- The driver must ensure that wheelchairs, scooters and patients are secured before beginning to move the vehicle.
- One of the most important aspects during transit is to drive in a manner to avoid hard turns, sudden stops or accelerations, driving over curbs or through potholes and most of all being involved in a collision. All of these situations have the potential to dislodge the patient and/or wheel chair.
- Wheelchairs should be secured with a minimum of four anchor/strap points.
- The patient passenger secured by shoulder/seat belts.
- Scooters and wheelchairs have basic similarities but the driver must ensure they can identify differences that might cause a dangerous securement situation.
- Carefully select lift and ramp equipment and ensure that employees are thoroughly trained on use of and securing the equipment.
- Procedures must be developed to ensure both drivers and helpers are familiar with the variety of wheel chairs and scooters used by passengers.

**Three-Wheeled Scooter (TWS) Securement Checklist**

- Determine if the scooter driver can safely use existing passenger seats in vehicle.
- If not, advise the scooter driver they are not allowed to ride in the vehicle and must arrange for other travel alternatives.
- If the fleet operator policy allows TWC driver to transit on TWC seat, special securement may be needed in addition to TWC installed driver securement restraint belts. Each transporter should establish local policy concerning transportation of TWSs.
- Place the TWS in the securement area.
- Turn off TWS power.
- Lock wheels.
- Use a minimum of three TWS securement straps, one at each corner and lower rear mid-point of the TWS.
- Use a minimum of one securement strap for the front wheel.
- Lock the wheels if equipped.

**Wheelchair (ADA) / Lift Training**

- Wheelchair goes on lift backwards / unless requested to go forward
- Wheelchair power off on lift
- Brakes on chair need to be applied on the lift and in the bus
- Make sure lift is in the up position to unload wheelchair
- Knowledge of wheelie bar usage / DO NOT LIFT CHAIR
- Wheelchair always faces forward in bus for transport
- ABC's of wheelchairs
  - Arms (make sure arms are close to their sides)
  - Belts (all belts secured)
  - Clicks (listen for click on everything for securement)
- Position wheelchair in bus for the best securement
- Wheelchairs must have 4 point tie-down
- Use a 3 point seat belt securement for wheelchair passengers. IF they refuse, call base and document
- Respect passenger's wheelchair as their personal property
- Have knowledge of all tie-down operation/pick up straps
- Allow passengers to transfer to a seat with no assistance
- If passenger transfers, wheelchair still needs to be secured
- Ask scooter passengers if they can transfer, (can't make them)
- If someone transfers from a scooter or wheelchair, it doesn't matter which way the scooter or wheelchair faces to tie it down. This is for **unoccupied chairs only**. (still 4 tie-downs)
- Passengers are permitted to stand (Standee) on the lift (ADA)
- Wheelchair/passenger safety concerns (trainer will emphasize)
- Folded wheelchairs can be secured behind a seat or between seats, with seat belt tied around

I understand customers cannot be lifted if they fall. CALL BASE IMMEDIATELY, they will call EMT.

LTV	Date	Initial
.....	.....	.....
Employee	Initial	Date
.....	.....	.....

I understand securements on above buses.

Name	Signature
.....	.....
Date	Trainer
.....	.....

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