



MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIRS AND SCOOTERS SAFETY CHECKLIST

No one knows exactly how many residents use motorized wheelchairs or scooters, but they are becoming increasingly prevalent in many facilities. Although these devices can dramatically improve the lives of people who otherwise would be dependent on others for mobility, they do come with risks. For instance, residents maneuvering in crowded hallways could hit walls and slower-moving residents, staff, or visitors. However, with careful risk management planning, the benefits can outweigh the risks.

Please keep the following tips in mind when developing your facility's risk management policies on the use of motorized wheelchairs and scooters.

- **Develop facility rules pertaining to the use of motorized conveyances, but do not restrict or prohibit a resident's access to motorized conveyances.**

Sample rules can include the following:

- There will be a maximum of xx motorized scooters/wheelchairs allowed in the facility at one time. The number should be decided by the facility based on what you feel can be safely accommodated.
- The size and type of each wheelchair or scooter that operates within the facility must be approved in advance by the facility administration. The size of the resident's room should be a consideration, as the wheelchair or scooter cannot interfere with the transfers and care provided by staff.
- Only one (1) person per motorized conveyance is allowed. No towing, pushing, or pulling of other objects or vehicles of any sort is allowed within the facility.
- All operators must maintain complete control of their own vehicle at all times. They must operate their vehicle so as not to endanger themselves, other residents, staff, or visitors.
- All operators must maintain safe speeds when in use within the facility or on its grounds. Safe speeds are defined as no faster than the average walking speed of the other residents in the building.
- Motorized conveyances must, at all times, yield to pedestrians and appropriately to other conveyances similar to the rules that apply when driving a car.
- Operators must avoid contact with fixed and moveable objects at all times.
- Motorized conveyances will operate only in authorized areas within the facility. For example, motorized conveyances cannot be used during bathing or

showering, although they may be used to transport the resident into the bathroom area.

- Operators must maintain, or allow to be maintained, their vehicle in a safe and hygienic condition.
- Motorized conveyances will be parked only where authorized.
- Motorized conveyances can only be charged in designated areas.

- **Address obligations to physical damages.**

Do not require individuals with disabilities who use motorized mobility aids to indemnify or otherwise insure against injuries or damages resulting from the use of such aids. Instead, enact a Policy that any resident whose neglect or failure to adhere to the Rules of the Facility, which results in physical damage, shall be responsible for the cost of the physical damage.

- **Clearly communicate the resident's rights, privileges, and obligations.**

Ask eligible residents to read and sign an agreement of compliance. The following is a sample statement:

The resident has the right and privilege of the use of a motorized conveyance within the facility and on its grounds if he or she respects the Rules and Regulations of the facility pertaining to motorized conveyances and all other Rules and Regulations. He or she must maintain appropriate safety and consideration of other residents, employees, and visitors to the facility.

- **Monitor the resident's use of the motorized conveyance.**

Train your staff to watch and make sure the resident remains competent and safe.

- **Mount wide-angle mirrors for sharp corners in your facility.**

That way, both walkers and drivers are aware when the other is approaching and can avoid collisions.

For additional information regarding these components and to ensure that the vehicle remains safe, contact the wheelchair or scooter manufacturer or your local medical supplier.

Finally, seek legal counsel to assist you in the development of your policies.

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You are encouraged to consult with your own attorney or other expert consultants for a professional opinion specific to your situation.

