



WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CHECKLIST

Every year residents in wheelchairs are injured needlessly by accidents that occur during transport—often within sight of the facility where they live. Fortunately, most of these accidents can be avoided if simple precautions are followed.

This checklist contains items that facilities should consider to increase wheelchair safety during transport:

- ❑ Consider implementing a drug-testing program for employees responsible for transporting residents.
- ❑ Equip vehicles with emergency communication devices, such as a two-way radio or cell phone.
- ❑ Motor vehicle registration checks should be completed upon hire and annually for all persons assigned to driving duties. Employees with unacceptable driving records or improper license classification should not be permitted to drive company vehicles until appropriate corrective action has been taken.
- ❑ Develop a preventive maintenance schedule for each vehicle, according to manufacturer's recommendations. Keep a log of monthly inspections.
- ❑ Develop a visual checklist to perform routine safety inspections. Service vehicles as needed, and keep reports and corrective action receipts filed with the vehicle maintenance records.
- ❑ Provide appropriate staffing to adequately meet the needs of the passengers while en route (e.g., residents at risk for seizures, residents who are dependent upon oxygen, or confused and able to unfasten their safety restraints may need additional staffing).
- ❑ Before loading residents, visually check equipment for proper working conditions. Make sure safety straps are not frayed, torn, or broken.
- ❑ Always park the vehicle so that the wheelchair lift can be lowered to a flat area, away from traffic flow. Be sure that the lift area is unobstructed from branches, signposts, hydrants, or other items.
- ❑ Instruct the operator to restrict personnel movement near the lift to reduce the risk of being injured from the lift platform.
- ❑ During loading, move the wheelchair completely on the platform with the passenger's hands and arms in his or her lap to avoid getting them caught.
- ❑ Set both wheelchair brakes and fasten safety restraints before raising the lift to the level of entry into the van.

- ❑ When transferring a wheelchair into a vehicle, always fasten restraints according to the vehicle's manufacturer directions. The operator should verify that the wheelchair restraints provided on the van are compatible with both the resident and the wheelchair to secure the passenger in place.
- ❑ Keep the path of the safety straps clear between the floor track and the wheelchair.
- ❑ The driver should not start the vehicle until all passengers are properly seated, safety belts are fastened, and wheelchairs are secured.
- ❑ Before unloading residents, visually inspect the lift to ensure that it is in the up position before moving residents.
- ❑ Maintain a web cutter in the back of the van at all times where it is quickly accessible to cut the safety straps in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Provide a certified driver training course for employees assigned to this duty upon orientation, and offer refresher courses annually and as needed. Obtain signatures of both the trainers and employees upon satisfactorily completing the facility's driver training requirements.

Develop an audit system where the fleet manager randomly travels with drivers to assess their skills and knowledge. Provide training as needed.

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GuideOne Risk Resources for Health Care
 1111 Ashworth Road
 West Des Moines, Iowa 50265
 1-800-688-3628