

WHEELCHAIR PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION SAFETY



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Transporting your loved one safely is an essential part of day to day life following a brain injury. Wheelchairs are equipped with an array of features, such as anchor points for securing the transit wheelchair to the frame of a bus or van, and attachment points for restraining the wheelchair occupant to the chair.

WC19 Wheelchair Safety Standard addresses issues that improve the safety and security of the wheelchair occupant during transportation. These safety measures apply to all aspects of transportation, but particularly in the event of a vehicle crash. Shepherd Center also follows these recommendations, which include:

- The wheelchair (independent of occupant) must be secured to vehicle.
- Use the four-point strap tie-down method taught by your therapist.
- Secure points must be easily accessible.
- Wheelchair occupants should **face forward** (not sideways).
- Lap tray attachments must be removed and stowed securely.
- All wheelchair safety and positioning attachments are required to be in place. (i.e. seatbelt, chest strap, headrest)
- Even though the wheelchair has a seat belt attached, you still need to use a 2nd vehicle-mounted lap/shoulder belt.
- Provide **both upper and lower torso seat belts** (i.e. lap and shoulder belts)
- Position seat belts over the **skeletal regions of the body** (i.e. hip bones and shoulders), not over the abdomen.
- Use belt restraint systems regulated by federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS).
- Achieve **lap belt angles** of between 45 to 75 degrees to horizontal and at an angle of 30 degrees or more to the occupant's thigh angle.
- Driver and a 2nd caregiver must be able to access the wheelchair occupied passenger efficiently.
- A wheelchair backrest should not be reclined/tilted more than **30 degrees** to the vertical. This maximum angle is intended to help maintain effective performance of belt-type restraint systems by having the shoulder belts close to, and preferably in contact with, the chest and shoulders.
- Keep objects away from the passenger that may be thrown or may distract the driver.
- Use **child locks** to prohibit access to window controls.
- Use mirrors to assist with monitoring the wheelchair passenger.
- Reduce/eliminate possible concerns regarding sensitivity to sound, temperature, light, and movement.
- **NEVER leave the wheelchair occupied passenger** in a vehicle unattended.