



Work Health Safety: Safe Work Practice: Support

Assisting client with wheelchair

 Risks	Risk rating	Risk Controls
Injury to client or others from client fall from wheelchair	Likelihood: C Consequence: 3 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteers can only assist client on flat ground <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteers never to assist client transfer to/from wheelchair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteers never to transport wheelchair in a car <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Never give more help than is required – encourage independence. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use ramps or curb cuts on footpath whenever possible. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If chair must go over curb it should go down backwards <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only clients who are competent are to be encouraged to negotiate a curb without help <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff to ensure clients is attentive to where/how they are travelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allow plenty of time, don't rush the client. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff/volunteer to wear non-slip footwear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff to never attempt to catch client if they are falling from chair.
Injury to staff from incorrect use of wheelchair	Likelihood: D Consequence: 2 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use correct technique: see 3. below
Injury to staff from use of inappropriate or poorly maintained wheelchairs	Likelihood: E Consequence: 2 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ask client to provide suitable wheelchair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only assist client if they have the correct wheelchair for their needs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure tyres are properly inflated to optimise ease of movement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure wheelchair (especially brakes) are in good working order
Injury to staff from assisting client in inappropriate area	Likelihood: E Consequence: 2 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assess and ensure floor or ground surfaces around the home (e.g. footpaths) are in good repair and suitable for the pushing of wheeled equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid gravel paths where possible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid steep inclines – take another path even if this means a longer route. In shopping centres, use lifts in preference to ramps where possible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take suitable precautions in extreme weather conditions, e.g. wet, very windy, hot <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure client has seatbelt (if fitted) on when in wheelchair
Emotional distress resulting from offence	Likelihood: C Consequence: 5 Rating = LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Always ask the person if they would like your assistance, don't assume. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If unsure how to help, ask the person and follow instructions given. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speak directly to the person, not to someone else nearby.

 Risks	Risk rating	Risk Controls
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If a conversation lasts for more than a few minutes consider sitting down. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When greeting a person, it is appropriate to shake hands; a touch, a nod or a similar gesture is fine. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't shout, speak patronisingly or force enthusiasm. Forgo the 'speed limit' jokes. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A wheelchair is a part of a person's body space; don't push it, lean on it or tap it – respect the wheelchair as you would another person's limbs. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People using wheelchairs require turning space. Keep pathways and corridors clear. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Taken from Paraquad "Wheelchair Etiquette"</i></p>

Equipment required:

<i>Mercy Services equipment</i>	<i>Others equipment</i>
Worker to wear <u>footwear</u> that is fully enclosed, slip resistant sole, water repellent/resistant and provides adequate support. Personal Protective Equipment required:	Correct wheelchair

Activity	Worker behaviour	Client/other's behaviour
1. Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure wheelchair (especially brakes) are in good working order b) Ensure environment is safe for operating wheelchair c) Clarify with client the degree of assistance they need d) If the chair has a seatbelt ensure that seatbelt is fastened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Client to fasten seatbelt or consent to staff or volunteer fastening it
2. Getting into and up from a wheelchair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure that both of the brakes are in place b) Back the wheelchair so the front casters face forward. c) Squat to fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides or up, depending on the chair model, out of your way. d) Hold the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move. e) Ensure the client uses both hands on the front of the armrests to lower or raise her/himself onto the seat. f) Squat to swing the footrests to the front and/or fold down the footplates. Place client's feet on the footplates, with 	Client with ability will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Put brakes on; b) Ensure front casters facing forwards; c) Fold up footplates and swing them out of the way. d) With both hands on the front of the armrests, lower or raise her/himself onto the seat. e) Swing the footrests to the front and/or fold down the footplates. f) Place her/his feet on the footplates, with heels resting towards the back of the foot plate.

Activity	Worker behaviour	Client/other's behaviour
	her/his heels resting towards the back of the foot plate.	
3. Correct wheelchair pushing technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stand in upright body position, maintaining natural curve of spine b) Stand as close to wheelchair as is comfortable when pushing c) Walk with the chair, do not reach d) Do not use excessive force – let the wheels do the work 	
4. Transferring sideways from a wheelchair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Place wheelchair alongside the chair, bed, or toilet to which client wishes to transfer. b) Back the wheelchair so that the front casters face forward. c) Ensure that both the brakes are in place. d) Squat to fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides or up, depending on the chair model, out of your way. e) Hold the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move. f) Remove the armrest on the side from which client is transferring. g) Ensure client places one hand on the armrest and the other, palm down, on the surface to which s/he is transferring. h) Ensure client moves forwards on the wheel chair seat, leans slightly forwards, pushes up and slides across to the other surface. 	<p>Client with ability will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Place wheelchair alongside the chair, bed, or toilet to which s/he wishes to transfer. b) Back the wheelchair so that the front casters face forward. c) Ensure that both the brakes are in place. d) Fold up both footplates and swing them to the sides or up, depending on the chair model, out of your way. e) Remove the armrest on the side from which s/he is transferring. f) Place one hand on the armrest and the other, palm down, on the surface to which s/he is transferring. g) Move forwards on the wheel chair seat, lean slightly forwards, push up and slide across to the other surface.
5. Pushing an Occupied Wheelchair Down or up a Curb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make sure the road is clear, then back the wheelchair to the edge of the curb. b) Pull the rear wheels carefully down onto the road surface, making sure that both wheels touch down at the same time. c) When the front casters are at the edge of the curb, pull back on the handles and at the same time push down and forward on the tipping lever with your foot. <i>(This will balance the wheelchair and client on the rear wheels. Do not</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Only clients who are trained and competent should try going down a curb unassisted.

Activity	Worker behaviour	Client/other's behaviour
	<p><i>tip the wheelchair back more than necessary).</i></p> <p>d) Carefully pull the wheelchair further back into the road and, when the client's feet are clear of the curb, gently lower the front to the road. Check that the road is clear before turning around and crossing.</p>	
6. Carrying Book Bags, Purses or Other Bags on a Wheelchair	a) Either carry book bags, purses or other material for the client without pushing chair or push chair and client to hold book bags, purses or other material (<i>hanging items on the back of the wheelchair can make it unbalanced and more liable to tip over backwards</i>).	a) Client either push chair or hold book bags, purses or other material while staff/volunteer pushes chair
7. Follow-up	a) Document any incidents and report these to your Coordinator immediately	

As at 27/09/16 this Safe Work Practice is authorised for use in:

<i>Service</i>	<i>Position</i>
Community Transport	Driver
Day Centre	Activity Officer and Coordinator
Home Care Packages	Community Care Assistant
Home Support Program/NDIS	Community Care Assistant
Residential Aged Care	Assistant in Nursing
Support Coordination	Case Manager and Coordinator

Date for review of safe work practice: September 2019 (*or if injury or changes require*)

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Assisting client with wheelchair

Employee _____

Assessor _____

Date _____

Desired Outcome:

For staff/volunteer to assist a client in a wheelchair without causing injury or distress to self or client

Knowledge required:

- see also SWP Transferring Wheelchair In Car

Performance Criteria	Competence demonstrated	Comment
1. Prepare		
a) Ensures environment is safe for operating wheelchair		
b) Clarifies with client the degree of assistance they need		
2. Getting into and up from a wheelchair		
a) Ensures that both of the brakes are in place		
b) Backs the wheelchair so the front casters face forward.		
c) Squats to fold up both footplates and swings them to the sides or up and out of the way.		
d) Holds the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move.		
e) Ensures the client uses both hands on the front of the armrests to lower or raise her/himself onto the seat.		
f) Squats to swing the footrests to the front and/or folds down the footplates. Places client's feet on the footplates, with her/his heels resting towards the back of the foot plate.		
3. Correct wheelchair pushing technique		
a) Stands in upright body position, maintaining natural curve of spine		
b) Stands as close to wheelchair as is comfortable when pushing		
c) Walks with the chair, does not reach		
d) Does not use excessive force		
4. Transferring sideways from a wheelchair		
a) Places wheelchair alongside the chair, bed, or toilet to which client wishes to transfer.		
b) Backs the wheelchair so that the front casters face forward.		
c) Ensures that both the brakes are in place.		

Performance Criteria	Competence demonstrated	Comment
d) Squats to fold up both footplates and swings them to the sides or up and out of the way.		
e) Holds the handles of the wheelchair so that it will not move.		
f) Removes the armrest on the side from which client is transferring.		
g) Ensures client places one hand on the armrest and the other, palm down, on the surface to which s/he is transferring.		
h) Ensures client moves forwards on the wheel chair seat, leans slightly forwards, pushes up and slides across to the other surface.		
5. Pushing an Occupied Wheelchair Down or up a Curb		
a) Makes sure the road is clear, then backs the wheelchair to the edge of the curb.		
b) Pulls the rear wheels carefully down onto the road surface, with both wheels touch down at the same time.		
c) When the front casters are at the edge of the curb, pulls back on the handles and at the same time pushes down and forward on the tipping lever with her/his foot.		
d) Carefully pulls the wheelchair further back into the road and, when the client's feet are clear of the curb, gently lowers the front to the road. Checks that the road is clear before turning around and crossing.		
6. Carrying Book Bags, Purses or Other Bags on a Wheelchair		
a) Either carries book bags, purses or other material for the client without pushing chair or pushes chair and has client hold book bags, purses or other material		
7. Follow-up		
a) Documents any incidents and reports these to Coordinator immediately		

Is the worker assessed as being competent? YES NO

Any required follow up action/training: _____

Signature of employee Date.....

Signature of assessor Date.....