

WHEELCHAIR SAFETY AND CARE

In order to transport a person with a disability, you will need to know how to maneuver a wheelchair and how to safely lift and transfer the individual. It is important that both the wheelchair user and the caregiver be familiar with the safe use of the wheelchair.

THE WHEELCHAIR



1. Wearing proper shoes is important when pushing a wheelchair. Low-heeled, closed toe, rubber-soled shoes are best.
2. Fasten the seatbelt (if there is one).
3. Lock the brakes when the chair is unattended or when the person is transferring from the chair.

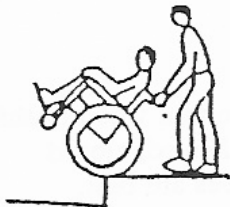
4. Carefully plan the route. If possible, avoid obstacles such as curbs, stairs, narrow openings, and uneven surfaces.

FOLDING A WHEELCHAIR



To fold most wheelchairs, first remove the seat cushion. Next pull up on the seat fabric at the center front and center back.

CURBS OR STEPS



When descending a curb, the chair must be tipped back with the tipping lever so that it is balanced on its back wheels. The pusher controls the decent by bending his legs. The pusher's back should be kept straight. It is important that both rear wheels touch the ground at the same time.



When going up a curb, tip the chair and place the front wheels onto the sidewalk. Then "climb" the curb with the big wheels.

STAIRS



A minimum of two people should participate when taking a wheelchair up steps. Position the chair squarely at the foot of the steps with its back toward the steps. Place one foot up on the first step, and pull the chair up by straightening your legs. The second person stands in front of the chair and assists by holding the rods to which the footrests are attached.

When going down steps, the chair should be tipped backward and moved to the edge of the step. The pusher controls the descent of the chair by bending his legs. The second person stands in front of the chair and steadies the chair by holding the rods to which the footrests are attached.

UNEVEN SURFACES



When a chair is being pushed on rough ground, it should be tilted onto its back wheels.

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Never move a wheelchair unless you are absolutely sure that you can move it safely.
2. When you are lifting a wheelchair, lift it by the permanent parts—not by the armrests or leg rests of the chair. These are not permanent and can easily come off.
3. It is better for two people to help when lifting a person into or out of a chair. Lift with your legs—not your back.
4. Never tip the chair forward—always backwards.



THE COMFORT AND SAFETY OF THE PERSON USING THE CHAIR IS MOST IMPORTANT. IF THE PERSON WANTS MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE TO HELP THEM, COMPLY WITH THEIR WISHES.

CARING FOR A WHEELCHAIR

1. Keep the chair clean and dry. It will rust if it is wet.
2. Keep the wheels and casters oiled. (A technician can show you how to do this before you leave.)
3. The wheel locks are not brakes. Never use them while you are moving; it can completely destroy your tires.