

APPENDIX B

DRIVER ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

The following are examples of situations that driver's may face when dealing with transporting students who require a Student Transportation/Health Plan. These guidelines address the most common situations but would not address all issues that may need to be considered when transporting students with disabilities. The individual Student Transportation/Health Plan will address any specific issues not covered here.

WHEELCHAIR

Boarding

When operating a lift to load a student with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by Police or Student Transportation) the driver must:

1. Put the 4-way emergency flashers on in approaching the stop.
2. Ensure the vehicle is stopped in a safe position for pick-up.
3. Ensure the parking brake is applied.
4. Check that the student is ready to be loaded on to the lift.
5. Check traffic and then activate the overhead alternating lights and stop arm before exiting the vehicle.
6. Open the lift doors and ensure that they are secured.
7. Deploy and lower the lift and undo the lift safety belt.
8. Back on to the lift with the wheelchair and set brakes. Secure lift safety belt. If the student is using a power chair, be sure to use low gear and turn power off.
9. Keep one hand on the wheelchair and use the other hand to operate the controls.
10. Inform the student that you are raising the wheelchair lift.
11. Ensure that in raising the lift, the front plate on the lift folds up and locks into position and the power cable is clear of any pinch points.
12. Raise the lift to its fullest extent (level with vehicle floor).
13. Release brakes on wheelchair and load student into the vehicle, positioning the wheelchair into a tie-down position and reapply brakes. If power chair, use low gear and turn power off.
14. Exit the vehicle, stow the ramp and close the doors.
15. Enter the vehicle and turn off overhead alternating flashing lights and stop arm.
16. Secure the wheelchair with the Q-strait system.

Securement

1. Each wheelchair must be restrained and made secure as it is loaded onto the bus.
2. There shall not be more than one wheelchair loose or free at any time while the bus is being loaded.

3. Position the wheelchair, centred and square to the floor anchor points so that the restraint belts will attach to the chair and floor at approximately a 45 degree angle. The smaller front pivoting wheels on the wheelchair should be pointing straight.
4. The chair and the student must always face forward in the bus.
5. Apply the wheelchair brakes (manual) or turn off the power on the power chair.
6. Attach the front belts (narrow type) by connecting the large hook to a solid frame member of the chair or the connection location as designated by the vendor or WC 19 marked area on the wheelchair and connect the opposite end (flat hook) of the belt to the floor anchor point.
7. Pull the belt through the clamping mechanism until all the slack is removed and the belt is snugly attached to the wheelchair.
8. The rear belt clamps will provide the final tensioning of the front belts. Attach the loose end of the belt to the Velcro patch above the clamp.
9. Attach the rear belts by connecting the chair hook to the solid frame member of the chair or the connection location as designated by the vendor or WC 19 marked area on the wheelchair, as close to the point where the wheelchair back and seat cushion meet.
10. Attach the floor hook at the opposite end of the belt into the floor anchor point.
11. Attach the belts only to a solid, welded frame member on the wheelchair. Do not attach the hook to the wheels. Some chairs may come equipped with bolt-on anchor points or sling-straps, which are acceptable. Do not, under any circumstances, cross belts over each other.
12. With the buckle open, pull the loose end of the belt until snug. While holding the loose end with one hand, close the clamp lever down until it securely locks into position. Connect the loose ends of the belts to the Velcro patch to keep the excess belting off the floor.
13. Check that all the belts are tight and the wheelchair is secure and does not have any back and forth or sideways movement.
14. To attach the lap belts, pass the loose ends of the lap belts around the student and downward toward the rear tie-down belts through the gap between the side panel and seat cushion or the gap between the seat cushion and the back rest of the wheelchair. Connect the belt ends to the pin connectors on the rear tie-down belts.
15. The lap belt should be positioned as low as possible over the student's pelvic area and adjusted as tightly as possible. Ensure the belt is not twisted.
16. To attach the shoulder belt, connect the loose end of the belt to the pin connector on either the left or the right side of the lap belt. The belt should be attached to the connector pin of the lap belt depending on which side of the bus the wheelchair is located. Use the right side pin if the wheelchair is on the left side of the bus and left side pin if the wheelchair is on the right side of the bus. Again adjust the shoulder belt as snugly as possible, making sure the belt does not rub on the student's neck area.
17. The shoulder belt should lie across the mid-point of the shoulder and travel upward and rearward from that point to ensure that the downward force is avoided. Lap and shoulder belts should not be held away from the student's body by wheelchair components or parts such as wheelchair armrests or wheels.

Deboarding

When operating a lift to unload a student with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Student Transportation Services) the driver must:

1. Ensure the vehicle is parked in a safe position for unloading.
2. Put on the 4-way emergency lights.
3. Ensure the parking brake has been applied.
4. If the student requires a designate, make sure the designate is present to receive the student. If the designate is not there to meet the student the driver must call dispatch and wait for further instructions
5. Go to the student in the wheelchair and remove the lap belt, shoulder belt, front 2 floor Q-strains, rear 2 floor Q-strains, and hang up belts.
6. Position the wheelchair to unload and set brakes; if it is a power chair make sure the power switch is off.
7. Check traffic and, when ready, activate overhead alternating red flashing lights and deploy stop arm.
8. Exit the vehicle and open lift door and secure it.
9. Deploy the lift to floor level.
10. Go back inside the vehicle and push the wheelchair (if power chair, turn on power and put in low gear) onto the lift. Set the brakes, for power chair turn off the power.
11. With one hand on the chair and the other hand on the control, lower the wheelchair to ground level. Make sure the student is made aware that he/she is about to be lowered.
12. Release the brakes and undo the lift safety belt and push the wheelchair (if power chair, turn on power and set in low gear) off the lift.
13. Secure the lift safety belt, raise and stow the lift into the vehicle and close the doors.
14. Return to the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing red lights and stop arm.

WALKER

Boarding

Students with walkers will use the stairs to enter the bus. The walker must be folded and stowed in a safe manner

Deboarding

When deboarding a students with a 4-point walker on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by Police or Student Transportation Services) the driver must:

1. Ensure that the vehicle is parked in a safe position for unloading.
2. Put on 4-way emergency lights.
3. Ensure parking brake has been applied.
4. If the student requires a designate, make sure the designate is present to receive the student. If the designate is not there to meet the student the driver must call dispatch and wait for further instructions
5. Position the walker at the bottom of the stairs.
6. Stand behind student as the student descends the stairs.

Note: In any instances where a student is required to wear a vest, seatbelt or similar security device it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to secure/detach the device at the point of departure or arrival at the home stop and it will be the responsibility of the receiving school staff to secure/detach the device at the point of arrival at or departure from the school.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE A DISABILITY AND ARE AMBULATORY

Students who have a disability and are ambulatory such as vision, hearing or communication disabilities, are autistic, have asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and severe allergies will board and disembark unassisted and are seated unsecured unless otherwise specified in the Student Transportation/Health Plan. **Do not use the loading ramp for ambulatory students unless specifically authorized by Student Transportation Services.**

If there are issues with the student boarding or disembarking the driver must:

1. Communicate with the student. Ask what help he/she needs and allow time for a response.
2. Let the student set the pace. If the student is unable to respond, indicate clearly what you are going to do and what you expect the student to do.
3. Follow behind the student while he/she is going up the steps; support the student while he/she steps up, if required.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE SERVICE ANIMALS

Where a student with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, the requirement for the service animal, including the type of service animal, will be specified in the Student Transportation/Health Plan. Policy AT-02 Transportation of Service Animals will be followed.