

Carers Equipment Safety Card – The wheel chair

The wheelchair enables mobility for many people. The person should be comfortable with the wheelchair and carer. If using a wheelchair long term the person should be assessed for the most appropriate wheelchair. This considers the clients comfort, fit and suitability for function and environment.

1. Assembly:

- To unfold - pull apart the armrests and push downwards on the centre of the seat.
- Reattach foot plates on the side pins, then swing back & click into place.
- Push down footrests. If lifting the wheel chair, always bend from the knees, keep it close to the body and hold secure sections of the wheelchair.



2. Disassembly:

To fold the wheelchair, sharply pull up the seat of the wheel chair in the centre. On some wheelchairs the wheels can be detached by pushing on the wheel-releasing button in the centre of the wheel. Flip up the footrests and swing away to detach.

3. Transfers – make sure that the brakes are on:

From the front - Flip up the foot plates and swing away or even detach. Use armrests for support.

From the side - Swing foot rests away, and remove one armrest. Place the chair beside the object you are transferring to. A smooth transfer board to slide across may also be used.

4. Carer safety precautions:

- Ensure the brakes are ON at all times when stopped. To fully engage: push them until they 'click' on.
- When pushing, be close to the wheelchair, have a straight back and push with whole body.
- When going down a steep ramp or step, reverse down and have an assistant to help
- Keep a distance behind others to avoid running the footplates into them.

5. Moving the wheelchair up a small kerb:

- Face the wheelchair to go up the kerb, inform the occupant, place foot on tipping bar and carefully level chair back with handgrips until balanced on rear wheels.
- Propel forward until front castors are on the higher pavement.
- Roll chair up kerb.
- When possible, use a street kerb ramp or driveway instead.

(Never lift rear wheels off the ground as the front castors may twist)

6. Moving the wheelchair down a small kerb:

- Reverse the wheelchair to the kerb to go down; inform occupant that the chair will tilt back.
- Allow it to roll slowly down the kerb making sure both rear wheels hit the ground simultaneously.
- Use tipping bars to raise front castors and roll chair back on rear wheels.

7. Safety check:

- Wheelchairs have a weight limit that must not be exceeded.
- Some people may require a cushion for comfort and / or pressure care
- The home and community environment needs to be taken into account for client and carer safety. Potential obstacles include: door width, 90 degree turns into narrow corridors, ramps/steps, low branches, floor surface / footpaths and location of transfers.

Note:

1. If you have any difficulty assisting with this or have any concerns, please let nursing or support staff know.

2. If this equipment is faulty or damaged in anyway, contact the nursing or support staff.

Acknowledgements: Occupational Therapy Department – Swan Hill District Health

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Please return this card to the Community Palliative Care Service when no longer required.