

SECTION 5 – Passenger Care and Safety

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5.1 – Introduction

5.1.1 **We take full responsibility for our clients/passengers; remember their care and safety are our professional tasks.**

However, passengers have a key role to play in maintaining safety standards. Certain standards of behaviour are required in order to ensure the safety of all those on the vehicles. The vehicle operator and driver have to make passengers aware of their responsibilities and ensure that rules are observed. In particular, passengers should not:

- Smoke
- Drink alcohol
- Stand or walk around during the journey
- Remove their own or other people's seatbelts
- Remove or interfere with wheelchair restraints
- Distract the driver's attention more than is necessary
- Leave luggage or equipment in dangerous positions

5.1.2 Not all passengers can be relied on to adhere to these rules. In particular, children can cause problems for drivers. Where the passenger group consists mainly of children or disabled people, an escort should be provided to support, assist and supervise as required.

5.1.3 Passengers also have a positive role to play in developing services and safety standards. They should be consulted when a new vehicle or equipment is being purchased. What is their experience? What are their feelings? What improvements to vehicles or services can they suggest?

5.1.4 Guidance on the conduct of pupils is also contained in the 'Code of conduct for home to school transport' which is available from the Road Safety Unit.

5.2 – Entering and Leaving Minibus

There is a correct procedure for this and it is carried out for the passenger's comfort and safety. It is essential that care be taken to find a safe suitable location.

- 5.2.1. **On loading put on any passengers who are wheelchair users first, but make sure the front doors are closed.**
- 5.2.2. **For passengers who cannot use the normal entrance, use the tail lift, again making sure the front doors are closed.**
- 5.2.3. **Lastly put on all walking passengers who are able to use the normal entrance, leaving the rear doors closed.**

These points are particularly important in cooler or inclement weather.

It is also important to ensure that each passenger is put in the vehicle in such a way that they can be dropped off in sequence without having to climb over other people.

The unloading should be carried out in the same order.

Helpful hints

Road Crossings

It is important to avoid passengers having to cross a road. Whenever practical and safe, park on the same side of the road as the passenger's boarding point or destination.

The Pace

Always let the passenger set the pace. If you are handling a wheelchair user, take your time and reassure the passenger whilst manoeuvring the wheelchair.

Pay Attention

The passenger is in your care and as such your attention should be with them at all times. **NEVER** leave a passenger on their own whilst you go off to do something else. Talking to the passenger can be reassuring to them, especially when using the tail lift.

Assistance – where appropriate

With walking passengers assist them on and off the vehicle and into their seats. Make sure they are comfortable and wearing a seatbelt. **NEVER** drive off before all passengers including the escort are seated and wearing seatbelts or appropriate restraining equipment used, if travelling in a wheelchair.

Passengers in wheelchairs should be facing the vehicle while the lift is in operation to reduce the feeling of insecurity.

Electric wheelchairs should be in manual mode and full assistance given to the passenger, especially when the wheelchair has to be reversed off the vehicle.

5.3 – Escorts

Escorts are required under the following conditions:

Where passengers' needs require an escort to be present
Where children are being carried

It may be unreasonable to require an escort for every journey where children are being carried. Short, local journeys to a neighbouring school, for example, may be undertaken satisfactorily without an escort. However, schools and other organisations should establish clear guidelines concerning those journeys in which an escort might not be needed. This should take account of local road circumstances and the age and needs of the passengers.

Clear arrangements would be needed regarding what the lone driver would do in the event of an emergency and a mobile telephone is recommended. The guidelines should state that any volunteer driver, including a teacher, who is not prepared to drive without an escort will not be required to do so. Ideally, the escort should also be able to act as a second driver, in which case he or she should have received the same training and assessment as the main driver. The results should be recorded as a generic risk assessment.

5.4 – Accident/Incidents

Establishments must ensure that there is a clearly defined written procedure, which must be followed in the event of an accident or other emergency incident, and that all drivers and escorts are aware of and adhere to. A copy of the procedure should be kept inside the vehicle.

The driver and/or the escort must make the accident scene as safe as possible.

- Use hazard warning lights and any other devices supplied and required to be used by their department.
- Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion.
- Call the emergency services immediately
- Ensure one person (driver or escort) remains with the children if child passengers are involved.

The driver must stay at the scene of the accident until the emergency services (and anyone else with reasonable cause) have taken all the details. If possible, the names and addresses of all independent witnesses should be obtained at the scene.

If the accident is 'damage only' and no one is injured it must be reported by the user on their return. A report book or form must be kept for this purpose. The user should ensure that all repairs and insurance details are completed.

If the names of people involved are not exchanged, it is a legal requirement that the accident be reported to the nearest Police station 'as soon as reasonably practicable' and in any case within 24 hours.

Any other incident, including traffic offences, must be reported by the user.

5.5 – Emergency Evacuations

In the event of an accident, or other incident such as fire, an emergency evacuation should be conducted. The best way to evacuate the vehicle will depend upon the nature of the incident, the passenger group and the type of minibus. Therefore, the driver and escort(s) will need to exercise their judgement at the scene of the incident. Drivers and escorts who have been trained will be far better equipped to make appropriate decisions and cope with such difficult circumstances.

Passengers should exit the vehicle as they would normally, if possible, and move as far away as possible. If passengers need assistance to exit the vehicle, the escorts and driver should provide what help is necessary. If it is necessary to use the rear exits, care must be taken against approaching traffic.

It may not be possible to remove wheelchairs quickly from a minibus, unless the escorts, driver and carers are trained to do so. It may be necessary to lift a passenger from the vehicle, which is not easy to do so in a confined space and often requires two people. See also Section 1.21

5.6 Use of Restraining Equipment

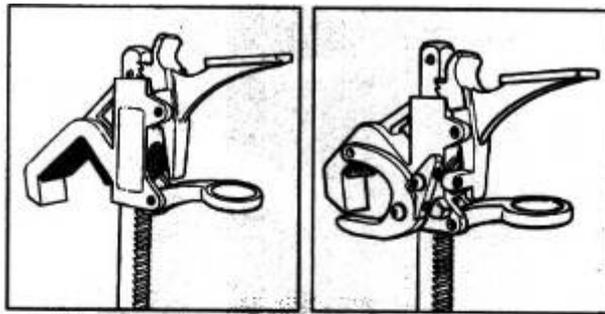
The safety of passengers must be paramount so use the restraints, clamps, belts etc and their correct use is important. All passengers **MUST** wear seatbelts. If the standard seatbelt is not adequate or suitable for a particular passenger then the matter must be referred for a risk assessment.

All vehicles that are required to carry wheelchairs must have suitable tracking correctly fitted to the floor of a vehicle. This means that the track is set at 13" (330mm) centres and attached to the floor by counter sunk bolts using spreader plates on the underside of the floor pan to even out the loading. The more bolts fitted the better.

The types of restraint used are many and varied. The most common wheelchair restraint systems are:

The Clamp

These must only be used on manual wheelchairs. This is a metal item consisting of a spring foot to which a toothed square bar is attached, either by a steel loop or by a universal joint. Attached to the bar is a sliding hook and ratchet mechanism. The clamps are used in pairs and attached to the floor tracking by the spring foot with hook and ratchet connecting with the wheelchair frame. The chair is secured by using the ratchet on the clamp.



Quiklok Head

Double Lock Head

The Hook
engages over the
frame of the
wheelchair.
(*Double Lock
clamp head
shown*).

Release lever
marked on red
background

Operating lever

Wheelchair
frame
maximum
clearance
height

Sliding clamp head
can be moved to any
position on the ratchet to
suit the requirements of
each wheelchair

360°
swivel action

ATF Rail Clip
fits into alloy rail bolted
to floor of vehicle.
Quickly inserted or
released.

IMPORTANT NOTE

When in position Quiklok clamps should be as near vertical as possible although slight angling is permissible. To achieve this on a normal wheelchair the rails should be fixed to the floor at 13" (330mm) centres. They **MUST** always be fitted forward of the rear axle.

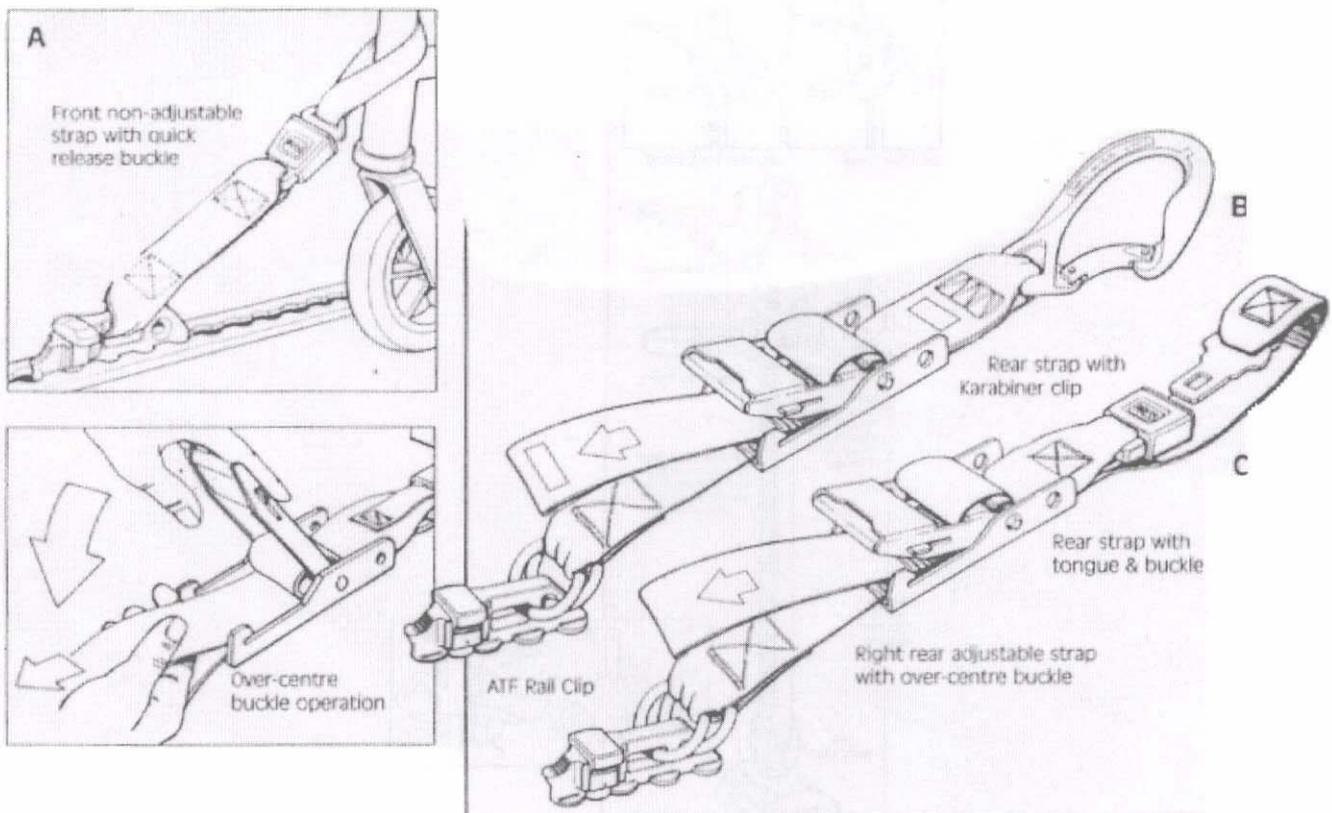
Q-Straint (Webbing Straps)

This involves the use of four webbing straps and buckles similar to those used on seatbelts and at one end of each strap, a similar fitting to the clamps. These **MUST** be used to secure electric wheelchairs.

The straps come as a set of two pairs, one pair which are non-adjustable and are used on the front of the chair, the other being adjustable and fit at the rear of the wheelchair.

To install this system, clip to the tracking using the spring feet front set of straps ensuring that the feet are parallel. Bring the chair up and attach the straps (there are two types – one with a carbinarre, the other with a loop and buckle), put the hook or loop around the front vertical frame of the wheelchair with one strap on each side. Now attend to the rear, carrying out the same as the front set, remembering that there is an over centre buckle which is pulled tight and locked off for each side.

Now that the wheelchair has been held in place, it is essential that the occupant be restrained.



5.7 – Passenger Restraints

In an accident or under heavy braking the person in the wheelchair will undoubtedly move out of the wheelchair if not held in, and will suffer some form of injury. Therefore, passenger restraints **MUST** always be used. There are two good systems, both using inertia reel belts similar to those available in cars. In addition to passenger restraints, wheelchair seatbelts must also be fastened (where fitted) - see 'The use of Restraining Equipment' section 5.6.

Double Inertia Reel

The Double Inertia Reel forms a lap and diagonal restraint for the wheelchair occupant and has the advantage of reacting to the reel.

Each webbing strap is tensioned on the inertia reel for ease of operation and is prevented from becoming too tight on the occupant's shoulder by the use of a sliding Klunk-Klip. However care must be taken to avoid having too much slack in the belt as this can lead to greater injury in an impact.

The Double Inertia Reel is supplied in two parts:

5.7.1. The Double Reel Unit housing the lap and diagonal belt

5.7.2. The stalk unit with the belt buckle point.



NMI Inertia Reel

This system is similar to the Unwins inertia, but uses a different track clamp and has independent belts with twin stalks.

The track fixing uses a long aluminium strip with two locking methods: a large knurled knob at the opposite end of the reels, which is spring loaded and can be locked in the up position by pulling up and twisting the knob. Between this and the reels is a smaller knob that acts as a tightener once in place on the track. To install this into the track, the large knob should be locked in the up position and the small one loose. The reels should be installed nearest to the wheelchair. Insert the assembly into the tracking and slide into the desired position, turn the large knob and release; it should drop but if it doesn't move the assembly until it falls into place. Tighten the small knob to hold the assembly in place.

The stalks use the same method.

To install the belts simply pull out one belt to cross the lap and connect to the stalk. The next belt is pulled over the shoulder to form a diagonal and lock into the second stalk.



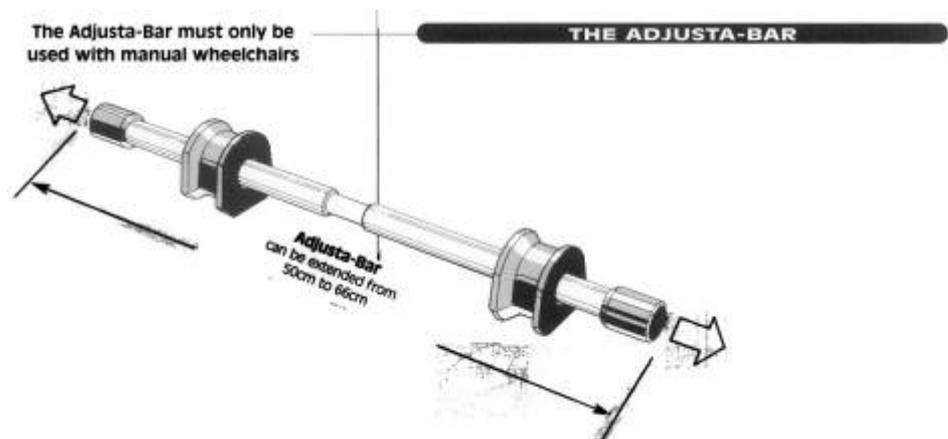
These belts are particularly useful for passengers who have limited upper body movement.

5.8 – Restraint Accessories

Adjusta-Bar

A simple inexpensive device to smooth wheelchair securing problems. It will be found invaluable if the desired position of the wheelchair does not match up with the floor fixings, also if the wheelchair is of a design that makes clamping difficult. The twin-moulded rubbers are able to slide along the bar to the desired position over a wheelchair frame (with this application the Springfoot swivel clamp should be used). The bar **MUST** always be fitted forward of rear axle.

When using a hand propelled wheelchair it will be necessary to put the Adjusta-Bar through the spokes.



Securing Ortho-Kinetics Travel Chair 12" and 15" models

Due to the unconventional design of the chair, problems may be experienced particularly in securing the 12" model. This can be achieved very simply by use of the Adjusta-Bar as shown in illustrations. The more widely used 15" travel chair can be secured with standard equipment as illustrated.

If you have a wheelchair which is out of the ordinary and difficult to fix with available clamps/restraints, then the wheelchair must be referred for risk assessment.

5.9 Tail Lift Safety

Hertfordshire County Council has a set of rules that **must** be followed when using all types of tail lifts. It is essential that instruction in the operation of such equipment is provided before usage - see also section 1.12. The basic rules for operating tail lifts on minibuses are as follows:

- 5.9.1 The tail lift must **NEVER** be left in the down position.
- 5.9.2. The engine should always be running when the tail lift is being operated, otherwise the battery could become flat.
- 5.9.3. Unless specifically sanctioned, and recorded on the client's risk assessment, clients should **NEVER** travel on the tail lift unaccompanied. It is the **escort's task** to travel with them and to ensure they are given support and reassurance while on the lift, while **another member of staff** operates the tail lift controls. Managers must sanction, and record, any deviation from this **BEFORE** the journey. Under no circumstances should unauthorised persons operate the tail lift.
- 5.9.4. No attempt should be made to turn a wheelchair around to face the opposite direction once inside the vehicle.
- 5.9.5. Because of the disability of the client, as a result of a risk assessment, it may be impossible to put the client onto the tail lift platform in the usual manner. In such cases the wheelchair must be placed on the tail lift facing rearwards, the operating procedures remain the same. Advice must be sought from the departmental health & safety adviser or the Road Safety Unit **BEFORE** commencing the journey.
- 5.9.6. Later models and all new vehicles are fitted with manual operation for the tail lift in addition to the power motor. The manual operation is an emergency device to enable the tail lift to be operated if the power motor fails to operate. The procedures for using the tail lift to load and unload passengers by operating the manual device are identical to the power operation.

5.9.7. The operating instructions for using a tail lift are as follows:

- a. Ensure the engine is running with the handbrake on and gear in neutral.
- b. Operate the tail lift control switch, normally mounted on the dashboard.
- c. Lower the tail lift platform.
- d. Use the control button unit to lower the tail lift platform to the ground.
- e. Open the handrails.
- f. Carefully bring the wheelchair onto the platform ensuring the person's feet/wheelchair footrests are completely clear of the edge of the platform.
- g. Put the wheelchair handbrake on.
- h. When carrying electric wheelchairs, the power supply to the drive mechanism **MUST** be disconnected to prevent use of the wheelchair's own power by the client.
- i. Release the safety catches on the tail lift platform (if fitted) or the wheelchair ramp stop.
- j. A member of staff should stand on the platform behind the wheelchair using the tail lift handrails for support and not the client or their wheelchair.
- k. Raise the tail lift to the level of the vehicle floor ensuring that the client's feet clear the toe-guard as the platform is raised.
- l. When the platform comes to an automatic stop at the vehicle floor height, release the wheelchair handbrake and carefully push the wheelchair into place, taking care not to cause the client's legs or feet to come onto contact with anything.



5.9.8. The tail lift operating instructions should be read periodically to ensure familiarity with the specific tail lift operation.

5.9.9. If for any reason a member of staff is unable to stand on the platform with a client, extra care needs to be exercised when raising or lowering the platform. Exemptions to this should only be authorised by the manager, who may seek advice from the Road Safety Unit.

A generic risk assessment for moving a client using a tail lift is shown at Appendix 1. If this requires modification to allow for the needs of a particular client, a copy of the modified risk assessment should be incorporated into that client's risk assessment/care plan prior to their journeys.

5.10 – Safe Lifting Guides

There is a requirement for appropriate training in moving and handling. Details on carrying out assessments can be found under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations, which can be found in the Health and Safety County Policies and Guidance Manual.



The following checklist aims to protect people from *transfer injuries*.

5.10.1. Study the starting/finishing positions – particularly those of the feet –

5.10.2. Make sure you can manage the transfer yourself.

If not, seek assistance from another helper or use equipment if required.

5.10.3. General rules when moving and handling *anything*:

- Have the weight as close as possible to your body before moving.
- Take the strain by using your powerful leg muscles rather than your back
- Ensure knees are bent and keep back as straight as possible. Keep arms close to body and elbows in.
- Make sure you have a secure grip that is comfortable to you.
- If more than one helper is required for any technique, make sure the manoeuvre is coordinated so that both helpers are in time. One helper should be designated to give the command: "1-2-3-move", for example.
- Tell the person what you plan to do before you do it, so that the person knows what is about to happen and can help you if possible. In this way you avoid undue strain.
- Make sure you have enough clear space to perform the manoeuvre safely.
- Suitable footwear is an important safety factor when lifting. Flat shoes are best.

5.11 – Assisting Person Out of Chair

Make sure chair cannot slip. If person is in a wheelchair put brakes on.



Helper stands besides the chair and places their elbow in the palm of the person's hand. The helper then supports the person by placing their hand under their elbow.



The helper then places their other hand on the person's shoulder to enable them to assist the person to stand.



5.12 - Transfers

Transfers are potentially dangerous. The shoulder lift, the cross arm lift, through arm lift or pivot transfer are no longer used. The lift commonly known as the “bear hug” sometimes referred to as “rocking with one nurse” has also been withdrawn as a potentially dangerous move.

Where clients have to be transferred from say bed to chair, chairs to wheelchair, wheelchair to toilet, items such as transfer boards, slide sheets and turning circles have now been introduced. Note should be made that turning circles should only be used with sitting clients and not in the standing position. These transfer tools are relatively cost effective and easy to use.

Manually handling a client from one place to another via a transfer is normally unacceptable and constitutes a high risk. It is a risk for the carer in injuring their back and a further risk of the client being injured through manhandling.

5.13 – Weight

The guidance for lifting as set by the RCN and the Back Care Association is as follows:

Male one person 25kg or 55 lbs, two persons 33.3kg or 75 lbs, three persons 37.5kg or 85 lbs. No more than three persons should be involved in a lift.

Female one person 16.6kg or 37 lbs, two persons 22.2kg or 50 lbs, THREE PERSONS 25KG OR 55 LBS. No more than three persons should be involved in a lift.

Any weight over this guidance should be moved using equipment, to do so without equipment would be classified as a high risk to you and others.

RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD

ESTABLISHMENT/WORKPLACE: GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT		
WORK ACTIVITY: MOVING CLIENTS USING TAIL-LIFT		
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Ensuring that the client is transported on the tail-lift into/out of the welfare ambulance safely. FREQUENCY: DURATION: 2 x Daily	PEOPLE AT RISK: Client Escort Driver	
SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS: Non-effective team handling Obstructions, trailing leads Poor lighting, uneven surfaces Unstable/heavy loads Stretching, twisting, bending, pushing Faulty equipment Client behaviour	ADVERSE EFFECTS: Cuts, bruises, sprains Head/back injury and strain Fractures Fatigue Stress	
EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES: Two people involved in activity – one operates tail-lift controls and other stands on tail-lift with client. Operating instructions displayed on vehicle. Vehicle familiarisation including tail-lift training. Use of safety equipment training and procedures. Moving and handling training and procedures. Well maintained vehicle/equipment.		
RISK FACTOR = LIKELIHOOD X SEVERITY		
BEFORE CONTROL MEASURES APPLIED: 12-15		
AFTER CONTROL MEASURES APPLIED: 6		
FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED TO MAKE ACTIVITY ACCEPTABLE: <i>N.B. Undertake a further Risk Assessment following the introduction of additional control measures</i>		
DATE FOR COMPLETION OF ACTION:		
ASSESSED BY-	SIGNATURE/s-	DATE-
APPROVED BY: UNIT MANAGER		
SIGNATURE:	DATE:	
APPROVED BY: SAFETY ADVISOR		
SIGNATURE:	DATE:	