

**CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL
POLICY**

SUBJECT: Transporting Clients in a Wheelchair Bus/Vehicle

ANNUAL REVIEW MONTH: August

RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW: Clinical & Consultative Services Clinical Director/Central Motor Transport Supervisor

LAST REVISION DATE: November 2005 (Reviewed 10/08)

PURPOSE

To ensure that clients are safely transported while in a wheelchair bus/vehicle. Tie down and safety belt systems are essential to protect the client in the event of an accident or abrupt vehicle maneuvers. Not all transportation-related injuries are due to an accident; abrupt vehicle maneuvers actually pose a greater risk to wheelchair users.

POLICY

A client should never be transported in a wheelchair without a tie down and safety belt system in place. A tie down system will prevent the impact of the client with the interior of the vehicle and from ejection from the vehicle. A web cutter should always be available to quickly cut the tie down straps and free the occupant if necessary.

The following factors should be considered by the motor vehicle operator when transporting clients in a wheelchair bus:

1. Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions.
2. Each client's wheelchair and seating system is a specialized unit designed to fit and provide unique postural control for him/her. Additional equipment may be necessary to establish the highest level of safety during transportation.
3. Because each client's equipment is unique, it cannot be used for another client.
4. Lapboards that are not postural supports should be removed during transport unless the client is at high risk of sliding or falling out of the chair during a non-accident vehicle maneuver, and if no other alternatives can be identified.
5. It is best to ride with the wheelchair backrest not reclined more than 30 degrees. If the client requires a reclined position of more than 30 degrees, the shoulder-belt anchor point

may need to be moved rearward along the vehicle sidewall to maintain contact of the belt webbing with the rider's shoulder and chest.

6. Maximize the clear space around the person to reduce the likelihood of contact with other objects in a crash. Pad the parts of the vehicle that are close to the rider.
7. Check the wheelchair tie down and safety belt system for wear and broken parts monthly, and return broken components to the appropriate manufacturer for repair or replacement.
8. Replace wheelchairs and tie down and safety belt systems that have been damaged. They may not function properly if they are involved in an accident.
9. If at all possible, remove and secure hard trays elsewhere in the vehicle to reduce the chance of rider injury from contact with the sharp edges of the tray. If it is not possible to remove the tray, place padding between the rider and the tray edge and make sure that the tray is securely attached so it will not break loose and cause injury to the other occupants in a crash.
10. Secure medical and other equipment to prevent it from hitting people in a crash.

Approved:

This policy has been approved by the CEO and CMO on August 2009.