



Adaptive Equipment & Caregiving Corner

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General Safety Instructions for Caregivers When Mobilizing a Client in a Wheelchair or Transport Chair

Caution – a transport chair, being lighter in weight with smaller rear wheels, will not be as easy to tip backwards and won't feel as stable as the wheelchair to you or the client, especially with larger clients. Use extra caution if you **MUST** tip a transport chair backwards to clear a threshold or curb etc. If using anti-tip bars on the back of a wheelchair, you may need to flip them up out of the way if needing to tip the wheel back enough to clear a curb.

Client Instructions

- Instruct the client to keep their hands, arms, and elbows inside the wheelchair; encourage them to fold their arms on their lap
- Have the client keep their feet on the footrests. If not using footrests, give continuous reminders for them to hold their feet up during transport. (Transport without leg rests should only be a last option and only for a very short distance)

General Safety Tips

- Always apply the wheel locks before transferring a client
- Always support elevated leg rests when releasing and lowering - this prevents the client's legs from quickly dropping to the floor
- Ensure the client's feet are securely on the footrests before transporting
- Never allow the client to move forward in the wheelchair/transport chair while their feet are on the footrests - the client could tip the wheelchair/transport chair forward and fall
- Care providers should never step on the footrests

Over Thresholds

- Proceed with caution!
- If needed, step on the step tube at back of the wheelchair/transport chair (just inside back wheel) for leverage to tip the chair slightly backwards, lifting the front wheels over the threshold

Entering an elevator

- Wheel the client in backwards. The floor and elevator floor levels may be slightly uneven, causing the front wheels of the wheelchair to get caught, stopping the wheelchair abruptly, and potentially causing the client to fall forward out of the chair!

On a Steep Ramp (non ADA)

- When descending, transport the client down **backwards** using your weight to control the chair

Up a curb

- Wheel the client forward up to the curb
- Step on the step tube, lift the front wheels, and place the wheels on the curb
- Push and slightly lift the chair forward, allowing the back wheels to roll up the curb

Down a curb

- Wheel client backward up to curb
- Caregiver stays behind the wheelchair; control the chair while the back wheels roll down the curb
- Step on step tube, lifting the front wheels off the curb and back down to a level surface

While on a Sidewalk

- Always watch for uneven, broken concrete. Anything that can stop the small front wheels abruptly could pose a fall risk from the chair for your client.
- Stay well away from the edge of the sidewalk while pushing your client, getting a wheel off of the edge of the sidewalk could cause the wheel chair to tip over.
- If needed, stop and allow someone walking toward you to pass in order to prevent having to move over too close to the edge of the sidewalk.