

Wheelchair Safety and Securement

**Risk Alert
July 2016**

Recently, we have become aware of incidents regarding occupants in unsecured wheelchairs. This issue requires the immediate attention of our members. Wheelchairs and their occupants **must** be secured properly before the vehicle is moved.

We recommend using the three-way securement system known as the three "B's"

Buckles (or securement straps): Proper use of securement straps is one of the most critical procedures in preparation for transporting passengers using wheelchairs. The driver must understand the correct use of the securement system for their vehicle, and be able to use the securements properly.

Brakes: The brakes on the wheelchair must be locked. Even when the wheelchair is secured to the vehicle, there may still be a slight play in the wheels. The locks on the wheelchair will keep the wheels firmly positioned.

Belts: Whenever possible, use a seatbelt system that attaches to the floor securements instead of just around the wheelchair itself. This will give added security similar to seatbelts in a car. Seatbelts must be placed under the armrests and fit across at the lower waist or lap level.

Basic Securement Procedures:

1. The wheelchair and occupant must face toward the front of the vehicle.
2. Lock the wheelchair brakes.
3. Attach the front straps to a structural frame member of the wheelchair creating a 45 degree angle between the strap and the floor. Pull as much of the slack out as possible.
4. Release the wheelchair brakes and pull the wheelchair back until the front securements are tight. Reset the wheelchair brakes. If in a motorized wheelchair, ask the occupant to move the chair rearward and then turn off all power.
5. Attach the rear straps inside the rear wheels. Pull upward on the strap to make certain it is secure. The other end of the strap must be looped around a permanent part of the chair as close to the seat cushion as possible. Never attach the securements to a removable part of the wheelchair, through, or to the wheels. Ideally, there should be a 45 degree angle from the floor to the wheelchair.
6. The lap belt must be worn low and snug across the front of the occupant's pelvic area, with the junction between the lap belt and shoulder belt located near the wearer's hip. Make certain not to position the lap belt over the abdominal area. Whenever possible, slide the belt through the arm rests of the wheelchair against the body of the occupant. In the event of a sudden stop, this can prevent the occupant from sliding out of the wheelchair under the belt. Pull on the loose ends of the lap belt to provide firm and comfortable tension.

*****For further information regarding this topic, please contact our P.A.S.S. Certified Instructor at: skellams@chooseclear.com***

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Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this risk alert please contact your local agent, or your Clear Risk Solutions Risk Manager directly at 800.407.2027.