

Safe Transport of Customers and Cargo Policy

LINK Community Transport recognizes the importance of providing a safe and healthy work environment for all workers, volunteers, contractors, customers, and visitors. We are committed to meet our legal obligations and moral duty to ensure that workers health and safety is not adversely affected by reducing exposure of staff and volunteers to manual handling risks.

Manual handling includes a wide range of activities including lifting, pushing, holding, supporting, throwing, and carrying of objects and repetitive tasks. Tasks with higher risks involves repetitive or sustained awkward posture, application of high force, sustained vibration or handling loads that are unstable or difficult to hold.

Objectives:

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that always:

- The safety of customers whilst embarking and disembarking vehicles, and during transit,
- Appropriate assistance is provided to customers to meet individual support needs,
- Staff and volunteers always maintain safe work practices to minimize risk within LINK's operating environment, including pedestrians and other road users, and
- Provide a basis by which, continuous improvement initiatives can be developed and evaluated.

Responsibilities:

Link Community Transport staff and volunteers are not authorized to lift or bear the weight of a person or lift or carry heavy/bulky items. Nor must they take part in a manual handling activity which they ought reasonably to believe to be unsafe to themselves, customers, or others. LINK personnel must abide by the directions provided within relevant policy and procedure, and training and induction measures.

LINK's customer service team will:

- Encourage all customers to maintain their own mobility and assist with their own transfers and weight bearing as much as possible;
- Reserves the right to suspend or withdraw a service which exposes staff, volunteers, customers, or the public to an identified hazard involving manual handling;
- Prior assess clients for transport requirements that involve manual handling, such as the restraining of wheelchairs, fitting passenger and child restraints and assistance with shopping. Control methods will be assessed and reviewed following implementation, monitored for changing circumstances;
- Ensure that all handling aids, equipment, and items are maintained in good working order in the accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications;
- Implement modifications to the workplace as far as is reasonably practicable to eliminate or control an identified risk or hazard, and

- Refer a customer, deemed unsuitable for LINK's service, to an appropriate referral Agency to ensure the customer's needs are addressed and LINK's reputation is preserved, wherever possible.

Drivers will, having due regard for the weighting of relevant factors:

- Park in an appropriate location as close as possible to an entrance whereby customers can access the LINK vehicle, on a flat, even surface to the maximum extent possible;
- Walk with the customer wherever possible, open the door and assist them to be seated with their seatbelt prior to storing walking frames and/or other equipment in a vehicle;
- Coordinate the entry and exit of all customers from LINK vehicles. The alert provided on the driver schedule to indicating any special transport needs of customer's, must be catered for in the prescribed manner;
- Extra assistance maybe required when a customer is entering and exiting a bus on an uneven or sloped surface. This must involve remaining near the customer to apply supports as needed to ensure safety. Cautious and requisite restraint is permissible where no-restraint may lead to harmful accident or injury. At all times the even/sloped area in question must be prior assessed.
- Ensure customers are safely within the confines of the destination and purpose of their trip prior to departing, and
- Any safety concerns or incidents related to a customer must be phoned through to the Duty Officer immediately.

All staff and volunteers of LINK Community Transport will exercise personal responsibility to ensure that no hazardous manual handling is undertaken.

Staff Induction and Training

All employees and volunteers receive appropriate induction, providing drivers with the skills & knowledge to safely transport older people and people with disabilities. Prior to on-road deployment (or 'Pre-Start') all employees and volunteers will be given induction in:

- **Wheelchair assist** -Correct use of vehicle hoists & restraining wheelchairs/ Wheelchair etiquette;
- **Customer transfer** - between vehicle and destination – walking a customer;
- **Cargo constraints** - Safe stowage of cargo-walkers, shopping, shopping carts, and the like;
- **Passenger restraint** – Safe and comfortable transport of customers in car seat or wheelchair, and
- **On-road driving skills** – safe and comfortable ride for passengers.

Regular training is provided to refresh staff on these topics – see LINK's *Induction, Training, and Professional Development Program*.


Tim Long
Transport Manager
February 2017

Safe Operating Procedure - Loading a Wheelchair on/off bus.

Task Objective: Safely load wheelchair bound customers into/out of van/bus

1.0 Equipment and PPE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van/bus • Wheelchair • Q-straints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosed footwear with non-slip sole Hoist platform Wheelchair straps
2.0	Prior to Procedure:
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the required restraints and seatbelt to secure wheelchair for travel is in good working order and stowed in the vehicle • On arrival, ensure the vehicle is parked on a flat, level surface with access for wheelchair to and from the curb where possible. • Ensure there is clear access to the rear of the van (3 meters). • Vehicle must be stopped with parking brake on and transmission in 'park' or motor turned off. • If wheelchair is parked near the vehicle, ensure the brakes are engaged. • Always include the customer to Inform them of what you are going to do. • Open the rear door of the van and stand clear of area. • Use the controls as per manufacturers instruction to lower the platform hoist to ground level. • Operation of the hoist must be completed while the vehicle's transmission is in "Park". • Apply the techniques of manual handling always. • Ensure wheelchairs are facing forward always • Ensure tracks are kept clean of any debris and webbing on straps is in good condition. • Ensure emergency release tools readily available and clients can be accessed readily in an emergency.

3.0 Procedure	
3.10 Loading Wheelchair Platform	
3.11	Release the safety catch and lower the wheelchair hoist so it is flat on the ground using the control panel and standing to one side.
3.12	Release the brakes on the customer wheelchair.

3.13	Push or drive the wheelchair up to the rear of the van and wheel onto the lowered wheelchair platform using a lunge type movement.	
3.14	Ensure wheelchair is centered, engage the brakes on the wheelchair and turn electric wheelchair to manual.	

3.20 Raising the wheelchair platform

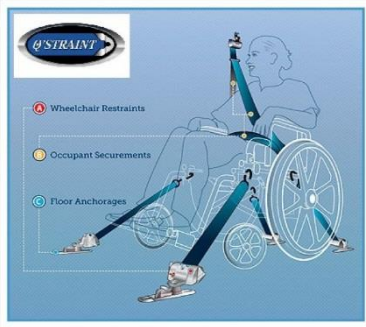
3.21	The worker who pushed the wheelchair onto the hoist steps off the platform and enters the van from the side door.
3.22	If a single worker, stand beside the hoist and reassure the person. Using the control panel, raise the hoist Once raised, enter the vehicle through the side door and assist the wheelchair into the rear of the vehicle.
3.23	The second worker (if available) could be inside the vehicle waiting to receive the customer once the hoist is fully raised hoist

3.30 Loading the Wheelchair into the van

3.31	Worker to enter the vehicle, release the brakes on the customer wheelchair and guide the wheelchair into the vehicle.
3.33	After restraints secured – see below hoist is to be folded (turned off) and door(s) closed Remove and store any metal trays etc. and check all bags are secured.

3.40 Secure restraints (follow manufacturer's instructions)

3.41	Obtain attachments from storage container.
3.42	Adopt a half kneel position and attach 2 front anchor points to floor track on the outside of the front wheels and check it is secure (propping may be possible to maintain natural curves).
3.43	Whilst in half kneel position facing the wheelchair fit the wheelchair restraints to front of chair either to designated attachment hook or to rigid part of chair as close to seat as possible.
3.44	Push wheelchair forward and apply brakes.
3.45	Move to back of chair and whilst as close as possible in a half kneeling position, attach anchor points to rear track inside rear wheels (or in line depending on chair type).
3.46	Whilst in the half kneel attach restraints to back hook or rigid part of frame near seat.
3.47	Attach seatbelt and or harness to bolt on both left and right Q-strait Move seatbelt around client ensuring it is between armrests and frame of wheelchair Anchor positions at the FRONT of the wheelchair are to be placed on the outside of the front wheels, shake the fittings to ensure they are secured and the client remains safe.

3.48	Take off wheelchair brakes and ensure all straps are locked into place with less than 25mm movement) and reapply brakes.
3.49	The angle of the rear securement straps should be 30 to 45 degrees. The securement straps need to be placed inside the wheels.
3.50	Ensure separate seat belt attached to anchor points is used even if client uses a wheelchair belt.
3.51	If carrying more than 1-wheel chair, offset position if possible so you can see both people.
	
3.60 Releasing the restraints and unloading wheelchair from the van	
3.61	Reach the back of chair to release rear straps and seat belt and remove anchor points. Alternatively release straps and attachments from floor track whilst on ground level if possible.
3.62	Go to front of chair and release the front restraints (release brakes and push chair backwards to make space).
3.63	Once restraints are released and put away, the worker pushes the wheelchair onto the wheelchair platform. If a second worker is present, the second worker assists with positioning the wheelchair as required.
3.64	Ensure that the wheelchair brakes are applied & tell the customer what is going to happen. Reassure where necessary.
3.65	Lower the wheelchair or the other worker lowers the platform to the ground following the manufacturer's instructions.

4.0 Post Procedure

- Once the platform has been lowered completely, the worker not using the controls steps onto the platform behind the wheelchair.
- Ensure there is a clear pathway off the platform onto an even surface.
- **Wheelchair brakes are released using lunge or squat posture and the wheelchair is pulled off the platform by walking slowly backwards, looking behind always.**
- Once clear of the platform, the second worker follows the manufacturer's instructions to use the controls to raise the wheelchair platform into the van.
- Close the rear door to the van.

Context and/or Referenced Documents

- Safe Transport of Customers and Cargo Policy
- Victorian home care industry occupational health and safety guide,
- Australian Standards AS/NZS 3856:1998, Hoists and ramps for people with disabilities – Vehicle-mounted

- AS/NZS 2640:1994, Portable ramps for vehicles AS3693 – Wheelchairs—Nomenclature, terms, and definitions Wheelchairs ISO 10542-1:2001, Technical systems and aids for disabled or handicapped persons – wheelchair tie down and occupant – restraint systems
- Handling wheelchairs in & out of the vehicle, Worksafe Victoria, 2010.
- Home Care Common Standards, 1.6 Risk Management, 1.8 Physical Resources
Australian Aged Care Quality Agency

Version History

Version Number	Date	Summary of Changes
1	February 2017	Safe Operating Procedure -Loading Wheelchairs on/off bus
1.1	February 2018	No changes

Authorisation

Authorization	Date	Review Date
Author: Miranda Blok, HSEQRC Coordinator	February 2018	February 2019
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