aidacare
HEALTHCARE EQUIPMENT

PREVENTING TIPPING

WHEELCHAIR ATTENDANT SAFETY GUIDE

What is an attendant wheelchair?

Attendant wheelchairs typically have smaller rear wheels and are propelled by an attendant, rather than the user. The attendant could be a family member, friend, or caregiver/support worker who pushes the wheelchair to move the user between locations.

What you can do

Brakes on: Always lock the brakes before assisting the person into or out of the wheelchair to prevent it from moving unexpectedly. Stand behind the chair and hold the handles/back canes for extra stability.

Footplates: Swing (or remove) the footplates out of the way before transferring into or out of the wheelchair.

Plan your route: Consider potential obstacles. Is it possible to avoid narrow doors and corridors, steps, uneven paths, slippery surfaces and steep footpaths?

Low obstacles: When approaching low obstacles that stop the chair from being pushed forward, turn the wheelchair around and approach backwards, leading with the larger wheels.

Always: Inform the person in the wheelchair of your intentions, such as when tilting the chair.

When pushing: Remain close to the wheelchair, keep your elbows bent and arms near your body.

Parking/stopping the wheelchair: Never park/stop the wheelchair on a slope or uneven surface. **ALWAYS** apply the brakes when you park/stop the wheelchair. Strive for smooth, gentle movements and avoid rushing or handling roughly.

Observe: Keep an eye on the path ahead to avoid sudden changes in level or other hazards.

Be cautious: Of drains, gratings and approach them at a diagonal angle.

Weather: Always take the weather into account, as it can affect the performance and safety of the wheelchair.

Maintenance: Make sure the wheelchair is in good working order - check brakes are functioning properly and tyre pressure is correct (if pneumatic tyre) and wheels secured properly on quick release wheels. Cleaning the wheelchair regularly is important to prevent the buildup of dirt and debris.

What you should not do

If the wheelchair is stuck: Avoid forcing it. Instead, assess the situation to identify the cause and try to resolve the issues carefully.

Heavy bags: Avoid hanging heavy shopping bags or items on the push handles as this will affect the wheelchairs centre of gravity.

Handling: Never lift a wheelchair by the armrests, wheels, or any detachable or movable parts.

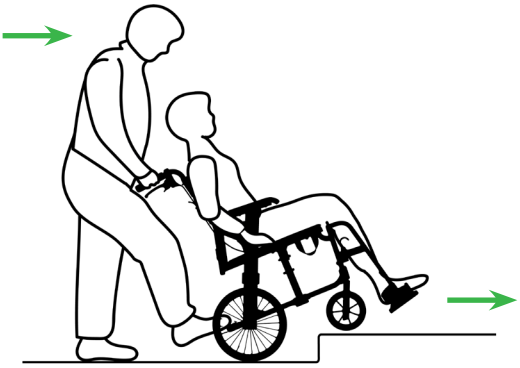
Downward Slopes: Avoid descending a steep slope while facing forwards as this may lead to loss of control, or the user feeling that they may be tipped out. Instead, turn around and go backwards, using your body to provide resistance.

Upward Slope: Avoid steep slopes where possible but, when unavoidable, ensure anti-tippers (If available) are extended and maintain a firm grip on handles.

Navigating Slopes and Uneven Terrain

Moving wheelchair up a kerb with an attendant

1. Push the wheelchair up to the kerb **FEET FIRST**.
2. The attendant should push down on the rear foot peg to slightly incline the chair. **DO NOT** tilt the chair back with the push handles.
3. Once the front wheels are firmly on the ground above the kerb, the rear wheels should be pushed against the kerb to propel the entire chair to rest above the kerb.

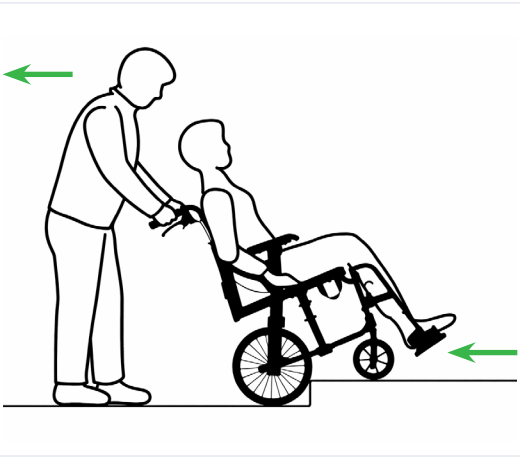


WARNING

WARNING! This should only ever be done with an attendant and not performed by a user on their own. It is very important the above steps are followed to prevent injury to both the user and the attendant.

Moving wheelchair down a kerb or single step with an attendant

1. Reverse the wheelchair up to the kerb **FEET LAST**.
2. The attendant should check for cars or obstructions prior to commencing the descent.
3. The attendant should slowly lower the rear wheels down to the road surface, ensuring not to tip the chair.
4. Once the rear wheels are firmly on the road surface, the front wheels should be slowly lowered onto the road surface.



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