



for BUS Drivers



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Keep Yourself Safe When Working With Wheelchairs

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A part of student transportation includes maneuvering sometimes heavy and rigid wheelchairs in tight spots. As drivers on a schedule, we are often tempted to use brute force when needed, instead of taking the time to position ourselves to keep ourselves safe.

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When a new student to be transported in a wheelchair comes to transportation, usually only general information is provided - the student's disability and assistive devices needed. The driver-trainer or supervisor will find out what kind of wheelchair will be used - rigid frame, collapsible, motorized, or doublewide, and if the student will ride in the bus seat or in the wheelchair (whether upright or reclined). The driver-trainer will assess the pick up and drop off locations for the wheelchair to ensure they are adequate. As a driver, you are aware of general handling instructions for the different types of wheelchairs, and the wheelchair and occupant restraint systems needed. If you need additional information, and it is not provided, please ask for it!

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Here are reminders of five ways to keep you safe while maneuvering a wheelchair:

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- * Follow the lift operating instructions, usually found on a sticker on the lift's frame. Position yourself in a safe location while operating the lift.

- * When having to scoot wheelchair into position in the bus bay, stay as close to the wheelchair as possible and use your knees rather than your back.

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- * Give yourself as much room as possible to move when connecting tie-downs in the close confines of a bus wheelchair bay. Move the wheelchair as far forward as possible to maneuver better. Get down on your knees rather than standing up and reaching over the student where possible.

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- * When helping the student into bus seat, assist, don't lift.

- * Be aware of how the student may react when being moved and secured.

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If you have questions or concerns, please talk with your driver-trainer or supervisor.

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