Policies, Procedures, and Training for Wheelchair Accommodation

DEFINITION: “Wheelchair” means manual wheelchair, power wheelchair, and three-or four-wheeled mobility scooters

NOTE: Shading denotes areas affected by the new US DOT ADA rule on wheelchairs (October 2011)

Policies/rules for passengers to follow

- Wheelchairs/mobility devices accommodated
  - Maneuvering onto lift/ramp
  - Maneuvering within vehicle and fitting in wheelchair securement locations
- Walkers/rollators
- Securement:
  - Mandatory
  - Optional
  - Wheelchairs that cannot be satisfactorily secured will still be allowed to ride
- Transferring to regular seat, especially from scooters
- Seats not to be fully reclined
- Use of seat belts (vehicle-mounted lap and shoulder)
  - Will be encouraged for wheelchair users
  - Can be mandatory only if all passengers on vehicle also must use them

Customer information

- Vehicle features
  - Width and length of lift platforms
  - Width of ramps
  - Width of aisle openings
  - Turns required at entrance
  - Turns required to orient forward-facing in wheelchair securement locations
  - Flip seats in wheelchair securement locations
  - Special stop request notification that wheelchair user wishes to disembark
- Operator duties and assistance
  - Minimal assistance/support going up or down ramps
  - Verbal guidance in making turns and maneuvering
  - Asking passengers in flip seats to move to allow turns and maneuvering
  - Securing wheelchairs, including if mandatory
  - Offering seat belts and assisting in their use
- Vehicle signage related to the above items
- Information on transit-safe (WC19) wheelchairs

Customer programs

- Boarding practice opportunities
- Wheelchair marking and tether strap programs
- Travel training

Venues for communicating customer policies, rules, information, and programs

- Web pages
- Brochures (including for vehicle operators to hand out)

Copyright © 2012 Douglas J. Cross Transportation Consulting
• Rider’s guides
• Agency newsletters and “take one” publications
• Public service announcements
• Phone queue announcements
• Press releases or informational flyers, especially to disability service organizations
• On-board vehicle signage (ad cards, special posters, special signage)

Operating procedures
• Assisting wheelchair users on lifts or ramps
  o What types of assistance are required
  o What techniques are to be used
  o Operator ergonomics/body mechanics safety
  o What to do if passenger needs more assistance than can be provided
• What to do if wheelchair won’t fit:
  o Lift or ramp
  o Aisle
  o Wheelchair space
• Securement
  o How to secure wheelchairs
  o What to do if passenger refuses securement
  o What to do if wheelchair cannot be satisfactorily secured
• Seat belts
  o How to offer/use seat belts
  o What to do if passenger refuses seat belts
• Asking other passengers to move from wheelchair securement location, or temporarily to allow maneuvering in aisle or into wheelchair
• What to do if there is a disagreement with the wheelchair user about any of the above
• What to do if the wheelchair user cannot board due to any of the above

Operator training and education
• Training curricula
  o Specialized content for wheelchair accommodation and securement
  o Procedures shown with photos and diagrams
  o Photos and descriptions of different types of wheelchairs and mobility devices
  o Policies and procedures that operators are expected to follow
  o Specialized guidance and “scripts” for customer relations regarding wheelchair access and securement
• Training tools
  o Different types of wheelchairs for hands-on practice
  o Volunteer customer or employee wheelchair users for demonstration in hands-on practice
  o Vehicles and/or indoor securement platform for hands-on practice
  o Different types of lifts or ramps on vehicles used in hands-on practice
  o Include multiple boardings by various types of wheelchair users in behind-the-wheel training
  o Reference card with basic rules & procedures to carry in-service
• Testing for proficiency
• Practice and refresher opportunities
• Reminder and update bulletins
• Supervisor training and resources
• Training and information for customer service representatives