

Wheelchair accessible vehicle guidance

This document is for guidance only and specific passengers may have different requirements that will be evaluated at the transport assessment stage. Further information can be found in the additional guidance section or by contacting Integrated Passenger Transport.

1. Transport assessment

A transport assessment will be completed by North Yorkshire Council before the contract award is finalised and it should be noted that no offer of a contract is final until a satisfactory assessment has been done. The appropriate transport assessment must be present on the vehicle during the contracted journey and will define which wheelchair occupant restraint and tie-downs can be used.

Each assessment is done for a specific vehicle and the contractor must notify North Yorkshire Council if they wish to change the vehicle or if they become aware that the wheelchair specified in the transport assessment has changed. Under no circumstances should you continue to operate the contract where you are aware that there is a change to a passengers wheelchair or needs.

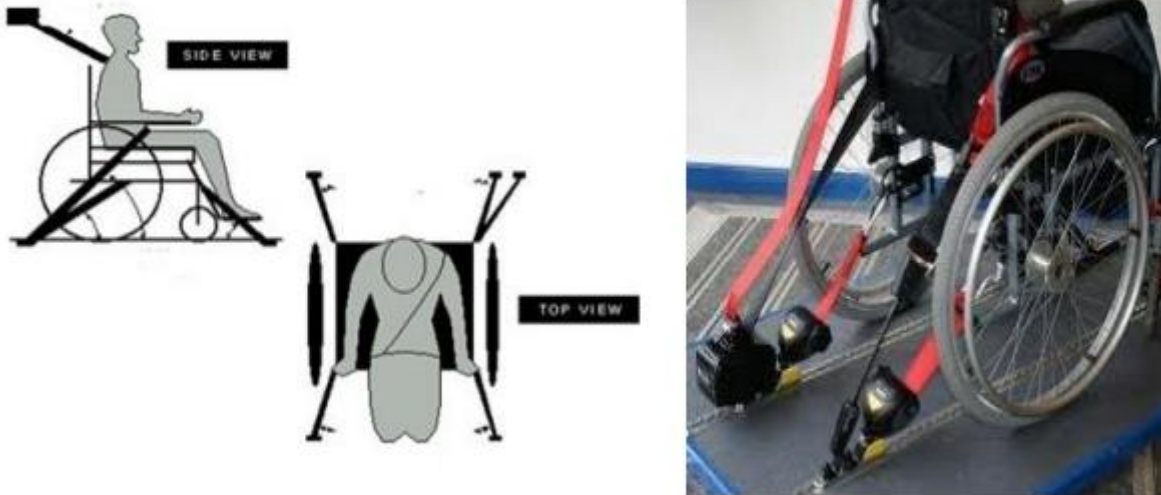
2. Occupant restraint

The passenger travelling in wheelchair situ and the wheelchair must both be restrained correctly. The occupant restraint system should be no more than five years old and be rated for the wheelchair and occupant being transported. If a specific occupant restraint system is required then this will be specified in the transport assessment and must be complied with. The occupant restraint normally consists of belts connecting three anchorage points. The occupant restraint should be fitted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

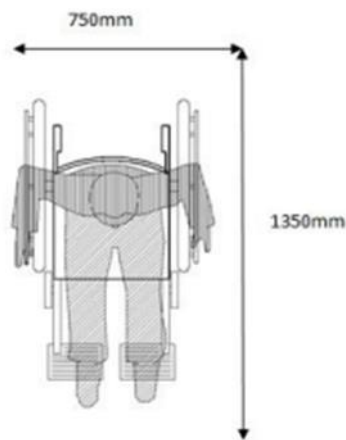
The wheelchair tie-downs should be no more than five years old and be of the same specification and type. Ratchet clamp type tie-downs must not be used. Tie downs must comply with the rated capacity specified in the transport assessment. If specific tie downs are required then this will be specified in the transport assessment and must be complied with. The tie-downs must be secured to the correct anchorage points on the wheelchair. Winches must not be used to secure a wheelchair.

A wheelchair lap belt must be used but please note that this is not part of the occupant restraint system unless specified.

Tie down and occupant restraint indicative diagram – please refer to equipment manufacturers guidelines for precise advice.



3. Space around wheelchair

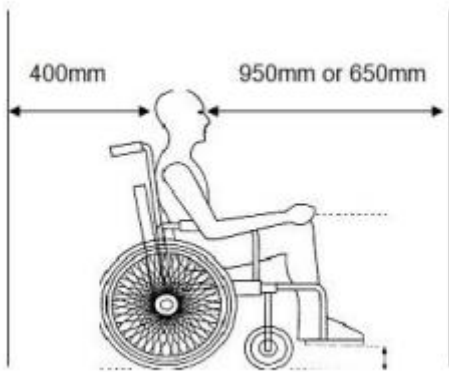


Minimum footprint required:

There must be sufficient space in the vehicle for the vehicle crew to assist the passenger without unnecessary contact with other passengers or other parts of the vehicle whilst boarding and alighting or during the journey.

There must also be sufficient space to allow the passenger assistant to support the passenger as required and to allow for emergency access and egress from the vehicle as a guideline this should be 300mm.

There must also be sufficient height to allow the passenger to access the vehicle safely and travel their normal seating position this is usually at least 1400mm.



4. Doorways

The doorways must be large enough so that the passenger can be assisted safely on and off the vehicle.

5. Direction of travel

Passengers must not be carried in wheelchairs facing sideways. Passengers must travel forward-facing unless provided with a vertical bulkhead against which to travel rear-facing. Wheelchair accessible taxis with integral bulkheads and suitable wheelchair restraints may offer this rear-facing facility. It is not advisable for wheelchair users to travel rear-facing against the back of a vehicle seat because the backs of seats are rarely vertical. The passenger must travel in the upright seating position unless otherwise agreed on the transport assessment.

6. Instructions

There must be instructions available, for the vehicle crew, for the use of the occupant restraints, wheelchair tie-downs and any lift or winch fitted.

7. Wheelchair lifts

The lift must be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and certified every twelve months. The appropriate service and safety certification must be kept on the vehicle file. The lift must comply with all necessary regulations.

8. Ramps

Ramps must be approved for the use for which they are intended and have a sufficient safe working load and the appropriate service and safety certification must be kept on the vehicle file. They must comply will all necessary regulations.

9. Winches

Winches must be approved for the use for which they are intended and the appropriate service and safety certification must be kept on the vehicle file. They must comply with all necessary regulations.

10. Other equipment

An unoccupied wheelchair or other walking aids must be adequately secured within the vehicle. Bags should not be transported attached to the wheelchair. Any wheelchair accessories that are not required for transport should be removed from the wheelchair whilst on the vehicle.

11. Training

The crew must be trained to use the wheelchair occupant restraints, wheelchair tie-downs, ramps, passenger lifts and winches required and be familiar with the equipment used.

The crew must also be trained to assist a passenger that travels in wheelchair situ boarding and leaving the vehicle safely and with dignity. The crew must be familiar with basic safety checks on a wheelchair and the correct procedures for using a tail-lift for a passenger that travels in wheelchair situ. North Yorkshire Council staff can offer guidance in this area where required.

12. Powered wheelchairs

The crew should comply with any additional instructions relating to the transport of powered wheelchairs specified in the transport assessment. Passengers must not be permitted to power on or off the vehicle or tail-lift under any circumstances.

Additional guidance can be found in these documents:-

1. The Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs in Buses Code of Practice VSE 87/1.
2. Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme
3. Wheelchair occupant restraint and tie-downs manufacturers
4. MHRA Guidance on the Safe Use of Wheelchairs and Vehicle-mounted Passenger Lifts.
5. MHRA Guidance on the Safe Transportation of Wheelchairs.
6. Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee Revised Accessibility Specification for Small Buses designed to carry 9 to 22 passengers.
7. PAS 900:2010 Code of Practice for Wheelchair Passport Schemes.