



## WRHA VOLUNTEER SERVICES GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINE MANUAL

<b>Good Practice Guideline:</b> Wheelchair Safety – Direct Service and Collaborative Volunteers	Reference # 6.5	Page 1 of 2
	Approved: J. Edwards	Date: 15/09/04 Reviewed/ Revised: November 2011

### **GOOD PRACTICE DESIRED OUTCOME:**

The safety of WRHA clients and volunteers will be ensured.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES:**

Volunteers, who may be called upon to assist clients in wheelchairs, must follow these guidelines to wheelchair safety:

- Always introduce yourself. Be friendly, co-operative and cheerful.
- Always check the hand brakes, located on both back wheels, and ensure that they are locked when the wheelchair is not in motion.
- Always ensure that the hand brakes are disengaged when putting the chair into motion.
- Always ask the client if they are ready before you begin moving the wheelchair. Inform the client where you are taking them.
- Always ensure that the client's arms are either resting inside or directly over the arm rests, not over the side of the wheelchair.
- Always ensure that the client's feet are securely placed on footrests. Check for anything, i.e. blankets, sweaters, which may get caught in wheels.
- Always turn the wheelchair around so that it is descending backwards when going down an incline, entering an elevator or going over a curb.
- When negotiating rough ground, steps or curbs, tilt the chair back onto its two large wheels and proceed. It may seem awkward but the person in the chair is more secure and is less likely to fall out.



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- Avoid quick, short stops as this may jar the person forward.
- When guiding a client out of their wheelchair always make sure the hand brakes are in place and the foot rests are folded up and out of the way. Allow the client enough time for their body to adjust to the standing position.
- When proceeding through a door that swings away from you push it open with your seat and pull the chair in backwards. If the door swings in toward you, open the door, hold and push the wheelchair through.
- To avoid injury to both clients and volunteers, **volunteers MUST NOT transfer clients** who are unable to get out of the wheelchair on their own but wish to be moved.
- When talking to the client, do so at eye level whenever possible.
- If the wheelchair is not working properly, please seek the advice from your placement supervisor about appropriate referrals for repairing/replacing the clients' wheelchair.

Source:                    New

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