

# SAFETY TIPS

Wheelchair Sales & Service, Inc.

## Special Points of Interest:

- *Get familiar with your new equipment*
- *Keep under control at all times.*
- *Maintain your equipment*



### **PATIENCE**

Always start slowly. You will grow into the feel of your new wheelchair. By trying to do too much too soon, you could run the unnecessary risk of injury to yourself and others.

### **TEAMWORK**

Have someone assist as you familiarize yourself with your wheelchair. Each new maneuver could pose a potential risk of injury. Backward movements are especially tricky. Always have someone working with you until you attain a level of proficiency when operating your wheelchair. Whenever anyone assists you, it is important that they read the owner's manual prior to getting started.

### **CONTROL**

Avoid unnecessary risks such as high speeds, quick turns and leaning backward. In addition, avoid running over objects which could cause you to stop suddenly or capsize.

### **SAFETY CHECK**

You should always perform a safety check of your wheelchair before each use.

### **CONSULT**

Talk to your doctor, nurse or therapist prior to operating your wheelchair to determine

safe methods of operation that suit you best.

### **WEIGHT SHIFT**

Certain shifts in your weight while dressing or performing a physical activity may create a potential hazard. If these functions are not done properly, they could result in a fall or capsizing of the chair. To help prevent this: Position the front casters forward.

- Make sure the anti-tippers (if installed) are locked and in the downward position.
- Move the rear of the chair so that it is against a wall.
- Lock both rear wheels.

### **WHEELIE**

This is a dangerous maneuver and we do not recommend its use without assistance.

### **DOORWAYS**

The safest way to operate the chair is on level floors that are free of obstacles. Whenever possible use a ramp to enter or exit a facility. Keeping your hands on the push rims will allow you to maintain maximum balance. Do not try to force yourself over an obstruction by propulsion and never use the sides of a doorway to pull yourself through a passageway.

### **EXTENDING, REACHING OR LEANING**

It is best to avoid reaching or leaning forward when operating your wheelchair. If circumstances arise that make leaning forward unavoidable you should

- Position the casters in the forward position.
- Maneuver your chair as close to the desired object as possible.
- Secure yourself with one hand by holding on to the arm rest or rear wheel.
- Do not lock the rear wheels.
- It is best to avoid applying pressure on the footrest.

### **NAVIGATING INCLINES**

When traveling up or down a hill, it is recommended that you maintain a straight course. Never turn on a hill due to the danger of toppling. Avoid stopping, it can potentially cause you to lose control of the chair.

- Maintain a slow and controlled speed, by applying steady pressure on the push rims.
- Do not use the brakes to slow down or stop the wheelchair, this could cause it to seize up, causing you to lose control.



### **CURBS**

When navigating curbs it is suggested that:

- Whenever possible get help from an assistant (if you have assistance make sure that your chair is equipped with push handles).
- Avoid hard impacts when descending a curb. A hard impact could adversely affect the chair.
- If being assisted, the chair should be lowered, by gently rolling the rear wheels down the curb, from a backward position.
- Never try to scale or descend curbs that exceed a normal height.



**SAFETY TIPS**

**STAIRS**

When going up or down a staircase you should:

- Always use two or more assistants.
- One assistant should be positioned at the rear of the chair and one assistant should be positioned at the front of the chair.
- Always secure the chair by holding non-detachable positions on the frame.
- When ascending a staircase, position the chair backward.
- When descending a staircase, position the chair forward, tilt the chair back and roll down one step at a time.
- The assistant to the rear is always in control
- The chair must have push handles when negotiating stairs.

**STREETS**

Always use extreme caution when crossing streets. Reflective tape on the chair or your clothing will make you more visible to drivers.

Check local laws regarding wheelchair use as they vary from state to state.

**MOTOR VEHICLES**

Do not drive or transport with a patient in the wheelchair.

**WEIGHT LIMITATIONS**

Do not exceed the 250 pound weight limitation of the chair.

**ACCESSORIES**

Certain maneuvers should not be attempted without the proper equipment.

The following is a partial list of accessories available and when they could be utilized:

- Anti-tippers:  
When leaning backwards or tilting chair.  
When going up inclines or over obstacles.  
When performing a wheelie.

- Canes
- Walkers
- Walker Accessories
  - Rollators
  - Crutches
  - Knee Walker
  - Bath Safety
  - Cast Protectors
  - Bath Benches
  - Transfer Benches
- Elevated Toilet Seats/Safety Rails
  - Commodes
  - I.V. Stands
  - Accessories
- Medical Aids for Daily Living
  - Dressing Aids
  - Bathing Aids
  - Eating/Feeding Aids
  - Independent Living Aids



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14001 West Illinois Hwy  
New Lenox, Il 60451  
Tel: 815-62-6337  
Fax: 815-462-3748

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[www.WSSMedical.com](http://www.WSSMedical.com)