

Safe Personal Vehicle Travel Guide for Wheelchair Users

When traveling in a personal vehicle, it is always recommended that a person using a wheelchair transfer to a standard vehicle seat and use the built in seatbelt. If transferring to a standard vehicle seat is not possible, then follow the instructions below for safe transport of a person using a wheelchair.

It is best to use a wheelchair that is referred to as a “WC 19” specified chair. This means the wheelchair has met special requirements for use as a seat in a van. This includes being crash tested. These chairs will have four points where tie-down hooks can be easily attached. These points are marked with a hook symbol (see Image 1). Please contact your wheelchair vendor for questions about WC19 wheelchairs.

If a WC19 chair is not available, attach the tie-down straps to non-movable and non-removable parts of the wheelchair such as at frame junctions.

Always face the person in the wheelchair forward. Use the van shoulder and lap seatbelt system (see Image 2). Wheelchair mounted postural support belts are only for helping to maintain seat position and posture. They have not been crash tested.

Secure the wheelchair using an approved four-point tie-down system or an installed power lockdown docking system.

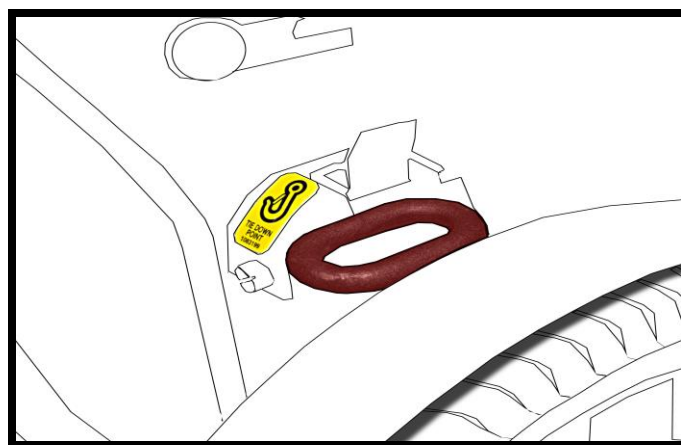


Image 1: Tie down hook point and label with hook symbol.

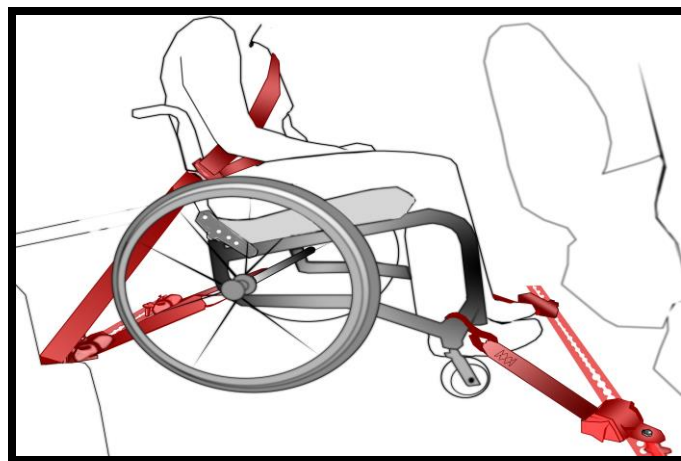


Image 2: Use the car or van shoulder and lap seatbelt system.

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All tie-down straps should be tight with no slack. Attach the rear straps to a van tie-down point that is directly behind the tie-down hook point of the wheelchair (see Image 3). Attach the front straps to a van tie-down point that is wider than the wheelchair (see Image 4).

Place the lap portion of the seatbelt low across the person in the wheelchair's waist. Do not place the seatbelt around or over the armrests of the wheelchair. Sometimes, the belt may need to be placed between the wheelchair back and the armrest.

Place the shoulder belt over the middle of the shoulder and center of the chest in contact with the body. The person in the wheelchair should sit as close to upright as possible. Transport in a tilted or reclined position is not recommended.

There are also power lockdown docking systems for securing wheelchairs. These systems require the installation of wheelchair specific brackets to the wheelchair and a docking system mounted onto the floor of the van. A mobility dealer would be able to install this type of system. To find mobility dealer in your area please visit:

<http://www.nmeda.com/>

For more detailed information and definitions of terms, please visit:

www.travelsafer.org or www.ercwts.org

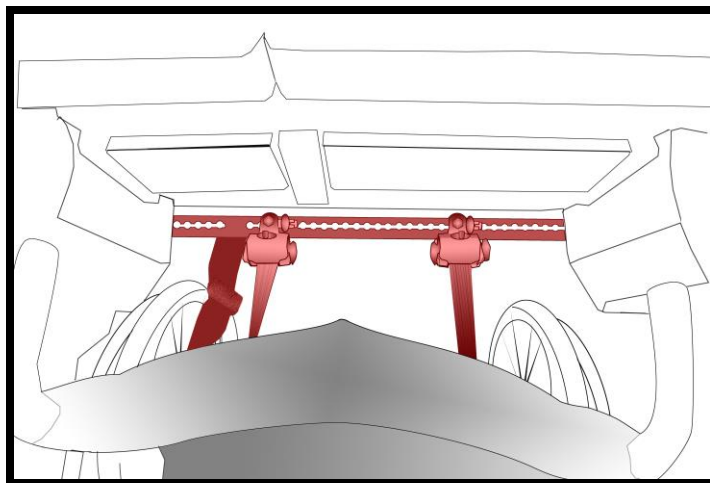


Image 3: Anchor rear straps directly behind the tie-down point of the wheelchair.

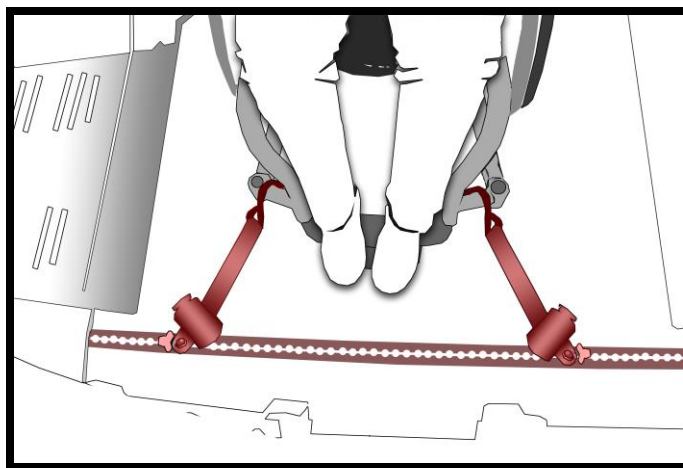


Image 4: Anchor the front straps to a tie-down point that is wider than the wheelchair.