

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



BACK



NEXT

LOADING AND UNLOADING



LOADING AND UNLOADING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. School bus driver
 - a. The school bus driver is the person who loads the student onto the school bus at the site, both pick up and school. At the destination, the school bus driver unloads the student.
 - b. In some school districts, there is a monitor who is responsible for loading and unloading. Make sure that you know exactly who should receive the student in both places.
2. Parent or caregiver
 - a. Before school, the parent/caregiver makes sure that the student is at the curb on time with or in proper equipment. The parent/caregiver supervises the student until the school bus arrives.
 - b. After school, the parent or caregiver meets the student at the curb on time.
 - c. A parent or caregiver may want to (or be required to) help with loading (helping the student onto the bus or fastening the seat belt or wheelchair positioning belt). It is still the responsibility of the school bus driver to recheck and make sure the wheelchair and the student are properly secured before moving the school bus.
3. Teacher
 - a. The teacher's responsibilities are usually similar to those of the parent or caregiver: to meet the student upon arrival at school and to have the student at the pick-up site on time and supervise the student until the school bus arrives.
4. Bus attendant
 - a. Sometimes another adult assists the school bus driver. These people may be called aides, attendants, or monitors.
 - b. The attendant may be assigned to help all students or one particular student.
 - c. While on the bus, the attendant is usually under the authority of the school bus driver.

LOADING AND UNLOADING WITH A WHEELCHAIR LIFT

1. General guidelines when the student is on the lift platform
 - a. The student always faces away from the school bus.
 - b. The wheelchair brakes are locked.
 - c. The roll stops must be in the completely up position.
2. Loading and unloading process
 - a. Open and secure the lift door.
 - b. Use the hand-held control to activate the unfolding of the platform.
 - c. Lower the platform until it rests entirely on the ground.
 - d. Unfold the outboard roll stop.
 - e. Fasten the wheelchair seat belt around the student.
 - f. Back the student onto the lift. Always face the student away from the school bus.

NOTE: To unload a student with a motorized wheelchair

- The student should NOT drive onto the lift unless cleared to do so by the entire IEP team.
 - Disengage the motor and push the chair onto the platform manually.
 - Consult with a parent/caregiver or a therapist about how to secure the chair on the lift.
- g. Lock the wheelchair brakes.
 - h. Make sure the roll stops are in the completely up position.
 - i. Turn off the wheelchair power. In some cases, the motor must be disengaged to secure the wheelchair. Ask the parent/caregiver or therapist for guidance.
 - j. Have the student hold onto the handrails if able.
 - k. Tell the student to keep arms and legs within the lift area and clear of moving parts.
 - l. Operate the lift controls. Stand next to the platform at the front corner. Keep one hand on the wheelchair as it is raised and operate the controls with the other hand.
 - m. When the platform reaches floor level, set down or hang up the controls.
 - n. Release the wheelchair brakes and push the wheelchair into the bus.
 - o. Set the wheelchair brakes.

- p. Fold the lift into the travel position.
- q. Position the student according to the IEP. Either transfer the student to a regular forward facing school bus seat using proper lifting techniques or secure the wheelchair and the student.

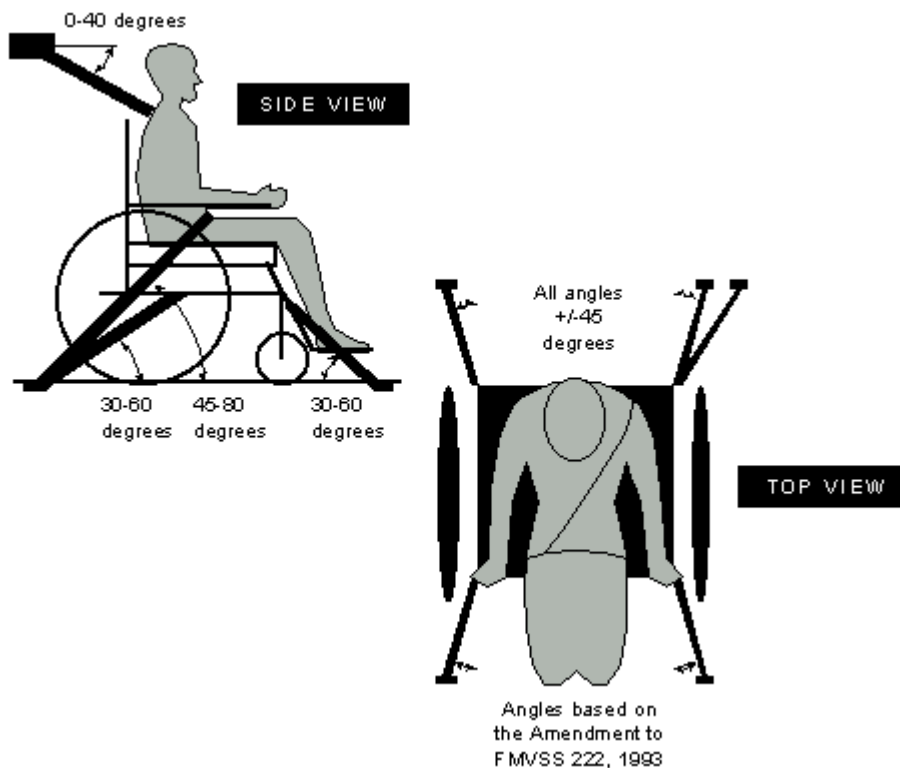
See [Handout #8](#) (Emergency Situations) for proper lifting techniques.

When loading and unloading, remember:
Tell the student what you are going to do before you do it.

FMVSS 222 SECUREMENT SYSTEM

1. A 7-point system: 4 points to secure the wheelchair; 3 points to secure the student:

The shoulder belt **MUST** be attached to the vehicle. The lap belt can be attached to the wheelchair 4-point system or to the vehicle.
2. Wheelchair must be forward-facing
 - a. The securement system is designed to be used with the wheelchair facing forward and is tested that way. All new school buses manufactured with wheelchair securement systems since January 1994 have forward-facing systems.
 - b. Wheelchair securement positions are inherently safer and wheelchairs and the human body are better capable of surviving a frontal crash when facing forward.
 - c. Sled tests show that side facing wheelchairs are unstable and often collapse.
 - d. Lap and shoulder belt restraint systems are designed to be most effective in the frontal impact position (most common fatal collisions type for school buses) and wheelchairs are believed to be stronger in frontal loading conditions as opposed to side loading positions.



WHERE TO ANCHOR THE WHEELCHAIR

1. Use the securement system in the school buses in your school district.
2. CAUTION:
 - Do not jerry-rig a securement for a wheelchair.
 - Only use a 4-point tie-down system with a separate restraint for the occupant. At a minimum, the front straps must be the same type and the back straps must be the same type.
 - Don't interchange systems. Use only one manufacturer's tie-down system for each wheelchair.
 - Never place a wheelchair in front of an emergency exit door, even if the wheelchair securement position is provided at such a location.

SECURING THE WHEELCHAIR

1. First, follow the manufacturer's guidelines for the particular wheelchair and for your system. If you don't have the manufacturer's instructions, ask for them.
2. Center the wheelchair with the anchorages on the floor. Leave room for the rear belt to be secured at a 45-degree angle from the floor.

3. Set the wheelchair brakes on both sides.
4. Turn off the wheelchair power.
5. Attach the wheelchair straps to the wheelchair at 4 points.
 - Attach the straps along the wall first.
 - Then attach the straps along the aisle.
6. Attach the straps properly.
 - Do not attach the straps to the wheels or any detachable portion of the wheelchair.
 - Don't let the straps bend around any object. they should have a clear path from the floor to the wheelchair frame.
 - Keep the straps away from sharp edges or corners.
 - Do not crisscross or twist the straps.
 - Make sure that the belts are at a 30 to 60-degree angle; a 45-degree angle is best.
 - Never use the 4-point system without also using the 3-point lap and shoulder belt.
7. Make sure that the wheelchair doesn't have forward or reverse movement.
8. If you can't get the wheelchair attached properly, contact dispatch.

Wheelchair Securement Checklist

- The wheelchair is forward-facing.
- The wheelchair is centered on the anchorage.
- Brakes are set and power is off.
- The wheelchair is anchored at 4 points using the manufacturer's instructions.
- The straps are attached properly:
 - They are at as close to a 45 degree angle as possible.
 - The angle is no less than 30 degrees and no more than 60 degrees.
 - They are not attached to the wheels or any detachable portion of the wheelchair.
 - They do not bend around any object.
 - They are away from sharp edges or corners.
 - They don't crisscross.
 - They are not twisted.

- There is no forward or reverse movement.

SECURING THE STUDENT

1. Always use a 3-point system to secure the student. The occupant restraint system is separate from the wheelchair securement. The 3-point system secures the student's pelvis and torso.
2. The occupant restraint system can be attached in several ways:
 - To the school bus anchorage points.
 - To the wheelchair securement system.
 - To the wheelchair itself.
3. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
4. General guidelines
 - Position the lap belt:
 - Over the pelvic bones, not the abdomen.
 - Inside the arm rests between the side panels and the cushion.
 - Adjust the lap belt so it is snug.
 - Position the shoulder belt so it does not cross the student's face or neck. Never position the shoulder belt under the student's arm where it would cross the rib cage.
 - Adjust the shoulder belt to achieve firm but comfortable tension.
 - Never twist the belts. The belts should always lie flat against the body.

THE SEATING PLAN

1. Things to consider:
 - a. Loading order.
 - b. Medical conditions:
 - Who is medically fragile?
 - Who is prone to seizures?
 - Who is young or in a child safety seat?
 - Who has a respiratory condition?
 - Who needs extra lower extremity support?

- c. Evacuation:
 - Which students can evacuate themselves?
 - Which students need help?
 - Which students could help others?
 - Who is in a child safety seat?
- d. Behavior: Which students are compatible and which aren't?
- e. Supervision: Who needs to be monitored, either for behavior or for a medical condition?

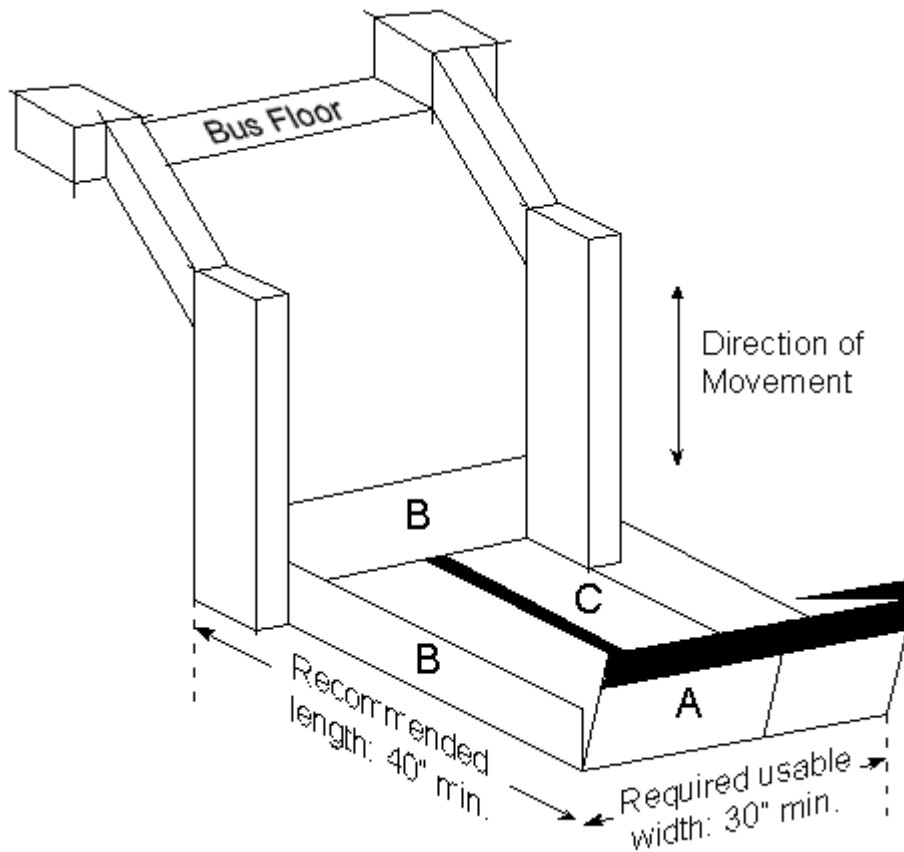
2. Put the plan in writing.

THE SAFE STOPPING PLAN

1. Things to consider:
 - a. Where to stop the school bus so the wheelchair lift operates properly.
 - b. Where to stop so that you can be seen by other traffic.
 - c. How and when to use the warning systems.
 - d. Where to stop if the original site is not available.
2. Put the plan in writing.

THE WHEELCHAIR LIFT

THE WHEELCHAIR LIFT SYSTEM



- A. Automatic Safety Barrier
- B. Side, Rear Safety Barriers recommended 1.5♦ min.
- C. Folding, non-skid Platform

A hand rail and safety belt are also recommended

WHEELCHAIR LIFT SAFETY FEATURES

1. The outboard roll stop is activated by the up and down buttons. When the up button is pushed, the outboard roll stop rotates to the vertical position before the platform raises. When the down button is pushed, the outboard roll stop does not rotate to the horizontal position until the platform is lowered fully to the ground.
2. The inboard roll stop position is also activated by the up and down buttons. When the down button is pushed, the inboard roll stop rotates to a vertical position. It remains in the vertical position while the wheelchair is loaded or unloaded on the ground. When the up

button is pushed, the inboard roll stop rotates to the horizontal position when the platform reaches the vehicle floor level.

3. The bridge plate rotates to the horizontal position when the unfold button is pushed. It rotates to the vertical position when the fold button is pushed.
4. Interlock devices prevent operation of the lift or the school bus when it is not safe. Interlock devices can work in a variety of ways:
 - a. They lock the school bus transmission in place when the lift is deployed.
 - b. They don't allow the lift to be deployed until the school bus is in PARK and the emergency brake is set.
 - c. They stall the school bus engine if the lift is deployed and the emergency brake is released or the transmission is shifted from PARK.

Discontinue operation immediately if any of these safety features do not work properly.

WHEELCHAIR LIFT AND SCHOOL BUS POSITION

1. Before using the wheelchair lift, park the vehicle on level ground. Do not park on a slope.
2. The platform must rest completely on the ground. Choose a place to load without obstacles to interfere with the operation of the lift.

WHO CAN USE A WHEELCHAIR LIFT

1. Wheelchair lifts are designed to be used by:
 - Anyone using a wheelchair or other mobility aid
 - Someone sitting in a folding chair
 - A standee: a person who has difficulty using steps (for example someone using a walker, crutches, braces, a cane). Due to liability, schools should never have someone stand on a lift. In the school bus carry a loaner wheelchair or a stroller for lift use.
2. Lift attendants should not ride on the platform with the passenger.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

1. If you experience a power or equipment failure and you have a child on the lift, you can operate the lift manually. Review the manufacturer's instructions for operating the wheelchair lift on your bus manually.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

THE EVACUATION PLAN

1. Things to consider:
 - a. What are the students' abilities?
 - Which students can come off the school bus by themselves?
 - Which students can be removed from the bus without their wheelchair (or specialized seat or child safety seat)?
 - Which students must not be removed from their wheelchair (or specialized seat or child safety seat)?
 - b. Which students have essential equipment that also must be removed?
 - c. What equipment do you need for an evacuation?
 - At a minimum, you need a belt cutter and a fire blanket.
 - d. What personnel will be available to help you? Which students can help others get off the school bus?
 - e. Where are emergency services along your route? (Fire stations, hospitals, police, clinics)
2. Things to include in the written plan:
 - a. A diagram of the seating pattern that identifies where each student sits.
 - b. Information on how to evacuate each student.
 - c. The location of emergency evacuation equipment and exits.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

1. Stay calm.
2. Stop as soon as possible in a safe place: off the traveled roadway, preferably in a parking lot or driveway.
3. Secure the vehicle.
 - Put the transmission in PARK.
 - Set the emergency brake.
 - Turn off the ignition.
4. Take the keys.

5. Contact dispatch. Report the emergency and ask for help (e.g., medical assistance, another vehicle).
6. If appropriate, use warning devices to alert other motorists you are stopped.
7. If you decide to evacuate:
 - Explain what you are doing using simple, concise directions. Use this approach with both the students and outside help if you need to enlist it.
 - Use all exits if possible.
 - Once students are off the school bus, move them to a safe place away from the school bus.

GENERAL LIFTING GUIDELINES

1. Never lift anyone more than half your weight. Ask for help if you are unsure.
2. Test your lifting ability with a small movement that can be stopped. If the student weighs too much, use another method.
3. Process for lifting a student:
 - a. Clear the path to the exit.
 - b. Tell the student exactly what you are going to do before you do it.
 - c. If necessary, cut the seat belt and other positioning straps.
 - d. Stand balanced with your feet shoulder width apart. Face the student. Face in the direction you want to go, if possible.
 - e. Get a good grip on the student or the student's clothing. Use your palms, not just your fingers.
 - f. Squat down but keep your heels off the floor. Get as close to the student as you can.
 - g. Lift gradually (without jerking) using your leg, abdominal, and buttock muscles. Keep the student as close to you as possible.
 - h. Keep your chin tucked in so as to keep a relatively straight back and neck line.
 - i. Lift straight up; avoid twisting at the waist while carrying the students.
 - j. Take small steps. Keep the student close to your body.

- k. With students with poor muscle control:
- Curl the student as much as possible.
 - Keep the student's arms and legs from flopping.
 - Support the student's head and neck.

ONE-PERSON LIFT

1. Follow general lifting guidelines.
2. Pass the student's near arm over your shoulder.
3. Place one of your arms behind the student's shoulders with your hand under the student's other arm.
4. Place your other arm under the student's knees.
5. Squat down, feet shoulder width apart.
6. Lift the student with the load equally divided between both arms, holding the student close to you.

2-PERSON LIFT

1. Follow general lifting guidelines.
2. Move the student in a wheelchair as close to the exit as possible. Slide the student on a seat next to the aisle.
3. The taller person stands behind the student and the other person stands in front of the student and off to the side.
4. If the student is in a wheelchair, the person in front should remove the armrests and fold up the footrests.
5. The person in back reaches under the student's arms and either grasps right hand to student's right wrist and left hand to student's left wrist or clasps hands across the student's chest.
6. The person in front lifts the lower extremities under the thighs and hips.
7. Squat down and lift together on a count of 3.
8. Move to the designated area and lower the student on the count of 3.

BLANKET DRAG

1. Follow general lifting guidelines.
2. Fold a blanket in half and place in on the floor next to the student.

3. Lower the student's legs onto the blanket first, then the head. Place the student with his head toward the exit.
4. Wrap the blanket around the student to prevent arms and legs from being caught on obstacles.
5. Grasp the blanket near the student's head and drag the student to the exit.

PRACTICE

1. Practice lifts and the blanket drag.
2. Practice operating the lift manually.
3. Conduct regular evacuation drills with the students on the school grounds with school personnel observing. Some may be physically unable to fully participate in the drills but they should always be walked through the drill.

USED CHILD SAFETY SEAT CHECKLIST

<p>1. Does the seat have a label showing it was manufactured after January 1, 1981?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: <input type="checkbox"/> NO:	<p>Continue</p> <p>Discard the Seat!</p>
<p>2. Does the seat have a label showing that it meets all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: <input type="checkbox"/> NO:	<p>Continue</p> <p>Discard the Seat!</p>
<p>3. Has the seat been recalled for safety defects? (To find out, call the Auto Safety Hotline* and give them the model number and date of manufacture of the seat.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO: <input type="checkbox"/> YES:	<p>Continue</p> <p>Have the defects been corrected?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES: Continue</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO: Discard the Seat!</p>
<p>4. Has the seat been involved in a car crash?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES:	<p>Discard the seat!</p>

NO: Continue

5. Are there any cracks, bends, or breaks in the plastic shell or metal frame?

YES: Discard the seat!

NO: Continue

6. Do you have a copy of the manufacturer's instructions?

YES: Continue

NO: Call [Auto Safety Hotline*](#) for telephone number of manufacturer to request instructions

7. Does the seat have all its parts: harness straps, retainer clips, padding, shield, tether straps, and bolts?

YES: Continue

NO: Discard or obtain replacement from the manufacturer

8. Are the harness straps worn or frayed?

YES: Discard or obtain replacement from the manufacturer

NO: Continue

9. Does the buckle area show signs of rust?

YES: Discard or obtain replacement from the manufacturer

NO: Discard the Seat!

10. Does the buckle mechanism latch, remain latched, and unlatch smoothly?

YES: Continue

NO: Discard or obtain replacement from the manufacturer