

**November
2018**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH/ DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION

SAFETY ALERT

Transportation Safety- Properly Securing a Wheelchair During Transport

Dangers

Even if you aren't involved in an accident, a non-secured wheelchair poses many risks.

- The rider can slide out of the wheelchair
- The wheelchair could roll in the cabin
- The wheelchair could tip over
- Injuries can occur:
 - Head injuries
 - Neck injuries
 - Broken bones
- Existing injuries could also be exacerbated.

For Additional Help: Call the Clinical Services Bureau or Regional Offices for assistance:

- CSB: 1-505-841-2848
- Metro: 1-505-841-5500
- SE: 1-575-624-6100
- SW: 1-575-528-5180
- NE: 1-575-758-5934
- NW: 1-505-863-9937



Resources:

<https://www.nmeda.com/4-point-tiedown-safety-tips/>

<http://www.aandjcommercial.com/video-demos>

DDSD and DHI jointly review data from the Incident Management Bureau (IMB) on a monthly basis and have identified an urgent health and safety issue related to properly securing wheelchairs during transport.

Important Information:

- There were 21 cases investigated by DHI-IMB in FY17 and FY18 of injuries caused by the failure of staff to properly secure a wheelchair before transporting an individual.
- Providers should have internal policies and procedures related to transportation safety and guidelines.
- Anyone who transports people in wheelchairs must be trained on proper wheelchair transport.

Safety Tips for Wheelchair Transport

1. Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions.
2. Always position the wheelchair and rider facing forward.
3. Do not attach tiedowns to adjustable, moving or removable parts of the wheelchair.
4. The program of training in the operation of a motor vehicle should include at a minimum:
 - Instruction on inspecting various wheelchair lifts, associated locking mechanisms and that other equipment are in safe working order for agency vehicles;
 - Instruction and hands on practice in the operation of wheelchair lock-downs/tie-downs and safety;
 - Identification of safe locations for boarding and disembarking passengers to enter or exit the vehicle;
 - Hands on practice in the operation of each type of vehicle provided by the agency under the direction of an instructor designated by the agency.