

Skilled Nursing Policy and Procedure

Subject/Title: Motorized Mobility Aids: Wheelchairs, Carts, and Scooters

References: Pendulum, 4600B Montgomery Blvd. NE, Suite 204, Albuquerque, NM, 87109, 888-815-8250,
www.PendulumRisk.com

I. POLICY GUIDELINES

Clinical policies and procedures (guidelines) are written with the understanding that “professional nursing judgment” remains at the center of the delivery of good resident care

The facility promotes that residents with disabilities and physical limitations have access to motorized devices that improve their independence. Motorized mobility aids may improve access to the facility and services.

In order to provide a safe environment for residents, employees, and visitors, the facility maintains a policy for use of motorized mobility aids, whether they are wheelchairs, carts, or scooters.

Orientation for safe use of motorized mobility aids augments safety for the resident using these devices as well as other residents, visitors, and employees.

Routine inspection of motorized mobility aids promotes the maintenance of equipment that remains in good working order.

II. DEFINITION

A **motorized mobility aid or device** is a wheelchair, cart, or scooter that serves as an assistive device to allow an individual to be more independent and/or enables an individual to accomplish a task.

*In accordance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II, Part 35, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services, Use of other power-driven mobility devices:** A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of other power-driven mobility devices by individuals with mobility disabilities, unless the public entity can demonstrate that the class of other power-driven mobility devices cannot be operated in accordance with legitimate safety requirements that the public entity has adopted pursuant to § 35.130(h).*

Regarding safety rules: In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act, a public entity may impose legitimate safety requirements necessary for the safe operation of its services, programs, or activities. However, the public entity must ensure that its safety requirements are based on actual risks—not on mere speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about individuals with disabilities.

III. PROCEDURAL COMPONENTS

A. Resident Orientation and Assessment

1. Residents are oriented to the facility and the safe use of their motorized mobility aid upon admission. This includes orientation to the facility layout and environment to increase familiarity with any hazards that may be encountered while using a motorized device. In addition, the resident is oriented to processes that promote the operation of a motorized mobility device with the utmost courtesy, care, and consideration for the safety and convenience of other residents, employees, and visitors.
2. Residents using motorized mobility aids need to demonstrate their understanding and ability to follow all facility safety rules pertaining to motorized mobility aids in order to operate their device safely.
3. Based upon the initial assessment of resident safety with use of a motorized mobility aid, staff assistance may be required for safe transfer of the resident to a wheelchair or other surfaces when indicated.

B. Safety Rules

1. Motorized mobility aids are permitted in any area of the facility unless they pose a direct threat to the safety of others or would result in physical damage to the property of others.
2. Motorized devices are not operated at a speed that is faster than ambulatory residents walking in the immediate area. This is considered the “safe speed” for the facility.
3. Ambulating residents are afforded the right-of-way at all times.
4. Residents who are using motorized mobility aids should pause prior to entering a corridor or public walkway and stop at corridor or sidewalk intersections where ambulating residents and others may not be readily observed.
5. Motorized mobility aids are operated in such a manner that they do not impede or interfere with normal resident flow, including a roommate’s ability to freely access the common area of the room.
6. When activities in common areas are in progress and the areas are crowded, the facility may request that those using motorized devices enter or exit before or after other residents in order to encourage safe resident traffic flow.
7. Operators must reduce speed on common walkways and maintain a safe distance from pedestrians and other motorized carts.
8. Motorized mobility aids must be parked near common areas in such a manner that they do not pose a safety hazard for flow of residents or block emergency exits.
9. Motorized aids may not block entrances to buildings, doorways, stairways, walkways, disability ramps, corridors, or sidewalks. In addition, they are not to be parked where they obstruct the exit of any building.
10. When parked, a motorized device must be secured from movement, including maintaining the device in the “off” position and engaging an emergency brake (if applicable). Devices that require a key for operation must not be left with the key in the ignition when the resident is not present.
11. Electric motorized mobility devices must be charged in designated areas.

C. Unexpected Events, Injuries, and/or Safety Rules Violations

1. Any unexpected event, accident, or injury is immediately reported to staff.
2. Following an unexpected accident or injury in which a resident’s motorized device is involved and failure to follow the safety rules has been identified, the resident is re-evaluated for safe operation of the device. If the resident is determined to be safe regarding continued operation of the device, (s)he is reoriented to the facility’s safety rules.

D. Resident Responsibilities and Agreement

1. Residents must agree that motorized mobility devices are operated in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. Devices may not be modified in any manner that affects their recommended mode of operation, speed, or safety.
2. Residents are responsible for ensuring their device is in safe working order and that mechanical or equipment defects are reported as soon as possible.
3. The facility obtains and maintains a statement signed by each resident who has a motorized mobility device attesting to his/her knowledge and understanding of the facility’s procedure regarding safe use of the device. This agreement language may include:

*I understand it is my responsibility to respect the rules and regulations of the facility when using my (**motorized wheelchair, cart, or scooter**). I agree to operate my (**motorized wheelchair, cart, or scooter**) safely and in consideration of other residents, employees, and visitors. If I fail to do so, I agree to reorientation and instruction, including reassessment of my ability to follow the safety rules of the facility.*