



Procedure EQ - #8

Title: **ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS: STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

Adopted: April 9, 2014

Revised: November 2017, January 2020

Reviewed: April 2014, March 2016, January 2020, April 2020

Authority: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11
Ontario Human Rights Code

Related: Policy PCE.001 – Accessibility Standards Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) requirements to ensure that accessible school transportation services are provided for students with disabilities in a manner that meets their unique needs and ensures their safety.

This procedure also outlines the development of an individual school transportation plan for each student who has a disability that affects their transportation to and from school. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the transportation provider and in consultation with the student's parents or guardians.

DEFINITIONS

Individual school transportation plan is a plan that provides details of the arrangements that meet the transportation needs of an individual student who has a disability

Operator means the driver of the school transportation vehicle

Transportation Provider is an entity or person who has entered into an agreement with the board for the transportation of students in accordance with the *Education Act*

Transportation Services means transportation that a board provides for students in accordance with the *Education Act*

PROCEDURES

1. The Principal or designate, will, in consultation with parents or guardians, annually identify students with disabilities who require specific transportation services; such identification will be made prior to the commencement of the school year.
2. Following consultation with parents or guardians, the Principal or designate will work to develop an individual student transportation plan for each student with a disability who requires specific transportation services.
3. An individual school transportation plan shall include the following:
 - i) details of the student's assistance needs with respect to transportation to and from school;
 - ii) provisions for the boarding, securement and debording of the student as applicable.
 - iii) Identification of students who are at greater than normal risk of falling and information regarding the provision of assistance in these cases.
4. The Principal will identify and communicate roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the individual school transportation plan to the following:
 - i) the transportation provider,
 - ii) the parents or guardians of the student with the disability,
 - iii) the operator (driver) of the student transportation vehicle,
 - iv) the appropriate members of the school staff,
 - v) the student with the disability.
5. Teaching and support staff will inform the Principal/Vice-Principal of students who are considered to be at risk for falling. This information will be highlighted on the student's transportation plan. All classroom staff and busing teams will be informed of this information.

ROLES

Transportation Provider	Operator/Driver	Parent/Guardian	School Staff	Student
Ensure that all Bus Operators/ Drivers are made aware of individual student's needs with regard to boarding, securement and debording, and provide appropriate training.	Ensure that the student is transported safely according to needs. Follow Consortium/Board procedures for the transportation of students with disabilities.	Advise school and Board Student Transportation Office/Consortium of medical or other conditions affecting safe transportation of student and communicate any changes. Help identify tools or strategies that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student.	Advise Board Student Transportation Office/Consortium and parents of relevant issues while at school during the day. Help identify tools or strategies that may help driver and/or monitor while transporting the student	Follow bus rules. Advise driver and/or monitor of any emergency health issues or concerns

BACKGROUND NOTES

The following notes provide a range of examples but are not intended to be comprehensive or address all the situations Bloorview School Authority may need to consider in the development of individual student transportation plans.

With regard to boarding and debording procedures it will be important to clarify that a parent/guardian or family member must know that they have to be there to transfer and receive the student.

BOARDING

Loading a Wheelchair/Stroller/Other Mobility Device

When operating a lift to load a student with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Manager) the driver must:

- (a) Put the 4-way emergency flasher on in approaching the stop.
- (b) Ensure vehicle is stopped in a safe position for the pick-up.
- (c) Ensure the parking brake has been applied (most ramps will not operate if parking brake is not applied.)
- (d) Check that the student is ready to be loaded on to lift.
- (e) Check traffic and then activate overhead alternating lights and stop arm before exiting the vehicle.
- (f) Open lift doors and secure them.
- (g) Deploy and lower the lift and undo the lift safety belt.

- (h) Back on to lift with wheelchair and set brakes. Secure lift safety belt. If the student is using a power chair, be sure to use low gear and turn power off.
- (i) Keep one hand on the wheelchair and use the other hand to operate the controls.
- (j) Inform the student you are raising the wheelchair lift.
- (k) Ensure that in raising the lift, the front plate on the lift folds up and locks into position and the power cable is clear of any pinch points.
- (l) Raise the lift to its fullest extent (level with vehicle floor).
- (m) Release brakes on wheelchair and load student into the vehicle positioning the wheelchair into a tie-down position and reapply brakes. If power chair, use low gear and turn power off.
- (n) Exit the vehicle, stow the ramp and close doors.
- (o) Enter the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing lights and stop arm.
- (p) Secure the wheelchair with the Q-strait system

SECUREMENT

Securing Students Who Have a Wheelchair/Stroller/Other Mobility Device

- (a) Each wheelchair must be restrained and made secure as it is loaded onto the bus.
- (b) There shall not be more than one wheelchair loose or free at any time while the bus is being loaded.
- (c) Position the wheelchair, centred and square to the floor anchor points so that the restraint belts will attach to the chair and floor at approximately a 45 degree angle. The smaller front pivoting wheels on the wheelchair should be pointing straight.
- (d) The chair and student must always face forward in the bus.
- (e) Apply the wheelchair brakes (manual) or turn off the power (power chair).
- (f) Attach the front belts (narrow type) by connecting the large hook to a solid frame member of the chair and connect the opposite end (flat hook) of the belt to the floor anchor point.
- (g) Pull the belt through the clamping mechanism until all the slack is removed and the belt is snugly attached to the wheelchair.
- (h) The rear belt clamps will provide the final tensioning of the front belts. Attach the loose end of the belt to the Velcro patch above the clamp.
- (i) Attach the rear belts by connecting the chair hook to a solid frame member, as close to the point where the wheelchair back and seat cushion meet.
- (j) Attach the floor hook at the opposite end of the belt into the floor anchor point.
- (k) Attach the belts only to a solid, welded frame member on the wheelchair. Do not attach the hook to the wheels. Some chairs may come equipped with bolt-on anchor points or sling-straps, which are acceptable. Do not, under any circumstances, cross belts over each other.
- (l) With the buckle open, pull the loose end of the belt until snug. While holding the loose end with one hand, close the clamp lever down until it securely locks into position. Connect the loose ends of the belts to the Velcro patch to keep the excess belting off the floor.
- (m) Check that all the belts are tight and the wheelchair is secure and does not have any back and forth or sideways movement.
- (n) To attach the lap belts, pass the loose ends of the lap belts around the student and downward toward the rear tie-down belts through the gap between the side panels and seat

cushion or the gap between the seat cushion and the back rest of the wheelchair. Connect the belt ends to the pin connectors on the rear tie-down belts.

- (o) The lap belt should be positioned as low as possible over the student's pelvic area and adjusted as tightly as possible. Ensure the belt is not twisted.
- (p) To attach the shoulder belt, connect the loose end of the belt to the pin connector on either the left or right side of the lap belt. The shoulder belt should be attached to the connector pin of the lap belt depending on which side of the bus the wheelchair is located. Use the right side pin if the wheelchair is on the left side of the bus and the left side pin if the wheelchair is on the right side of the bus. Again adjust the shoulder belt as snugly as possible, making sure the belt does not rub on the student's neck area.
- (q) The shoulder belt should lie across the mid-point of the shoulder and travel upward and rearward from that point to ensure that downward force is avoided. Lap and shoulder belts should not be held away from the student's body by wheelchair components or parts such as wheelchair armrests or wheels.

DEBOARDING

Unloading a Loading a Wheelchair/Stroller/Other Mobility Device

When operating a lift to unload a student with a wheelchair on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Manager) the driver must:

- (a) Ensure the vehicle is parked in a safe position for unloading
- (b) Put on 4-way emergency lights.
- (c) Ensure parking brake has been applied.
- (d) Go to the student in the wheelchair and remove lap belt, shoulder belt, front 2 floor Q-strains, rear 2 floor Q-strains, and hang up belts.
- (e) Position the wheelchair to unload and set brakes; if it is a power chair make sure the power switch is off.
- (f) Check traffic and, when ready, activate overhead alternating red flashing lights.
- (g) Exit the vehicle and open lift door and secure it.
- (h) Deploy the lift to floor level.
- (i) Go back inside the vehicle and push the wheelchair (If power chair, turn on power and put in low gear) onto the lift. Set the brakes. For power chair, turn off the power.
- (j) With one hand on the chair and the other hand on the control, lower wheelchair to ground level. Make sure the student is made aware that he/she is about to be lowered.
- (k) Release brakes and undo the lift safety belt and push the wheelchair (if power chair, turn on power and set in low gear) off the lift.
- (l) A parent/guardian or family member must know that they have to be there so that immediately upon unloading, they are there to receive the student.
- (m) If there is not a person there to meet the student, the driver must call dispatch and wait for further instruction; the student must not be left alone.
- (n) Secure lift safety belt, raise and stow the lift into the vehicle and close the doors.
- (o) Return to the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing red lights.

BOARDING

Loading a Wheelchair/Stroller/Other Mobility Device

When operating a lift to load a student with a 4 point walker on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Manager) the driver must:

- (a) Put the 4-way emergency flasher on in approaching the stop.
- (b) Ensure vehicle is stopped in a safe position for the pick-up.
- (c) Ensure the parking brake has been applied (most ramps will not operate if parking brake is not applied.)
- (d) Check that the student is ready to be loaded on to lift.
- (e) Check traffic and then activate overhead alternating lights and stop arm before exiting the vehicle.
- (f) Open lift doors and secure them.
- (g) Deploy and lower the lift and undo the lift safety belt.
- (h) Back on to lift with the walker and set brakes; secure the lift safety belt
- (i) Keep one hand on the walker and use the other hand to operate the controls.
- (j) Inform the student you are raising the lift.
- (k) Ensure that in raising the lift, the front plate on the lift folds up and locks into position and the power cable is clear of any pinch points.
- (l) Raise the lift to its fullest extent (level with vehicle floor).
- (m) Release the brakes on the walker and load student into the vehicle and into assigned seat.
- (n) Secure walker to the wall of the vehicle
- (o) Exit the vehicle and stow the ramp and close doors.
- (p) Enter the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing lights and stop arm.

DEBOARDING

Unloading a Wheelchair/Stroller/Other Mobility Device

When operating a lift to unload a student with a 4 point walker on highways, country roads, city, town or village streets (unless otherwise directed by the Police or Transportation Manager) the driver must:

- (a) Ensure the vehicle is parked in a safe position for unloading
- (b) Put on 4-way emergency lights.
- (c) Ensure parking brake has been applied.
- (d) Position the walker to unload on the lift and set brakes.
- (e) Check traffic and, when ready, activate overhead alternating red flashing lights.
- (f) Exit the vehicle and open lift door and secure it.
- (g) Deploy the lift to floor level.
- (h) Release brakes and assist the student with the walker off the lift.

- (i) A parent/guardian or family member must know that they have to be there so that immediately upon unloading, they are there to receive the student.
- (j) If there is not a person there to meet the student, the driver must call dispatch and wait for further instruction; the student must not be left alone.
- (k) Secure lift safety belt, raise and stow the lift into the vehicle and close the doors.
- (l) Return to the vehicle and turn off the overhead alternating flashing red lights.

Note: In any instance where a student is required to wear a seatbelt or similar security device it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to secure/detach the device at the point of departure or arrival at the home stop and it will be the responsibility of the receiving school staff to secure/detach the device at the point of arrival at or departure from the school.

FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE A DISABILITY AND ARE AMBULATORY (Examples might be students who have vision or communication disabilities, or have autism)

Do not use the loading ramp unless authorized.

- (a) Communicate with the student. Ask what help he/she needs. Allow time for response.
- (b) Let the student set the pace. If the student is unable to respond, indicate clearly what you are going to do and what you expect the student to do.
- (c) Follow behind the student while he/she is going up the steps; support the student while he/she steps up.

FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, HAVE ASTHMA, HAVE DIABETES, HAVE EPILEPSY OR WHO REQUIRE AN EPIPEN

Students board and deboard unassisted and are seated. Students are secured in the manner specified in the student's individual student transportation plan (i.e. using a lap belt, safety vest, car seat straps, etc.)

STUDENTS WHO HAVE SERVICE ANIMALS

Where a student with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, the requirement for the service animal, including the type of service animal, will be specified in the student's individual student transportation plan.