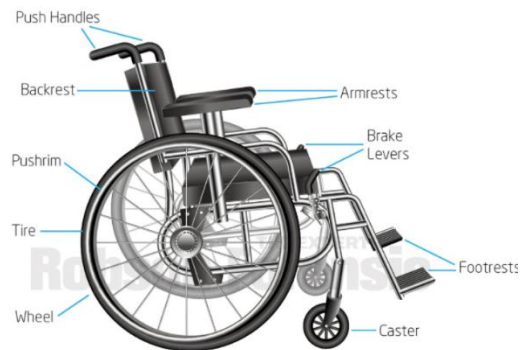


Wheelchair Safety Overview Volunteer Information

As a volunteer, transporting patients is an important and frequent responsibility. Your safety and that of the patient is very important. For this reason, volunteers are not allowed to assist patients in or out of the wheelchair nor are they allowed to transport bariatric patients. Other patient's volunteers cannot transport include patients with casts (patient would need help in or out of the wheelchair), patients with an IV (liability issue) and patients with hospital oxygen tanks (liability issue). Should this situation arise when you arrive to transport a patient from the floor, excuse yourself and talk with the staff. Explain you are unable to assist the patient. Should this situation arise when the patient arrives at the Information Desk, contact the Clinic or Department staff where the patient has an appointment; and request that they come to the Information Desk to assist their patient in transport.

Anatomy of a Wheelchair

Please review the wheelchair image and note key parts of the wheelchair. Specifically, the push handles, brake level and footrests. Prior to using a wheelchair, you will need to note these parts are in good working order and in appropriate position for use.



Every EvergreenHealth Volunteer Department wheelchair has a label on the side of the chair. The label can be found on the flat service below the wheelchair armrest and notes the following information:

- EH 300 - this means EvergreenHealth, 300 weight limit for the chair
- Chair identification number – example V-012.

Steps To Transporting a Patient in a Wheelchair

1. Sanitize your hands.
2. Choose a wheelchair. Make sure it is in good condition and functional - it has both footrests, both brake handles, both push handle grips, armrests are in good condition and brakes work.
3. If anything is wrong with the chair, take it out of the main corral so others do not use it. Select one in good condition. When you are finished with the transport, write a note indicating the damaged condition (ex: right brake broken) and bring the damaged wheelchair to the volunteer office. The coordinator will create a work order for repair.



4. Position the wheelchair near the patient in a way that is easy for them to get into the chair. Generally, placement is a 45-degree angle next to the patient, facing their same direction. This allows the patient to use the fewest moves to get into the chair. This results in a lesser chance of a fall. The wheelchair can also be placed at a 90-degree angle directly in front of the patient.



- a. If you are discharging the patient from a room, please remember to sanitize your hands before you enter the room and as soon as you exit the room.
 - b. Ask the patient if they can get into and out of the wheelchair on their own. If the answer is no, excuse yourself from the patient and contact the nurse. Volunteers are not allowed to touch a patient; therefore, they are not allowed to help a patient in or out of the wheelchair.
 - c. If the patient is bariatric, excuse yourself and contact the staff on the nursing floor. Explain you will not be able to transport the patient and they will need to transport. Volunteers are not allowed to transport bariatric patients for safety reasons.
 - d. Ask the patient where they are going. If they are going into the garage or across a street, excuse yourself from the patient and contact the nurse. Volunteers are not allowed to enter the garage or cross a street with a patient.
5. Set both brakes on the chair and make sure both footrests are in the upright position.
 6. Introduce yourself to the patient. "Hi, I'm _____, a volunteer. I am here to take you to _____, do you mind if I push you in the wheelchair?" If the patient does not want you to push them, please contact the nurse/clinic/ department to assist their patient.
 7. After the patient says it is okay for you to push them, explain you are going to stand behind the chair and you will let them know when you are ready for them to get into the chair.
 8. Stand behind the chair, holding both push handles to help steady the chair in case the brakes are loose. Tell the patient you are ready for them to sit.
 9. Once the patient is seated, walk to the front of the chair, and tell the patient your next steps.
 - a. " I am going to put the footrests down for your safety, would you please place your feet on the footrests." If the patient is not able to do so, please call staff to assist.
 - b. "I am going to make sure everything (coats, purses, bags, etc.) is tucked inside the armrests for your safety."
 - c. "I am going to take the brakes off and take you to _____ (their destination)."
 10. Walk slowly with the patient in the chair. You can talk about weather, sports, etc., but do not talk to them about why they were at the hospital, how their treatment was, etc. NEVER run with a wheelchair.
 11. Do not use your cell phone while transporting a patient.

12. Always watch your path. Check for uneven surfaces or any construction. Use extreme caution if you find any of these and move slowly.
13. If you need to use an elevator, put at least one brake on, press the appropriate call button. Then return to the chair, take the break off, secure the chair by holding onto the push handles and wait for the elevator to arrive.

14. Once the elevator arrives, **BACK** the wheelchair into the elevator and move all the way back. This allows the large wheels to go over the threshold easier and gives the front tires room to straighten out before going over the threshold. If the elevator is full, has equipment, or there are more than 2 people in the elevator, wait for the next elevator.



15. Place at least one brake on while in the elevator.
16. When you arrive to your floor, remove the brake(s) and slowly push the chair out of the elevator to continue to your destination.



17. If you need go down a wheelchair/ADA ramp to reach your destination, **BACK** the wheelchair down the ramp. This is for several reasons:
 - a. It allows you to use your body weight to control the speed of the chair.
 - b. It forces the patient to lean back against the back of the chair, making them feel more secure.
 - c. It keeps the footrests from getting stuck on the ramp. Some chairs have footrests that are low to the ground and going forward could cause the footrests to get caught on the ramp and tip the chair over.
18. As you are getting close to your destination, explain to the patient your next steps:
 - a. We will be at your destination soon. Please stay in the chair while I secure it.
 - b. I will put the brakes on and put up the footrests
 - c. I will then stand behind the chair to secure it.
 - d. I will let you know when all is ready so you may get out
19. If the patient is getting into a car, open the passenger door and get the chair as close to the car, behind the car door. Put the brakes on in the wheelchair and hold the push handles to secure the chair.
20. Secure the wheelchair for the patient to exit the chair completing the steps explained to the patient (see 18 above). Make sure the patient has not left anything in the wheelchair.
21. Watch the patient get out of the chair, get into the car and wait for the car to start to leave.

22. Never leave a patient alone in a wheelchair when discharging and they are waiting for a ride. For wheelchair escorts to clinics, notify the staff the patient is there and then leave the patient.
23. If the patient needs to stop anywhere on their way to their destination (pharmacy, restroom, etc.) we will wheel them there, secure the chair and wait while they are taking care of business. If the patient needs to use the restroom, we do not take them into the restroom. They need to get out of the chair, use the restroom and get back into the chair all on their own. If the patient needs help, we must notify staff.
24. If the patient ever has a medical event stop and call the appropriate code immediately.
 - a. If a patient falls out of the chair, ask them to remain on the floor until help arrives to assess their injuries. Always stay with the patient until the Code team arrives.
25. Once the transport is complete, return the wheelchair to the Information Desk for the next person to use. Using gloves, sanitize the wheelchair, check the back pocket to make sure there is a convenience bag in the pocket, put up both footrests, and secure the brake(s).



Personal Wheelchairs

If a patient arrives in their own wheelchair and it has footrests, you may use that chair to transport a patient.

If a patient arrives in their own personal wheelchair and it does not have footrests, EvergreenHealth volunteers cannot transport the patient in that wheelchair. If they can move to an EvergreenHealth wheelchair, you may transport them. If the patient needs help getting out of the chair, or refuses to move into an EvergreenHealth wheelchair, please contact the Clinic or Department to which the patient is going for staff to come and assist their patient. Note: The patient's family member or friend may push the patient in their own wheelchair without footrests, that is permissible. They are taking responsibility for the patient. Volunteers can walk along the side of the patient and escort them to their destination.