



Unique Opportunity for Hands-On Training in Wheelchair Securement

By Anne Lowder

Introduction

An unusual training opportunity was offered recently at a KS RTAP workshop on Advanced Mobility Device Securement at Futures Unlimited in Wellington. The workshop, developed by National Transit Institute (NIT) at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is designed “to train agencies about safe transportation and to respect the civil rights of passengers, including those who use wheelchairs.”

Kansas RTAP invited NIT to teach this class in Kansas.

Workshop Topics

The workshop covered topics such as understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and transportation requirements under ADA. For example: Under ADA, what is the definition of a wheelchair? The answer: “A wheelchair means a mobility aid belonging to any class of three - or more - wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.” The description of a wheelchair lacks dimensions and weight. Class participants learn that chairs cannot be denied service in transit vehicles because of size or weight under the ADA.

Along with teaching about the ADA, the course covers operator challenges and the importance of “best practices” in securement. The largest component of the workshop is the hands-on activities.

Hands-on activities included understanding lap and shoulder belt placement, how to work with different types of mobility devices, and how to recognize base frame and seat frame components suitable (and not suitable) for securement straps.

What Made the Class Unique?

A unique part of the training is that, in addition to Future's Unlimited bringing in chairs for use during the workshop (which they did), the class participants were asked to bring in their customers, with their own mobility devices. Then class participants were able to mark the best securement locations on the actual chairs of customers they serve. Marking and tethering of chairs can help operators identify securement locations. Securement locations are marked using colored tape or some other identifier.

Conclusion

This was a great chance for Futures Unlimited to work with their drivers and their customers, providing consistency in securement for customers and drivers.

The participation of customers was convenient for Futures Unlimited because it offers support for their customers who live on-site, but the hands-on training is not always available in public transportation. If a public transportation agency is interested in arranging this personalized training for their employees and customers, they can contact Anne Lowder, Kansas RTAP training coordinator, alowder@ku.edu or kutc_training@ku.edu.

ADA and Providing Passenger Assistance

What are the requirements under ADA that a vehicle operator must do or provide?

- Use the accessibility-related equipment in the vehicle.
- Allow adequate time for boarding the vehicle.
- Permit passengers without wheelchairs to use the lift.
- Operate the lift at all stops when needed.
- Immediately report lift failures.
- Transport any mobility device that fits on the lift.
- Allow customers to ride the lift in either the forward or backward position.

- Assist passengers with lift and securement.
- Permit service animals.
- Announce all transfers, intersections and destinations. Cannot require a passenger to transfer from a mobility device to a regular seat.
- Cannot require a passenger to use designated seats (even if marked) if the individual does not want to.
- Cannot require a passenger to have personal care attendant.
- Cannot require the wheelchair to have brakes.
- Wheelchair means a mobility aid belonging to any class of three - or more - wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered.

Source

National Transit Institute Advanced Mobility Device Securement Workshop Training Materials.

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