



Kansas RTAP Fact Sheet

A Service of the Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program — for Transit Agencies

Accessorizing Transit Vehicles Improves Safety

By Anne Lowder

A few months ago I attended a training event on securement, hosted by Q'Straint and Sure-Lok, two of the leading manufacturers of securement equipment. In this article, I want to share some tips from this excellent event. I will be adding these tips, and more, to RTAP driver training in Kansas.

Introduction

Certain accessories for transit vehicles provide extra tools for drivers to safely transport passengers. Accessories can help in securement of mobility devices and other potential projectiles such as walkers and oxygen tanks that are brought on the bus.

Some accessories can be used during emergencies to cut securement devices such as tie-downs and lap and shoulder belts. Finally, there are accessories that can protect tie-down retractors from damage. These accessories often are not provided on your vehicles. You might consider buying them for your lift-equipped vehicles.

Webbing Loops

Do you have difficulty finding attachment points on mobility devices for securement? Webbing loops can help. The three most popular chairs purchased in the United States are the Pride "Jazzy," Permobil and Invacare. These mobility devices are not designed to be transported, and are difficult to properly secure due to the large size of the chair and frame members where there are no attachment points for the hooks of the tie-down retractor. In fact, the owner's manual for each of these chairs comes with a warning: "Do not sit on your wheelchair while it is in a moving vehicle."

The Americans with Disability Act, though, states that it is the persons' choice to transfer to a seat or remain seated in the mobility device. Most passengers choose to remain seated in their mobility device,



Q'Straint Webbing Loop

making it very important that securement is done according to best practices to help ensure the safety of the passenger.

Webbing loops can help in securing difficult chairs with hard-to-reach securement points. The loops can be used where tie-down hooks cannot be fitted into the frame. It is important to note you should only use webbing loops when necessary. If you use webbing loops that cause the stitching and tag of the webbing on the tie-down retractor to not be visible above the retractor, it cannot tighten down. Also, do not use webbing loops if the hook will easily fit on the frame. A hook is a more secure option.

Webbing loops come in different sizes and can be purchased through Q'Straint or your vehicle manufacturer. It is important to purchase the proper equipment that has been crash-tested and designed for use in mobility device securement. In other words, do not go to the local farm store and purchase cargo straps.

If webbing loops are determined to be necessary for better securement of a mobility device, you might consider leaving the webbing loops on the device.

This provides consistency in securing the mobility device from driver to driver, as well as only having to solve the problem once, compared to every trip.

Walker Securement Retractor

If you transport walkers for your passengers, Q'Straint has developed a device for securing walkers. The device works like a seat belt, securing the walker against the wall of the bus. Q'Straint can make the retractor longer (up to 47") if necessary. In the event of a crash, this secures the walker from becoming a projectile within the vehicle.

Oxygen Tank Securement Holder

The GO2 Oxygen holder, an accessory developed by Q'Straint and Sure-Lok, can be purchased as a single or twin holding-device for oxygen tanks. It is adjustable, portable and crash tested. GO2 locks into the securement tracks on the vehicle similar to the way tie-down retractors secure in the vehicle.

Belt Cutters

A belt cutter can be used to cut not only the driver's seat belt in the event of a crash, but also any securement belts on the vehicle. The belt cutter needs to be in a secured location that the driver can reach; for instance, hanging upside down near the driver's seat.

A tip to remember when using the belt cutter is to cut at a 45-degree angle because cutting diagonally in this way, across the fibers of the webbing, keeps the webbing from bunching up while cutting.

Storage Pouch

Be sure to store retractors in their storage pouches. Drivers often leave retractors secured in the tracks on the vehicle versus storing them in a secured storage pouch, which meets crash testing FMVSS 302, a standard developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that regulates the automotive industry to keep transportation safe for consumers.

The reason for storing the devices in the storage pouch between each use is to protect the retractors from damage by mobility devices driving over them.



Q'Straint Walker Securement

Summary

Accessories such as webbing loops, walker securement devices, oxygen tank holders, belt cutters, and storage pouches help drivers provide better and consistent securement of passengers and their equipment. They also help prevent possible projectiles on the vehicle in the event of a crash. When accessories are not available or are not used properly, it compromises the safety of all passengers on the vehicle.

Q'Straint offers webinars and technical resources on best practices in wheelchair securement at <https://training.qstraint.com/training-presentations>.

Source

Q'Straint and Sure-Lok (August, 2019). National Training Seminar Para-Transit. Seminar presented at Q'Straint Training Center, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Q'Straint offers interactive training webinars throughout the year. You can find the schedule and register at <https://training.qstraint.com/training-webinars>