



Wheelchair accessible taxis – passenger loading, restraint and unloading

Wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs) play an important role in the point to point transport industry providing safe passenger services for people in wheelchairs. People travelling in wheelchairs are amongst our most vulnerable passengers and it is vital for their safety that drivers load, restrain and unload their passengers with the utmost care and in strict compliance with the law.

Background

Recently, the Commission has received several reports of WAT drivers failing to correctly attach/anchor all four restraints to the wheelchair. In one instance this resulted in the wheelchair tipping backwards during the journey and injuring the passenger.

The danger

Incorrectly fitted or unfitted restraints risk the passenger in the wheelchair falling backwards or the passenger falling out of the wheelchair once the passenger service commences.

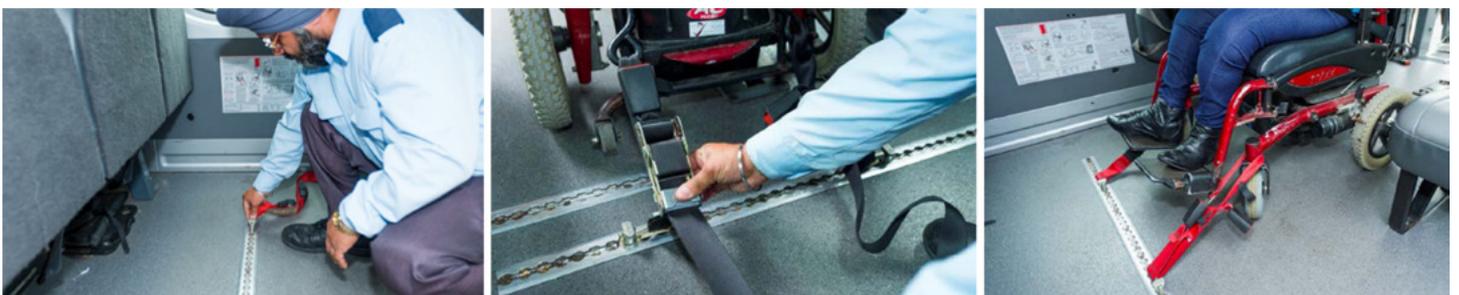
This can result in the passenger being seriously injured or even a fatality.

Drivers must check that they have correctly restrained the wheelchair by locking the two front anchorage restraints to the wheelchair, locking the two rear restraints into the floor tracks, and correctly fitting the WAT's passenger restraint fittings (seatbelt).

On many occasions, carers, or health professionals travel with a passenger in a wheelchair. While these people may be responsible for the care or welfare of these passengers, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure the wheelchair and the passenger are each restrained correctly including inspecting each of the four wheelchair restraints to make sure they are correctly fastened.

Service providers should remind drivers that:

- The driver is responsible for securing wheelchairs in a wheelchair accessible taxi and for securing the passenger in the vehicle's seat belt
- The only person who should be checking the four wheelchair restraints is the driver
- The driver cannot ask someone to secure or check on their behalf.



Responsibilities

Taxi service providers, facilitators, and booking service providers must ensure the driver of a WAT is :

- able to demonstrate competence in safely loading, restraining and unloading a person in a wheelchair
- competent in communicating with, and assisting, passengers with differing levels of ability
- able to ensure that the wheelchair is safely secured to the vehicle throughout the hiring.

These competencies must meet elements 3 and 4 of the Commonwealth issued document, TLIC2040 'Provide Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Services to Passengers With Disabilities'. This competence must apply regardless of the type of wheelchair accessible vehicle or the type of wheelchair; in different locations etc.

Whether you are a taxi service provider, facilitator of a service or booking service provider providing wheelchair accessible vehicles, you are required to ensure your drivers are competent, and maintain ongoing competency.

Penalties

Under Clause 65(2) of the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017, the driver of a wheelchair accessible taxi or wheelchair accessible hire vehicle who is conveying a person using a wheelchair must ensure that the wheelchair is safely secured to the vehicle throughout the hiring.

Drivers can face fines of up to \$1,100 where they don't comply with this requirement.

Resources

More information on vehicle registration standards and obligations can be found on the Point to Point Transport Commissioner's website:

- [Quick reference guide for WAT drivers](#)
- [WAT FAQ](#)
- [WAT driver and driver assessor competency guide](#)
- [Safety Standards for taxis](#)
- [Safety Standards for vehicles providing booked services](#)
- [Safety duties and standards](#)