



Advice for Coventry hackney carriage drivers

Customers in wheelchairs



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk

Taxi customers in wheelchairs

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The Taxi Licensing Office will soon be carrying out mystery shopping and enforcement exercises in order to ensure customers in wheelchairs are given a high quality level of service by taxi drivers.

A taxi driver, whether flagged down, pre-booked or on a rank will be expected to take a customer in a wheelchair unless there is a very good reason not to. Just guessing that the customer and wheelchair is too heavy or too big to fit in the taxi is not a good enough reason to refuse. It is expected that you help the customer by trying to load them and their wheelchair and only if they will not fit or be turned to face the back of the taxi or cannot be secured correctly should you not take the customer.

If you are concerned that a customer and wheelchair will not fit in your taxi you should advise the customer that you will try and put them in, but if they do not fit and cannot be positioned and secured safely you will not be able to take them.

Advice for loading a wheelchair customer/passenger

- 1 Lift up the rear seats and secure them (if the taxi has lift up seats).
- 2 Set up the wheelchair restraint straps and ensure the passenger seat belt is ready for use.
- 3 Set-up the access ramp(s). Taxis have different types of ramp so please read the vehicle manufacturer's instructions. However, here is some general advice.
 - a) Load from the pavement if possible.
 - b) Ensure there is enough room for the ramp(s), the wheelchair/passenger and you e.g. approx 2m(6ft) to 2.5m(8ft).
 - c) If you are loading from road level ensure the ramp(s) are fully extended and use the ramp extension if the taxi is intended to have one.
 - d) If using an extension ramp ensure the parts are locked together and cannot be pulled apart. Do not just rest one section on top of the other as they may separate and cause the passenger and/or you injury (read the manufacturer's instructions).

- e) Ensure the ramp(s) is set up to give the lowest angle possible to make it easier to get the wheelchair and passenger up the ramp(s).
 - f) Make sure the ramp(s) is wide enough for the wheelchair.
 - g) Ensure the ramp(s) is secure.
- 4 For powered (electric) wheelchairs the passenger should drive the wheelchair up the ramp. For manual wheelchairs you will need to push the wheelchair up the ramp. As the wheelchair moves up the ramp please ensure the wheels stay safely on the ramp and the passenger's head clears the top of the door way.
 - 5 When the wheelchair is clear of the ramp(s) ensure the wheelchair brakes are on and then securely put away the ramp(s).
 - 6 Position or assist the passenger into position, with the back of the wheelchair against the bulkhead/partition and the passenger facing the back of the taxi.
 - 7 Attach the wheelchair retaining straps to a substantial part of the wheelchair frame and tension the straps. Ensure the wheelchair is secured in line with the vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
 - 8 Fit the wheelchair passenger seat belt and ensure the lap strap sits low down across the hips and the diagonal strap sits comfortably across the chest.
 - 9 Remember that the wheelchair passenger is facing backwards, so keep them informed of things they might wish to know about e.g. speed bumps, hold-ups, changes to the route etc.
 - 10 At the end of the journey unload the wheelchair and passenger by reversing the procedure.

If you require more information please refer to the vehicle manufacturer's instructions and/or visit www.coventry.gov.uk/taxilicensing to view videos on loading a wheelchair customer/passenger. If you are still uncertain about how to load a passenger with a manual or powered (electric) wheelchair please contact the Taxi Licensing Office to leave your details and arrangements will be made to help you.

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www.coventry.gov.uk/taxilicensing