



Bariatric wheelchair

General guide and safety information



Your mobility aids service

The British Red Cross are part of a global humanitarian network, responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies, helping people in times of crisis, providing a range of services in your local community. All our services are delivered by skilled volunteers and staff.

Having the right medical equipment at the right time can make a great deal of difference.

Who is the service for?

The British Red Cross mobility aids loan service aims to help people who require medical equipment on a short term loan basis, typically for a six to eight week period. This service is provided free of charge, although we would ask for a donation towards our running costs.

Equipment available to loan

- Wheelchairs and ancillary equipment
- Toileting Aids

A small range of Independent Living Products are available to purchase in our local facilities, Disability Living Centres and from our online shop at **redcross.org.uk**.

Contact us

For more information, visit **redcross.org.uk/wheelchairs** or call us on **0300 456 1914**.

Bariatric wheelchair

General guide and safety information

For maximum safety, these operations should be carried out with the help of an attendant. The occupant should always try to assist the attendant wherever possible to share the total effort.



Self-propelled bariatric wheelchair

- 1 24" wheel with spokes
- 2 Padded nylon upholstery backrest
- 3 Push handle
- 4 Arm pad
- 5 Flip-back armrest
- 6 80° detachable leg rest hangar
- 7 Flip-up footrest
- 8 Front castor
- 9 Safety release for armrest
- 10 Manual brake
- 11 Hand rim
- 12 Quick release axle

Attendant-transit bariatric wheelchair

- 1 80° detachable leg rest hangar
- 2 Flip-back armrest
- 3 Arm pad
- 4 Padded nylon upholstery backrest
- 5 Push handle
- 6 Hub brake
- 7 12" rear wheel
- 8 Anti-tipper
- 9 Front castor
- 10 Safety release for armrest
- 11 Flip-up footrest



Opening the wheelchair

Press down with the palm of the hand on the seat tubes/canvas until the wheelchair has opened. Make sure you push down firmly until the seat has snapped fully open. This can be facilitated by slightly tipping the wheelchair, as this means that the weight is taken off one of the rear wheels.

Please note:

Make sure that the fold down back canes have fully clicked into place.

Warning: Pinching or crushing – be careful to avoid being pinched or having your hands crushed when folding or unfolding the wheelchair, or when lifting or handling parts.

Take care to avoid the cross structure under the seat, getting your hand pinched as you lower the armrests.

Folding the wheelchair

The wheelchair has been designed with an easy fold mechanism. To fold the chair, ensure that the leg rests are locked in position and the footrests are flipped up. Pull up in the centre of seat canvas and the wheelchair will naturally fold up.

Brakes

Hand brakes are provided for preventing wheel movement when parked, particularly on a slope, or during occupant transfer to and from the wheelchair. To apply the brakes push the brake lever forward.

Getting in and out of the wheelchair

Carers should not attempt to lift without help. If this is not possible a hoist may be required.

Getting into the wheelchair

Make sure that the brakes are on, flip up the footrests taking care that the heel support straps (if fitted) are not jammed against the footrest support frame. On some models, footrests may be swung away for easier access.

The occupant may be able to help getting into the chair by pushing on the armrests to provide support whilst being lowered into the seat. Finally, push the footrests down, and locate the occupant's feet on them.

Getting out of the wheelchair

Make sure that the brakes are

on, then flip up the footrests.

The occupant should place a hand on each armrest, bend slightly forward and place both feet well back and firmly on the ground, then push upwards to assist the carer.

Getting up and down kerbs and simple steps (up to 10cm)

Getting up and down kerbs and small steps can be dangerous.

Always look for a dropped kerb/ramp first.

Assuming you have an attendant:

(if you do not we recommend you always find a dropped kerb/ramp)

Getting up a kerb

Look for dropped kerbs and ramps. If there is no other way, keep control of the wheel-chair at all times and remember the person's safety and comfort.

Front position: the carer must position the wheelchair in front of the step. The wheel-chair must be reclined according to the procedures indicated in the 'How to tilt or recline a wheelchair to prepare to approach obstacles' section of this leaflet (pg.X) until the front wheel reaches the step.

Then push the wheelchair on the step until the rear wheels reach it and, finally, pull the wheelchair upwards until the rear wheels are on the step.

Please note:

If anti-tip device is on, there is a free space of 3cm for recline of the wheelchair. So this free space only corresponds to a maximum free inclination of 4 degrees.

Rear position: the carer must position the wheelchair so that the rear wheels are against the step and s/he must be on the step itself. The wheelchair must be reclined according to the procedures indicated in the 'How to tilt or recline ... (pg.7)' section, and pull it on the step. Finally, you should lower the wheelchair making sure you do so when the front wheels are already far enough off the step.

Please note:

With anti-tip device on, there is a risk of damage to the anti-tip when pulling the wheelchair up and/or leaning against the step.

Getting down a kerb

To climb down a step – always be in a rear position:

You should pull the wheelchair off the step until the rear wheels reach the ground holding the wheelchair by the handles. Afterwards, the wheelchair must be reclined according to the procedures indicated in the **‘How to Tilt or Recline a Wheelchair to Prepare to Approach Obstacles’ (pg.7-8)** section and pulled until you are sure that the front wheel will not collide with the step. Finally, gradually lower the wheelchair until the front wheels rest on the ground.

Approaching and overcoming stairs

This operation should be avoided where possible as it poses risks to the user and carer. However, if it has to be done, it requires two attendants, one behind and one in front of the wheelchair.

To do this, one of the carers reclines the wheelchair according to the procedure indicated in the **‘How to Tilt or Recline ... (pg.7)’** section, holding it firmly. The other carer holds the wheelchair in a fixed part of the front area of the wheelchair and lifts it up.

Wheelchair safety

- Ensure both brakes are firmly on and that the wheelchair does not move before getting in or out.
- Check armrests and backrest for security.
- When in the wheelchair place your feet firmly on the footrests and make sure they are secure.
- Make sure the way ahead is clear and that you are not on a steep hill.
- Release the brakes and practice going forwards, backwards and turning.
- Do use dropped kerbs when available.
- Do use tipping levers as well as push handles when negotiating kerbs.
- Do fold heel loops before folding footplates.
- Do pick up the wheelchair by its frame.
- Do ensure the lap strap is fastened if not in use.
- Don't pick up the wheelchair by the armrests or moving parts.
- Don't stand on footplates to get in or out of the wheelchair.
- Don't use the brakes to stop a moving chair.

Please note:

If your wheelchair is fitted with anti-tips, these may protrude beyond the frame of the chair, and therefore could be a trip hazard.

It is important to return your equipment on the agreed date, or to contact your local office to arrange an extension. This means the equipment will always be available for someone else to use when they need it.

Please note:

It is the responsibility of the user and the attendant to ensure that they take account of all weather and terrain conditions when planning the journey, and that the wheelchair is used in accordance with this guidance at all times.

Afterwards, the two carers cross each step in coordination with each other. To finish, lower the wheelchair, ensuring all stairs have been passed. This procedure is valid for both climbing and descending stairs.

How to tilt or recline a wheelchair to prepare to approach obstacles

Tilting or reclining the wheelchair should always be performed with the help of a carer.

Please note:

S/he should be aware of how to tilt the wheelchair correctly and have sufficient strength and ability to do so safely.

To recline or tilt the wheelchair, you must hold the wheelchair by the handles and advise the user of the movement that will take place so that s/he takes the necessary precautions for their safety. Next, place your foot on the tail tube and press it, whilst gently pushing downwards on the handles to recline the wheelchair. In this way, you can easily overcome an obstacle. The carer should lower the wheelchair slowly and gradually, holding it firmly in order to avoid a heavy impact on the ground.

Please note:

Do not lower the wheelchair quickly as it may injure the user.

Approaching small obstacles

- Never approach obstacles on the diagonal.
- To lower the wheelchair over a slight obstacle (up to 6cm), tilt your torso backwards, always keeping control of the wheelchair and wheel brakes.
- If the obstacle is high, incline the trunk forward during the climb.
- To overcome a frontal obstacle, always face it and calculate the possibility of passing it without touching with the footrest. You can give a boost with the wheel rim in order to place the front wheels on top of the obstacle, then tilting the body forward. Next, the wheels should be propelled.
- Before descending an obstacle, make sure that the footrest will not hit the ground, as the wheelchair may tip forward.
- Both to raise and lower, the wheels must overcome the obstacle simultaneously.
- Use the help of one or more carer(s) if you have doubts about overcoming the obstacle by yourself.

Pressure reducing foam cushions



If you have a cushion with your wheelchair, to keep it clean, wipe down with warm, soapy water and allow to dry naturally. DO NOT use solvent or alcohol-based cleansers.

Wheelchair propulsion

Self-propelling wheelchair

Self-propelling is achieved through the use of the hand rims mounted on the wheels. By gripping the hand rims and pushing or pulling round the hand rim, the wheelchair can be propelled either forward or backward.

- To go forward, release the brakes, grasp the hand rims and push forward.
- To go backward, pull the hand rims backwards.
- To turn right, hold the right hand rim steady and push the left hand rim forward.

- To turn left, hold the left hand rim steady and push the right hand rim forward.
- To make a tight turn, you need to move the wheels in opposite directions. For instance, to make a tight turn to the left, push the right hand rim forward and pull the left hand rim backwards.
- To go through a narrow doorway without hurting your hands, pull on the sides of the doorframe to propel the wheelchair forward.
- Do not drink alcohol and use this wheelchair.
- Only use the wheelchair for the purpose it is intended. Try not to drive through water or on slippery surfaces. Do not use the wheelchair to transport more than one person.
- Shopping bags or other additional heavy loads should not be carried in/on a wheelchair unless specifically designed for the purpose. This particularly applies to hanging items over the push handles, which can overload the chair and affect stability resulting in injury if the occupant were to tip out of the chair.
- You can wear gloves to aid the control of the wheelchair. Make sure they provide you with a good grip on the hand rim and that they are good condition.

Attendant-transit wheelchair

This type of wheelchair should be propelled forward and backward by an attendant using the grip handles.

Wheelchair safety

- Before you set out, do check the weather forecast. We suggest you make sure you are wearing suitable clothing, whether your journey is short or long.
- If you are taking medication, or have weakness in your hands or arms, check with your doctor or physician that your ability to control the wheelchair will not be impaired by medication or infirmity.

Would you like to volunteer for the British Red Cross?

Do you have free time? Are you able to support our Mobility Aids Service?

We offer the chance for you to work with people to make a real difference to their lives. There is comprehensive free training so you can represent the Red Cross with confidence and it's a great opportunity to develop your existing skills and to gain new ones.

You will enjoy the company of a warm and friendly team and we reimburse any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses when on duty.

Our volunteer tasks include:

- Demonstrating how to use and look after our wheelchairs and other items of equipment
- Dealing with telephone queries, completing paperwork and adding orders to our online stock management system
- Receiving and recording donations
- Being a home delivery driver.

If you would like to become a volunteer for the mobility aids service or you would like to know more, please contact your local office identified on the front of this booklet, or search for volunteering opportunities at redcross.org.uk/volunteering.



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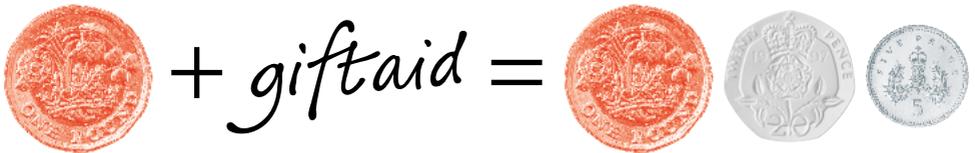
Support our service and help others

This service would not be here without your support.

Donate today to help others who need to borrow equipment

If you are able to, any donation is very much appreciated and helps us to continue to support others who may need a wheelchair or other equipment. It costs on average £10 per week to make a wheelchair available through our service.

If you are a UK taxpayer please don't forget to add gift aid to your donation.



Last year, if everyone had added gift aid to their donation we could have provided another 1,000 new wheelchairs.

Card payments accepted.