Wheelchair Maintenance Checklist

Your wheelchair is a machine that will help you to be more active and mobile. You need to check the wheelchair to be sure that it is working well and safely. There may be a maintenance contract with the purchase of the wheelchair. Check your contract to see what service is provided. Also, be sure you ask if you need adjustments or changes as you use the chair.

This is a list of things that you may need to check on your wheelchair, depending on the type of accessories you have. It is best to check your wheelchair every _____ months and anytime that you think there may be a problem.

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Arms

- Armrests – Check for sharp edges, crack, and burrs on screw heads. Be sure the screws do not come through the arm padding.
- Detachable arm assemblies – Fit should be secured, but not binding.
- Adjustable height arms – Check the fit on the upper telescoping portion. Check at each height to be sure it locks in place.
- Arm locks – Locks should engage squarely and fully.
- Side Panels – Check for any sharp edges or cracks. Be sure the fasteners are all present and tight.

Back

- Check the material for any rips and tears. It should fit with the same tightness from top to bottom.
- Be sure all hardware is present, tight and installed through metal reinforcing strips.
- Check the back-post brace joints for cracks. Be sure the post is not bent or damaged.
- Check removable hardware of rigid back to be sure it is tight and that the lock and release mechanism work properly.
- Handgrips should fit tight and secure and not rotate on the posts.
- Check the safety belts for fraying. Check hardware for tightness.
- Headrests should work well and be put on correctly. On hook on style headrest, check for proper fit.
- Reclining back – Check all adjustments to be sure they work the right way. Check the nut and bolt to be sure they are tight. Look for signs of wear, such as cracks, fraying or tears.
- Check folding mechanism of rigid wheelchair locks and unlocks properly.
- Spreader bar assembly – Check for loose hardware. Look for damage to folding linkage.
- Hinged back assembly – Check the slide lock to be sure it works. Check all hardware to be sure it is present and snug.
Seat, Cross Braces and Frame

- Check the seat material for rips and tears. The material should be tight from front to back.
- Check that all hardware is present and tight and fit through reinforcing strips. Check for stripped screws and burrs on screw heads.
- Carrying or lifting straps should not be frayed or worn.
- Fold chair to see if cross braces are sticking. Sight down seat rails to check for bent rails or cracks. Check that center pin nut is on and secure.
- Front post slides – Fold chair fully and sight check the straightness and roundness of both posts. Open chair fully and check front posts to be sure they do not hit crown of caster fork. Again fold chair and check that front post does not come out of frame socket.
- Seat rail guides – Check that guides are present and serviceable. With chair open make sure seat rails fit firmly into seat rail guides.
- Tipping lever sleeves – Be sure they do not rotate on tipping lever and are serviceable.

Wheel Locks

- Check tire pressure on pneumatics before checking the wheel locks.
- Locks should securely engage the tire surface and prevent the wheel from turning.
- Rubber tips are present on locks and not cracked or split.
- Hill climbers – Check for proper operation.
- Check lock grips to be sure they are within reach and are not cracked or sharp.

Large Wheels

- Check wheels for wobble or side play called trueness. When it spins, it should spin smooth and straight.
- Strum spokes to check for equal tightness. Check for missing spokes.
☐ Check wheel for side play. This could be a sign of worn bearings or poor adjustment.

☐ Check tires for excessive wear or a gap at the joined section.

☐ Pneumatic tires – Check for cracking or excessive wear. Check tire pressure and adjust as needed.

☐ Axles and axle lock nuts – Anytime the wheels are removed be sure to check the threads as well as the bushings and nuts.

☐ Quick release axles – Push plunger pin in. Steel balls at other end should be loose and recessed. Release plunger pin and balls at other end should be raised and solid.

☐ Hub caps should be in place.

☐ Hand rims and attaching hardware – Check for rough or sharp edges. Check for secure attachment. Look to see that all hardware is present. Rubber tips are in place and free of cracks or splits.

☐ Axle plates – Make sure plates are secure. If you have camber or toe in or out, make sure you have the same configuration of washers on both sides.

☐ Axle sleeves – Make sure distances are the same from front to rear.

**Casters**

☐ Forks and retaining mechanism – Check for signs of bending on sides and stem. Be sure stem is firmly attached to fork. Check threads and locking nut or retaining ring.

☐ Stem bearings – Check for excessive play, up and down, as well as back and forward.

☐ Wheels and bearings – Check for excessive wobble in bearings. Check axle and nut for stripping. Be sure felt washers or string guards are present.

☐ Check tires for excessive wear. Be sure tire is secure on rim. Check and adjust the pressure on pneumatics as needed.

☐ Caster housing – Select a level surface and roll check chair. If chair veers more than a foot in a ten foot distance, check frame for damage. Check alignment of housing on frame. Check fork and stem for bent condition.
Footrest and Leg Rest (Front Rigging)

- Put the lock mechanism on and check for a secure fit. Lock should be placed on and released without problem. Check frames for damage.

- Heel loops – Check hardware to be sure it is tight and in good condition. Check for rips, tears, or fraying.

- Footplates and footplate springs – Check for sharp edges. Spring should hold footplate in any position.

- Length adjustment hardware – Check that all hardware is present and in proper adjustment. Look for any damage. Fit should be tight enough that it does not rotate in the hanger tube.

- Leg rest panels or straps – Check for sharp edges. Check all attaching hardware. Check for cracks, splits, or fraying.

- Leg rest adjustment rod – Be sure all hardware is present and properly adjusted. Check the rod for scoring. There should be smooth, secure locking in all positions.

- Footrest bumpers are in place and workable.

- Check angle is correct for foot or footplate.

Other

- ____________________________

- ____________________________

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.