

PAUL S. WINSON COACHES

Guidance for Bus Drivers – Accessibility and Safety for Disabled and Wheelchair Using Passengers



The Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers (Amendment) Regulations 2002 have since October 2002 required the bus driver (or conductor) to provide 'reasonable assistance' to disabled people, including wheelchair users, to board and alight.

It is clearly in the best interests both bus driver and the passenger if the driver is fully aware of the needs of his disabled passengers and how to respond to them. However, the regulations do allow the driver to refuse to help if doing so would adversely affect his health or safety, the safety of the disabled person or that of other passengers or the safety of the vehicle.

As a general guide drivers should adhere to the following procedures;

Getting the wheelchair user ON to the bus:

- DO pull in as close to the kerb as possible.
- DO acknowledge the wheelchair user so they know you have seen them.
- DO check the wheelchair priority area is free. If not, speak to the person(s) occupying the space to explain that a customer needs the wheelchair priority area.
- DO allow other passengers to alight, then extend the ramp and let the wheelchair user on.

- DO make sure the wheelchair user has time to be safely positioned in the priority area. The wheelchair user should be facing rearwards with the back of the chair up against the backrest and the safety bar engaged, if applicable.



Getting the wheelchair user OFF the bus

- DO listen and look for the distinctive bell and dashboard light.
- DO pull as close to the kerb as possible, to ensure that the ramp can be safely deployed.
- DO allow other passengers to alight if appropriate, then extend the ramp.
- DO allow the wheelchair user to alight the vehicle completely and move away.
- When the wheelchair user is safely off the bus stow the ramp away securely.

What if people don't make room?

If customers are unwilling to move:

- You must take further steps to speak to the customers in the wheelchair space. A wheelchair user and an unfolded buggy can often share the priority area
- You should not put yourself at risk, so only get out of your cab if you feel safe to do so
- If you choose to leave your cab:
 - Explain to the wheelchair user and buggy owner they may be able to share the space, as this may resolve the situation. If the wheelchair user is correctly positioned and the buggy is not blocking the gangway, this can be allowed
 - Reassure buggy owners you will not move off until they are safely repositioned

Customers are required to make space for a wheelchair user. The bus should always wait while this happens. Should other customers make efforts to create space, remember to thank them.

If despite all of your efforts, customers remain unwilling to move from the priority area; do not force them to leave the bus:

- Explain to the wheelchair user why you were unable to make space for them and that you will contact your manager
- Then contact the out-of-hours on call number to report the situation.
- Do not close the doors and move off until you have done this and been given further guidance by an on-call Manager.

Wheelchair users are to be given access to the wheelchair priority area even if it is occupied by buggies and other customers.

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- *Wheelchair users can only travel safely in the priority area, so you must ask customers to move if necessary.*
- It is important you stay professional and calm as this will help wheelchair users feel valued and confident about travelling on York Pullman's bus service network.