Disability Equipment Program
Clinical Guidelines

10. Vehicle Transfer Aids

Equipment for the transfer of a wheeled mobility aid into a vehicle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Includes</th>
<th>Eligible Prescribers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1 General Equipment</strong></td>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Portable Ramp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2 General Equipment</strong></td>
<td>Occupational Therapist with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wheelchair Hoist</td>
<td>• More than 3 year clinical experience; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a previous prescription for Level 2 General Equipment of the specified Equipment Type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excludes:**

- Items under $100
- Vehicle Modifications
- Aids for transferring client or client in wheeled mobility aid into a vehicle such as:
  - Rolling platforms, platform-style vehicle hoists
  - Fixed fold down ramps
  - Turning vehicle seats
- Cargo barriers or tie down systems
- Wheelchair hoists not installed by an appropriately qualified installer
- Aids and equipment which can be funded by other sources
- Repairs and maintenance of vehicle transfer aid

**Alternate Funding Sources for Aids and Equipment**

Availability of equipment funding from other sources must be investigated.

This list should not be considered exhaustive as further alternative funding sources may be available.

Items for childcare may be provided through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP)

Items for school or TAFE may be provided through the Department of Education and Children's Services

Items for children may be provided through the Australian Lions Children Mobility Foundation (ALCMF) or Variety NT Steve Waugh Foundation Australia. Supports young people ages 0-25 with rare diseases as recognised by ORPHANET

MJD Foundation may provide funding for equipment

Items for the workplace may be provided through Job Access

Items for aged clients may be provided through an Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) package or High Level Aged Care Facility

Compensable and private funding such as Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Motor Accident Compensation (MAC), Private Health Fund or other insurance schemes
### Contracts in place: TBC

### Identification of Need/Clinical Criteria

**A Vehicle Transfer Aid may be funded where:**

1. Client/carer is unable to transfer wheelchair safely into vehicle without the use of a vehicle transfer aid

### Other Considerations

- DEP will fund $2,000 towards the purchase and installation of the vehicle transfer aid on a pre-approved reimbursement basis
- Prescriber must submit prescription for approval prior to purchase and installation
  - Once approved client may proceed with purchase and installation
  - Paid invoice to be submitted to DEP for reimbursement of agreed amount
- Wheelchair hoists (roof or boot mounted) are considered to be accessories by Transport Regulation and Compliance, NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.
  - If accessories similar to bullbars and towbars are fitted in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's instructions and/or in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's instructions, these modifications do not require specific approval from the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.
  - There are a few things to consider when fitting these varieties of accessories:
    - No dangerous projections or protrusions;
    - Secure fitment of the accessory;
    - Maintain compliance with vehicle dimensions, vehicle standards and roadworthy requirements.

### Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wheelchair Hoist</th>
<th>May be funded when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used to raise and lower manual wheelchair into the vehicle boot or onto the roof of a vehicle. Some models may allow the wheelchair user to independently load and unload their wheelchair from the vehicle seat.</td>
<td>- Client is the driver and is able to independently use the wheelchair hoist and independently transfer in/out vehicle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portable Ramp</th>
<th>May be funded when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| May assist with loading and unloading wheelchairs into the boot of a vehicle, reducing the need for excessive bending or lifting. | - Carer is unable to lift wheelchair into vehicle  
- Required to transfer wheelchair into vehicle only, not client in wheelchair |
## Clinical Priority

While a person may be eligible for DEP, it does not guarantee that a particular aid or item of equipment will be provided. This decision is dependent on the clinical priority and the availability of funds.

**New or re-issue stock items will be issued as soon as possible following approval and the processing of the prescription.**

To ensure clients most in need are assisted, each prescription item will be clinically prioritised using the following criteria.

This is an indication of the clinically assessed priority for the prescribed item and should be clearly justified by the prescriber within the prescription.

| 1. High Urgency Category | The provision of aids or equipment which are *essential* to:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The safety of the client/carer in the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The continuation of the current care/living arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The client’s independent functioning in the home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2. Medium Urgency Category | The provision of aids or equipment which will *improve* the:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety of the client/carer in daily living activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The client’s independent functioning in daily living activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The provision of aids or equipment that will <em>maintain</em> the client’s current care/living arrangements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 3. Low Urgency Category   | The equipment is *therapeutic based* equipment that increases the client's mobility and communication abilities in the long-term. The equipment *contributes* to the client's quality of life but is not essential for their current care/living arrangements. |
## Equipment Decision and Justification

### Client Factors

**Provide**
- Assessment of current transfers of mobility device and frequency of use

**Confirm**
- Agreed transfer plan developed with client/carers
- Client is able to use wheelchair hoist/ramp safely, if relevant
- That the client is able to sit in the vehicle seat and any postural supports that are also required do not impede the use of the hoist

**Consider**
- Whether the client needs to remain seated on their mobility device, or if they are able to transfer to a vehicle seat and use a vehicle transfer aid

### Social/Carer Factors

**Confirm**
- Carers are able to handle the wheelchair host/ramp
- Carers are able to use the wheelchair host/ramp safely including what to do in case of difficulty
- Training is available for future/changing carers

**Consider**
- Other transport options available such as accessible public transport or taxi subsidy scheme
- Transfer options at the destination

### Environmental and Equipment Factors

**Confirm**
- Transfer aid is appropriate for weight and size of wheeled mobility aid
- The style and weight of the wheelchair (powered, manual, paediatric, folding, fixed-frame, push-transit, self-propelling) or scooter (folding, three wheels, four wheels)
- The style and size of vehicle (car, van, minivan, hatchback, utility)
- Transfer aid is compatible with other equipment and planned new equipment
- Vehicle transfer aid is able to be transported safely in the vehicle. Cargo barriers or tie down points may be required in vans, hatches and station wagons for safety reasons
- The transfer aid meet Australian Standards

**Consider**
- If repair and maintenance options are available in the client’s residential area. DEP do not retain ownership of any vehicle transfer aids and as such do not provide repair and maintenance for these items
- If the vehicle insurer been notified of any proposed changes to ensure that the vehicle insurance policy is accurate and remains valid

**For Portable Ramps**

**Consider**
- Style of the ramp – platform (single width) or track (two separate components)
- Weight of the ramp and ease of use – able to be lifted in/out of the vehicle, set up and folded away
- Storage space available once the wheelchair is in the vehicle
- Load capacity of the ramp – able to hold the weight of the mobility aid
- Required length of the ramp – balance a manageable ramp length and weight with a safe ramp gradient
- Width of the ramp – able to fit the mobility aid
- Whether edge barriers are required for safety purposes
- Surface of the ramp – slip resistant

For Wheelchair Hoists

**Consider**

- Locking mechanism for the hoist boom when it is not in use
- Some of the hoists are customised to lift specific brands, sizes and weights of wheelchairs and scooters and are not recommended to lift equipment of different specifications
- What sort of modifications must be done to the vehicle to affix the hoist
- Whether installation of the wheelchair hoist is possible in the client’s vehicle and impact on stability and performance of the car, roof strength and ability to strap the load securely, particularly in the event of rapid braking. Owners of the vehicle may need to seek advice from their insurance company in regards to the coverage provided in the event of an accident
- Storage space available once the hoist is fitted to vehicle
- Whether the overall height of the wheeled mobility aid needs to be reduced, to fit into the rear of the vehicle
- Protection of the wheelchair in bad weather for roof mounted hoists
- Vertical clearance in client’s home environment to accommodate a roof mounted wheelchair hoist

**Trial or Investigation**

- Trial and investigation for consideration of alternative transfer methods including consideration of present equipment, modifications to the environment and/or transfer methods
- Trial/investigation of recommended equipment is required, in similar style of vehicle if possible. Trial should include the whole process including taking transfer aid in and out of a car, putting aid in vehicle together with the wheeled mobility aid and transfer of person in and out of car by client/carer, if required.
Plan for Delivery
- Client to arrange purchase and installation

Plan for Equipment Review

It is the prescribing therapist’s responsibility to ensure correct fitting and client education for DEP equipment on issue.

Prescribers must undertake an initial review after modification installed/completed.

In addition, the following review guidelines are recommended:

- Equipment review for Level 1 equipment
  - Within 12 weeks of delivery and use
- Equipment review for Level 2 equipment
  - Within 12 weeks of delivery and use
  - 12-months post delivery and use

Prescribers must indicate which mode of follow up they will undertake. Options include: home visit, telephone call, client advised to contact prescriber as needed or the prescriber may need to make arrangements to refer follow up to an alternate provider, where appropriate.

Resources

For Reference

- Transport Regulation and Compliance, NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
- Independent Living Centre
- Disability Information Service (Independent Living Centre) SA information sheets
  http://www.sa.gov.au/subject/Community+Support/Disability/Adults+with+disability/Equipment+and+home+modifications/Home+modification
- National Transport Commission of Australia – Assessing Fitness to Drive 2012

These Clinical Guidelines have been adapted from the New South Wales (NSW) Health EnableNSW Prescription and Provision Guidelines available at the following site: http://www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au/home/forms-and-guidelines