

## Information for patients

# MANUAL WHEELCHAIR ATTENDANT AND USER INSTRUCTIONS



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**This Instruction outlines the basic safety checks that should be carried out by a wheelchair user or attendant before use AND safe techniques for getting in and out of the wheelchair**

This instruction does not replace the User Instruction for specific wheelchair makes and models. For further information **always** refer to the Manufacturer's User Manual

This information is applicable to manual wheelchairs only. It should be read by both the occupant and attendants along with any other information supplied before using the chair.

If in doubt contact the manual handling team or occupational therapy department at Derriford hospital.

Manual wheelchairs are usually one of two types:-

- **Attendant Propelled** Wheelchairs – these have to be pushed by an attendant and have small wheels at the rear (see Figure 1)
- **Self-Propelled** Wheelchairs – these are propelled by the user using rims attached to the two large rear wheels (see Figure 2)

The main parts of a Manual Wheelchair are as shown in Figure 1 (note: type shown is an Attendant)

Figure 1: Picture showing main constituent parts of Manual Wheelchair (type shown is Attendant Propelled)



A typical Self Propelled Wheelchair is shown below



Figure 2: Picture showing Self Propelled type Wheelchair (only difference to Attendant type is the large rear wheels fitted with rims to allow user to propel)

## Initial checks before use

All Plymouth NHS Trust Wheelchairs should bear a **Service Label** and a **5 digit Asset No. Barcode Label** as shown in Figure 3 and 4.

A **Decontamination Label** can sometimes be present giving date of last steam clean.

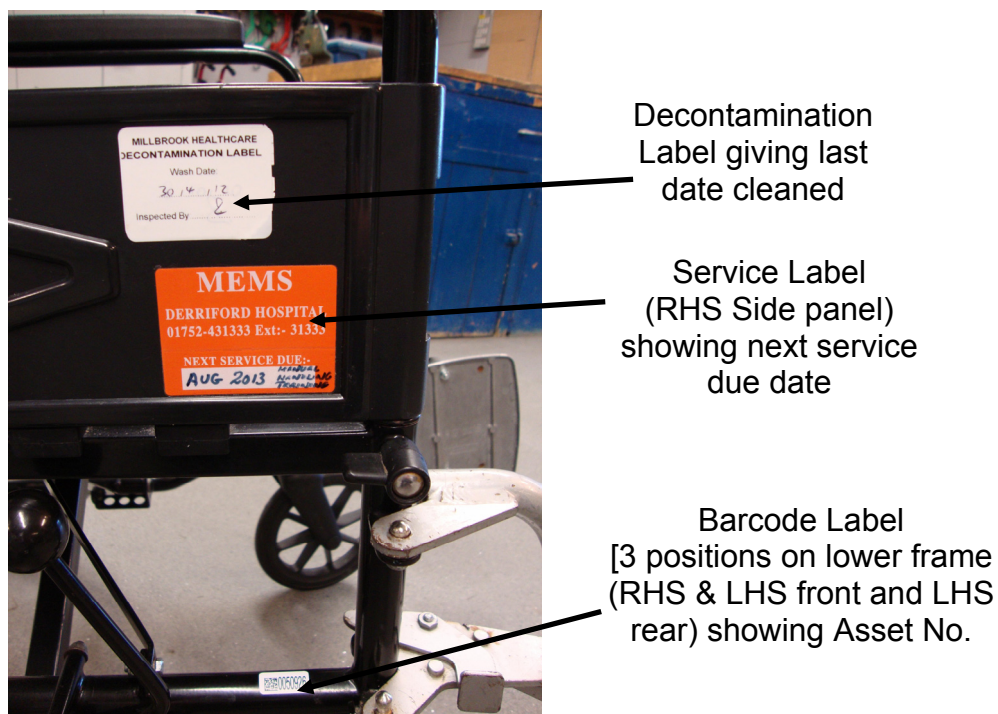


Figure 3: Photograph showing the (Orange) Service Label and Asset No. Barcode Label

Figure 4: Photograph showing (1) of the (3) Asset No. Barcode Labels (one shown is in rear LHS lower frame position)



Barcode Label  
giving Asset No.  
(also affixed to  
front & rear  
RHS lower  
frame)

## **Checks before using the wheelchair**

**Check that the date on the (Orange) Service Label (RHS side panel) is valid – if not ring the MEMS Service Department number given on the Label (Ex 31333) who will direct you to the Specialist Mechanical Workshop.**

Check User Weight Label (if fitted to frame) to ensure weight of user does not exceed recommended user weight of wheelchair. If label not present (or illegible) ensure that user is suited to wheelchair size (and fits comfortably between armrests)

## **Carry out a visual assessment of the Wheelchair**

- Check that leg rests and footrests are fitted
- If heel straps are present ensure they are unbroken and fixed to footplate
- Check security, condition and free running of rear wheels and front castors
- Check tyres adequately inflated (if pneumatic) and undamaged
- Check brakes secure and operational
- Check seat and seat back secure and fit for use (Tears = infection control issue)

## **Ensure anti tippers & stump boards are fitted if to be used for Amputee**

## **Ensure wheelchair is suitable for user's condition**

### **Getting in and out of a wheelchair**

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. Attendants should not attempt to singularly lift user without help.

**If in doubt contact the Occupational Therapy Department or Manual Handling Team**

### **Getting into the wheelchair – facing forwards**

Ensure both wheelchair brakes are on. Flip up the footplates taking care that the heel support straps (if fitted) are not jammed against the footrest support frame (some footrests may be detached or swung away for easier access).

Note that when footrests are detached the mounting swivels remain exposed and care should be taken to avoid injury.

The user should carefully lower themselves onto the wheelchair seat and may be able to help by pushing on the armrests to provide support whilst being lowered into the seat. Finally the footplates should be pushed back into the front position and the occupant's feet located on them.

**If the leg/footrests require adjusting please contact the MEMS service department (Ex 31333) if not competent to do so.**

### **Getting out of the wheelchair – facing forwards**

Ensure both brakes are on. Flip up the footrests or detach the legrest assemblies.

### **Do not use the footrests to aid getting out of wheelchair seat**

The occupant should place a hand on each armrest, bend slightly forward, place both feet firmly on the ground and push upwards (if able) to assist the attendant.

### **Side transfer in/out of wheelchair**

Sideways entry to/from a manual wheelchair is possible when a wheelchair armrest is removed. Physically active users with upper body and arm strength should be able to carry out this manoeuvre however it is advisable that an attendant be available if assistance becomes necessary.



Make sure both wheelchair brakes are on. Remove the relevant side armrest.

Flip up footrest assemblies or swing back out of the way or remove so as not to interfere with the legs. (Fixed frame wheelchairs with foot bars which do not have protruding brackets and footplates allow side transfer without the need for footrest removal).

Feet should be firmly on the ground and not on the footrests. The safest way to transfer is to bend the body slightly forward.

### **Do not attempt side transfer on slippery or uneven floors**

If there is a gap or height difference between the two seat surfaces it may help to slide along a smooth transfer board or use some other lever point for additional support whilst manoeuvring from one seat to the other.

### **Closing the wheelchair**

Remove any cushions. Ensure footplates are swivelled outwards. Grasp the middle of the seat canvas at the front and back, and give a sharp pull upwards. Press the armrests inwards (together) until the chair is fully closed.

To fold the backrest, slide up the backrest plunger knobs located at the back of the hinge. When both plungers have been released the backrest can be folded down.

For transit and storage, the footplates should be swivelled upright.



Figure 5: Showing Wheelchair folded with back rest down

### **Opening the wheelchair**

Grasp the seat sides (frame) and push down whilst pulling apart.

Ensure seat is fully down onto frame before use.



**This leaflet is available in large print and  
other formats and languages.  
Contact: Specialist Mechanical Workshop  
Tel: 01752 763889 (Int: 53889)**

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