

## **DRIVE SAFE!** USING A POWER WHEELCHAIR AT MOUNT ST. MARY HOSPITAL



### **Operating a power wheelchair at Mount St. Mary Hospital**

Mount St. Mary Hospital does not loan out or supply any power wheelchairs.

#### **If you already own a power wheelchair**

The therapist on your unit assesses your driving skills and ensures you are safe to drive on hospital property. A contract is set up with each resident that outlines specific points for safe driving. Your skills may be reassessed as needed, or if unsafe driving becomes a problem. Driving privileges may be revoked – temporarily or permanently – if safety problems develop.

#### **If you are thinking of purchasing a power wheelchair**

A therapist will do a screening assessment to determine if power mobility is practical and realistic for you. Various abilities needed for driving - strength, mental status, vision and seating needs - will be reviewed.

The therapist will make recommendations to you and your family to help select and purchase a suitable chair. The decision to purchase - and financial arrangements - are your responsibility and/or the responsibility of the person who looks after your finances.

Training time to be a competent driver varies widely from person to person, and will be offered by the therapist.

#### **Maintenance**

As a power wheelchair owner, you are responsible for all costs of maintaining and operating your equipment: parts, batteries, repairs and servicing. You may have to pay for pick-up and delivery or house call charges.

#### **Battery charging**

Information about responsibilities and instructions are available from the therapist.

### **HAVE A SAFE DRIVE!**

When you operate a power wheelchair, you are responsible for driving safely. The following tips must be kept in mind when you drive on hospital property.

#### **Concentrate**

Driving demands your full attention. Think of how you will drive and plan your route before you even turn on the device. Don't let anger distract you and don't let your mind wander. Focus!

#### **Notice your surroundings**

Look over each shoulder:

- Before start-up;
- Regularly while driving;
- When changing directions.

Watch for people with walkers or manual wheelchairs - they can't easily move out of your way.

### **Share the Road**

- Drive on the right side of hallways but allow space between you and the wall on the right. You also need to leave space for people coming out of doorways.
- Maintain a good distance between you and other people, especially when passing.
- The yield rule is simple when you're in a power wheelchair: ALWAYS GIVE WAY TO OTHER TRAFFIC.

### **Keep a safe speed**

When driving indoors, you should go no faster than someone walking at a moderate pace.

### **Backing up**

- Make sure the way behind you is clear;
- Do a full 360° check;
- Keep looking side to side as you move back;
- If you have a horn, use it.

### **Driving problems**

All members of the health care team (including you and your family) should report any concerns about the condition of the equipment and/or your ability to drive.