

A GUIDE FOR DRIVERS OF SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



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Preface

The *Drivers Guide for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities*, hereafter referred to as the Guide, was first published in 1996 by Alberta Transportation. The Guide has been used by various organizations and individuals providing transportation services to seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Guide was prepared in response to requests from drivers of seniors and persons with disabilities, especially those in rural areas that had limited access to training facilities.

While the Guide has been useful, a lot has changed since it was first published in 1996. There was need to adapt contents of the Guide to current government policy and legislation, as well as technological changes in mobility aids. The Guide also needed to reflect current changes in issues and conditions affecting seniors and persons with disabilities.

In reproducing the Guide, consultation was made with handibus associations and organizations representing seniors and persons with disabilities.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of everyone who provided input in reproducing the Guide. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of the City of Edmonton's Disabled Adult Transit Service and Access Calgary to the contents of this document.

This document will be updated as additional information becomes available. If you are aware of any additional sources of information, or any errors in this document, please forward them to:

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Note: The information in this document was gathered from various sources. No responsibility is assumed by Alberta Transportation for correctness or accuracy of the information contained in the Guide.

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1. Client Service



1.1. Know Your Passengers

Any successful operation rests on a thorough knowledge of its customers. As a driver of a handibus or van, your business is no different. Your passengers are your customers and you must know their needs to do your job with confidence and competence.

To know your passengers, you should be aware of different disabilities and how they affect people. These facts will determine how you drive, the kind of assistance your passengers may require in getting on or off the vehicle, and the measures required to ensure their safety enroute.

Ask your passengers how you can best assist them. Inform them of your actions before you do anything and check if that is the best approach. Keep asking until you get it right. Drivers sometimes hesitate to ask and passengers don't always volunteer details out of shyness or embarrassment.

With unfailing courtesy, carry out your customer service and ask your passengers what they need. Ask "how may I help you?" Do NOT ask: "what is wrong with you?"

1.2. Greeting Passengers

Greeting passengers is a courtesy that is expected of all handibus or van drivers. The following guidelines may be helpful.

Meet passengers at accessible doors of apartment buildings and offices.

If picking up passengers from their homes and you arrive early, let them know that you have arrived. If the passenger is ready, you can proceed to help them board the handibus.

Use the doorbell at single family dwellings such as town homes or houses.

Identify yourself as the handibus or van driver.

Ask the passenger for his/her name. Do not ask "is your name".....?, you could have the wrong customer as they may not understand what you are asking.

Be polite and courteous to all your passengers.

Communicate with your passengers while assisting them to the vehicle.

Ensure all people on your bus are supposed to be there and ensure you are not missing any clients. Refer to your itinerary or trip sheet.

In order to build positive relationships with passengers, it is important to anticipate passenger needs.

Acknowledge passengers with brief eye contact and a greeting.

Say "thank you" if they need to pay a fare.

Give polite responses to questions or requests for assistance.

It is recommended to never enter passengers' residences, you would be held responsible if anything goes missing or is damaged in the passenger's home.

Source: Adapted from DATS and Access Calgary

1.3. Disability Awareness Reminders

Every driver of seniors and persons with disabilities must have basic disability awareness. A person with a disability is, first and foremost, a person. Treat him/her with concern, respect, dignity and understanding. It is the driver's responsibility to recognize the symptoms and limitations of particular disabilities to determine how to provide the best assistance during the passenger's ride. Drivers need to determine their passengers' ability to stand, communicate, walk or manoeuvre a wheelchair, whether pain, stiffness or weakness is a factor, and the degree of caution you must take.

It is important to remember that each individual will be affected differently; simply knowing the type of disability a person has will not automatically tell you what he/she can or cannot do. When dealing with an unfamiliar passenger, always ask, "How may I help you?" Common sense, courtesy and consideration are the basics of passenger service.

1.4. Loading and Unloading Passengers

Before moving passengers using mobility devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes (both white and other types), etc., establish communication with the person first. If it is not clear to them who you are or what you are going to do, be sure to advise the passenger. Never move passengers using mobility devices without informing them first.

If the passenger is unknown to you, ask if there is anything special you should know about them. Sudden movements can be a source of anxiety for passengers, especially wheelchair users. When tipping the wheelchair, or making any unusual moves, be sure to advise the person in order to eliminate the chance of surprise.

1.5. Communication with Passengers

The Calgary Handibus Association offers a formula for customer satisfaction:

"Attitude + Skill + Knowledge (ASK) = Customer Satisfaction"

In other words, ASK your customers what you need to know. It is important to speak to your passengers in respectful manner considering that they are adults. The following general guidelines may be used when working with your customers:

Take time to discover each person's method of communicating. Some people, for example, may respond only in writing or by sign language. The general rule is to ask if there is anything you need to know and to inform the person what you are doing before you do it.

Have respect when talking to a person who has a disability. Speak directly to that person and try to attract their visual and hearing attention at the same time.

Do not overlook the person with a disability by asking a companion for information, as if the person was not present.

Call a person by their first name only when extending that familiarity to all others present. Some passengers may not want to be addressed by their first name.

Be patient, attentive and encouraging when talking to a person who has difficulty speaking. Do not correct or speak for that person. When necessary ask short, simple questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Speak clearly in a natural tone of voice.

Source: Adapted from the Calgary Handibus Association's *Handibus Operator Handbook*

1.6. Passenger Comfort

Passenger comfort must be a priority for drivers of persons with disabilities. Various conditions can cause discomfort to passengers. It is the responsibility of the driver to be alert and sensitive to the environmental conditions that can affect the comfort of passengers. Below are some tips to keep drivers alert:



Watch the temperature – It is the driver's responsibility to know where the warmer and cooler spots are in the vehicle when the heater or air conditioner is on, the location of any drafts, and where the drafts go when the door is opened. Inform passengers of the warm and cool spots to help them decide where to be seated. The rear of the vehicle is usually much warmer than the front. Use weather-stripping to cut down on the drafts.



Keep the season in mind - In the winter, open the bus doors only when necessary. In the summer, keep them open as much as possible, unless you have air conditioning.



Maintain good air quality – Smoking should never be permitted. With the rear loaders, it is a good idea to shut off the engine at pick-up and drop-off points to keep hazardous and irritating exhaust gases out of the bus. The engines of the side loaders do not necessarily have to be turned off as the exhaust vents are typically away from the door.

Ensure to make your vehicles "scent free" – make sure passengers are informed that the bus is a scent free environment. You can use stickers such as "no scent is good sense", for example, to show the bus is scent free.



Keep batteries charged – In the wintertime, batteries can be depleted if you leave the engine running, particularly if the lift operates with the battery as the power source.



Watch your radio dial – Consider your passengers when selecting a radio station and setting the volume.

Use words with dignity when communicating with clients. The Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities has provided the following list of “words with dignity” to help you in communicating with passengers.

<i>Instead of.....</i>	<i>Use.....</i>
Disabled/invalid	Person with a disability
Crippled by, afflicted with, suffers from...	Person who has...or person with
Lame	Person with limited mobility
Confined, bound, restricted or dependent on wheelchair	Person using a wheelchair
Person in a wheelchair	Person using a wheelchair
Normal	Able-bodied or non-disabled
Retarded, mentally retarded	Person with a developmental disability
Spastic (as a noun)	Person with a particular disability, for example, cerebral palsy
Deformed, congenital, defect	A person born with...
Physically challenged	Person with a disability
Deaf and dumb, deaf mute	A person who is deaf or hard of hearing

1.7. Operator Assistance: Door-to-Door Service



Door-to-door assistance to passengers is a required service delivery approach used by many drivers of seniors and persons with disabilities. The following tips may be useful:

Ring doorbell at residences (but not at apartment buildings – apartment dwellers are expected to be waiting at the pick-up door).

Assist passengers on and off vehicles.

Operate power lifts and secure wheelchairs and scooters in restraint devices.

With a passenger's consent or if asked, assist with shoulder straps and lap belts (Some individuals may be uncomfortable with this type of assistance. The passenger has to be considered and asked before any type of assistance involving their personal space is going to be provided).

Assist passengers with travel between the vehicle and the inside of the first set of accessible doors at the place of origin and destination. An accessible door is a door with no more than one step.

Ensure safe access to destination and never leave a passenger outside a locked door.

1.8. Driving Tips

Your driving patterns have a major impact on passenger comfort. Jerky, bumpy rides can create unbearable pain for many passengers and may jeopardize their safety. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Drive as smoothly as possible, particularly when starting or stopping. Avoid unnecessary lane changes.

Watch out for bumps and potholes. Slow down, and drive gently over them. If possible avoid bumpy routes.

Ease around corners slowly and smoothly. People who have difficulties with balance are particularly vulnerable to sudden changes of direction or movement as they do not have the core strength to support their body during these movements.

A verbal or audible notice may be required prior to reaching a destination for individuals with low vision or who are blind. This would allow them to prepare for departure, and not feel rushed.

1.9. Passenger-Related Issues

No one can predict the issues that may arise when dealing with passengers. The best approach is to help prevent situations that will prove unsafe for passengers and you, the driver. Passengers are expected to maintain their mobility aids in safe working order for their safety and the safety of other passengers. All brakes, speed and steering controls should be working properly. This is necessary to avoid incidents.

Incidents include any time that a passenger or escort falls, slips, bumps into something, etc. Incidents are anything that happens which may or may not result in an injury. Whenever an incident occurs, it is the responsibility of the driver to record the occurrence and include accurate and detailed information including any witness names and phone numbers, if possible.

The following tips are to help deal with passenger-related issues:

Stay calm.

When the passenger's voice rises, your voice should go down.

Remember, you convey your thoughts through your tone and body language, not just words.

Really listen and offer any assistance you can to help in the moment.

Don't take things personally.

2. Before You Leave – Trip Preparation



2.1. Bus Maintenance

The key to successful bus maintenance is prevention. As a driver of persons with disabilities, it is particularly important that your vehicle is regularly checked and well maintained. Your passengers could be in serious danger if your bus breaks down on a country road in the winter, to use just one example.

2.2. Trip Inspections

Alberta's *Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation* requires the handibus to be inspected prior to its use. Section 12 requires the driver, or a person authorized by the carrier, to complete and sign a report upon completion of the inspection.

A trip inspection report is valid for a maximum of 24 hours. This means a trip inspection conducted by a person may be used by another person provided it was completed within 24 hours.

The trip inspection must be done using an approved schedule, or using Schedule 2 of Part 2 of the National Safety Code (NSC) Standard 13. This schedule must be kept in the vehicle.

Bus Trip Inspection Report

The purpose of a daily vehicle inspection is to ensure the early identification of a vehicle problem and defects before the vehicle is operated on the highway. Inspections prevent the operation of a vehicle with conditions that are likely to cause or contribute to the severity of a collision. It also ensures there is clear communication within the company about the vehicle's day-to-day safety. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the **Bus Trip Inspection Report**.

Driving with defects

A driver may continue to drive with a minor defect that is listed on an inspection schedule if the driver has immediately entered the defect on the daily inspection report and reported the defect to the carrier. Carriers need to have policies and procedures to ensure defects are corrected in a timely manner. Refer to Appendix B for **Schedule 2 – Bus Application** for information on defects and major defects.

Vehicle not to be operated with a major defect

No carrier shall permit a person, and no person shall, drive a commercial vehicle on a highway when a major defect that is listed on an inspection schedule is present on the vehicle. Refer to Appendix B for **Schedule 2 – Bus Application** for information on defects and major defects.

2.3. Inspection Procedures

Do a walk-around check before starting any trip. The circle check may be done in any order, but make sure that you check everything and always make a complete circle around the vehicle.

Drivers may choose an inspection procedure that best suits the vehicle and its location. However, whichever procedure is used, each regulated inspection item must be inspected and where a defect is discovered the defect must be recorded on the report and reported to the carrier.

Check with your employer to determine if the company has its own forms for recording vehicle condition.

For more detailed information on circle checks, refer to the *Commercial Driver's Guide to Operation, Safety and Licensing* on Alberta Transportation's web site:
<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/531.htm>

3. Basic Handling of Mobility Aids

3.1. Types of Mobility Aids

The most common type of mobility aids are the standard manual wheelchair, the power drive (electric) wheelchair and the electric scooter. Although there are many different types, below are pictures of a few examples.

Standard Wheelchair



Electric Wheel Chair



Scooter



3.2. Passenger Escorts

An escort is any person who is traveling with the passenger as a companion.

- Escorts must have their trips pre-booked with the passenger.
- Escorts must be at the same pick-up location as the passenger and go to the same drop off point.

3.3. Passenger with a Scooter

Depending upon the type and capacity of vehicle you drive, the passenger may choose to transfer from the scooter to a seat. Passengers who can transfer to a seat are encouraged to do so. The following procedure is recommended for a passenger using a scooter:

Ask the passenger to manoeuvre the scooter into the securement spot.

Turn off the power.

Remove the armrest on the side closest to the transfer areas, or swivel seat.

Ask the scooter passenger if they would like to transfer to another seat unless the trip information states otherwise. Not all scooter passengers can or will transfer.

Assist to the seat.

Secure the scooter.

3.4. Wheelchair Handling

As a driver for persons with disabilities, you are required to assist passengers who use wheelchairs. This assistance requires knowledge of wheelchair handling, in addition to the ability to establish good communication with your passengers.

Note: Wheelchairs are often custom-made for individuals, very expensive and some are easily damaged. Most people do not have an extra wheelchair so damage could result in a loss of mobility until repairs are done.

The following 10 tips will be useful for wheelchair handling:

- Don't rush. Push at normal walking speed.
- Inform the passenger about what you are going to do.
- Look ahead at least three metres (10ft) and along the sides of the chair.
- Slow down. Watch for small cracks or bumps, and go around them.
- Tip chair over bumps or cracks if they cannot be avoided. Use the tip bar to lower with control and don't bang the chair down.
- Watch out for other people.
- Judge distance by the front of the foot pedals rather than the front of the seat. Remember that passengers' feet extend beyond the footrests.
- Beware of loose handle grips or armrests that are not properly locked in place.
- Watch that hands and feet don't get caught in the wheels, or on the ground, curbs, etc.
- Be careful. Don't bang the chair or handle it roughly for the sake of the passenger and the chair.

4. Loading and Unloading Passengers



Loading and unloading passengers is a very important part of the job for drivers of seniors and persons with disabilities. In most cases, passengers (especially those using mobility aids) will need your help and expertise to get on and off the vehicle. The key to safe loading and unloading of your passengers is to plan ahead. You can make life easier for your passengers, yourself and other road users by thinking ahead.

4.1. Positioning of Vehicle

Before loading or unloading, give some thought to the location of the vehicle. Proper location will make the process safer for passengers, you and other people using the road. It will also make loading and unloading faster and easier.

Consider the following when positioning the vehicle:

Have a standard routine. This is very important. Changes in routine are often present when collisions occur.

Ensure that the road surface under the lift is free of large rocks, debris or obstructions.

Avoid congested areas where it is difficult to manoeuvre.

Try to have a drive through route. Drive in and drive out without backing up.

Stop where other drivers have a good view of your location if possible.

Avoid stopping where the passengers will have to be taken over curbs, rough areas, snow banks, through water, etc.

Signal your intentions to turn well in advance.

Activate vehicle hazard warning lights.

Ensure bus is fully stopped, transmission in park, hazard light switch is on, parking brake is engaged prior to lift operations (helps keep battery charged).

Use traffic cones as required.

If the vehicle is left unattended, turn ignition off and remove keys.

Avoid getting too close to parked cars.

Leave room for the ramp/lift to be deployed.

Leave room to manoeuvre the chair on or off the ramp/lift.

Stop close to pick-up/drop-off area, keeping the above points in mind

4.2. Loading Using a Lift



To help passengers on and off a vehicle using a lift requires common sense and knowledge of your vehicle's entry system. The safest method varies with the type of equipment, the size of the mobility aid, etc. Side-loading lifts require the passenger to face away from the vehicle. Rear-loading lift systems require the passenger to face the vehicle when loading and face away from the vehicle when unloading. For safety reasons, passengers who use the lift must be accompanied by a driver. However, when the combination of passengers and driver exceed the capacity of the lift, the driver should NOT ride on the lift.

The following procedure is recommended for both types of lifts:

Put the parking brake on.

Make sure the doors are locked open and cannot swing closed.

Lower lift to ground level, be careful not to pound it into the ground or leave it resting on uneven ground.

Place the mobility aid on the lift, with the passenger facing the appropriate direction from the vehicle, making sure that the passenger's feet and legs or parts of the mobility aid will not get caught between the vehicle and the lift.

Put on the mobility aid's brakes, if available. Put up the safety plate on the lift (on some vehicles, this is done automatically).

Drivers should ride on the lift with the passenger when possible, but some scooters and electric chairs are too big to allow this. Drivers must keep one hand on the mobility aid to ensure they are immediately aware of any movement of the chair while on the lift.

Raise the lift up to the vehicle floor. Release the brakes.

Roll the mobility aid into the vehicle and apply brakes.

Enter the vehicle and manoeuvre the mobility aid to the desired location, ensuring passenger's feet are clear.

Use tie-downs, seat belts, shoulder straps and mobility aid brakes.

Don't forget to return the lift to the upright position and ensure the doors are closed before re-entering the vehicle.

Develop a routine. If distracted, take a breath and return to the routine to ensure no steps are missed or are incomplete.

When the weather is fair (i.e. can stay outside for a few minutes without undue discomfort):

Bring out all clients at once and have them wait by the side of the bus. Keep in mind: space, whether the ground is solid underneath them, whether they would block pedestrian traffic, safety, etc.

Open the doors and lower the lift when all passengers are in place by the side of the bus.

Take one passenger in at a time and place them in their space on the bus. Put brakes on, and complete the tie-downs and seatbelts/shoulder straps (unless they have exemptions) then return for the next customer.

After all passengers have been loaded, stow the lift and close the doors.

Complete the tie-downs and seatbelts/shoulder straps (unless they have medical exemptions).

When the weather is inclement (i.e. cold, rainy, blizzards, hail, strong winds):

Bring out one passenger at a time.

Stow the lift and close the bus doors between passengers.

Closing the lift and shutting the doors takes about 20 seconds, and although it is a bit more work, it makes the ride and loading/unloading process much more comfortable for your passengers

Adverse weather does not occur every day, so closing the doors in-between passengers is only required occasionally.

4.3. Loading Passengers in Wheelchair



Watch for feet and hands that can get caught in the wheels.

Be careful when moving the wheelchair and do not handle it roughly. Wheelchair passengers may have a postural lap belt on their wheelchairs. This may prevent an unnecessary fall if the wheelchair tips when going over uneven ground.

Note: Tipping power wheelchairs may result in spilling battery acid and may cause severe burns if it comes in contact with skin. Do not tip the chair more than a few inches unless batteries have been removed.

The following procedures will help in loading a wheelchair passenger:

Take hold of the handgrips at the back of the wheelchair and bring the passenger to the bus. If it is an electric wheelchair, guide the passenger verbally or ask them if you can assist with their power controls.

Apply both wheelchair brakes or turn the power off. This will prevent the mobility aid from moving.

Open the lift door.

If appropriate place pylon on the ground visible to pedestrian traffic.

Lower the lift to ground level using the control panel.

Remove the safety strap and place it on the other handrail.

Ask the passenger to take the brakes off (or turn the power back on) the wheelchair and assist the passenger to the lift.

Load the wheelchair onto the lift

Put the wheelchair brakes on (or power off).

Attach the safety strap in place.

Depending on whether they can fit safely, the driver should be either standing behind the passenger on the lift or next to the bus, with one hand on the mobility aid. Driver and passenger should be facing away from the bus.

Using the control panel, raise the lift to the bus floor level.

Take the brakes off (turn power on) and take the passenger to their place on the bus.

Put the brakes on and attach the tie-downs, seatbelts and shoulder straps (unless they have a medical exemption).

Go back to the lift door and using the control panel, raise the lift to the "stow" position.

Exit through the ambulatory door.

Close the bus lift doors.

Return to the bus and continue on with your route.

4.4. Loading A Passenger That Uses A Scooter

The following procedures will help in loading a scooter passenger where the driver is unable to ride on the lift with the passenger:

Escort the passenger to the side of the bus.
Open the lift door.
Lower the lift to ground level using the control panel.
Remove the safety strap and place it on the other handrail.
Ask the passenger to drive onto the bus.
Ask the passenger to turn the power off on their scooter.
Attach the safety strap in place.
Drivers should be standing on the ground, with one hand on the scooter's frame. Passengers should have their brakes on.
Using the control panel, raise the lift to the bus floor level.
Ask the passenger to wait for the driver.
Enter via the ambulatory door.
Ask the passenger to drive into the securement position in the vehicle. Assist the passenger to an ambulatory seat, if applicable. Attach the tie-downs, seatbelts and shoulder straps, (unless there is a seatbelt exemption noted).
Stow the lift and close the doors
Continue on with your route.

A passenger who uses a scooter is encouraged to transfer to a seat and use the lap belt and shoulder strap. Some companies make this practice a requirement.

4.5. Loading Ambulatory/Walker Passengers

Some passengers are able to walk on their own, while others may use a cane or walker. To help passengers, remember to ASK if and how they need assistance and wait until your offer is accepted before giving assistance. Touching a person unannounced can throw them off balance and lead to a fall. It is particularly important to ask people with walkers how you can help before the point when they must leave their walkers behind to board the vehicle.

If a passenger wants assistance, ask specifically how you may help. If the passenger refuses help, stay close by and be prepared just in case. The following procedures are recommended to assist an ambulatory passenger:

Offer your assistance to all passengers.

When assisting a passenger with low vision, offer your arm to the passenger. The passenger should grab your arm just above the elbow.

Your job is to act as a guide. Always walk slightly ahead of your passenger, and agree on your pace. Provide a description of what you are doing so that the passenger is aware of what you are doing. If you have other passengers on board already, let the passenger with low vision know that there are others on board.

Always ask how much assistance the individual needs. Individuals who are blind or have low vision, experience difficulty with depth perception or have special orientation requirements and may need support with uneven ground, stairs or low contrast areas. Verbal cues may be needed in addition to physical guidance.

Note: Passengers must not sit on their walkers while being loaded on the lift.

Passenger walkers should be stored and secured in the designated location. Drivers should use one or two tie-downs to secure the walkers and prevent them from moving while in transit. To make more space, try to fold the walkers, when possible. For walkers with baskets, drivers may ask the passenger to hold the basket (or its contents) when feasible.



Ambulatory clients normally use the ambulatory door.



However, the lift should be used if:

The passenger has a mobility aid that cannot fit up the stairs (a large walker, etc.) or

The passenger's disability is severe enough that they are unable to negotiate the stairs, even with assistance (frail elderly, etc.), or the customer requests to use the lift.

If these conditions apply, follow these lift procedures:

Quickly check whether the passenger would like to use the ambulatory door or the lift.

If the lift is to be used, escort the passenger to the side of the bus.

Open the lift door.

Lower the lift to ground level using the control panel.

Remove the safety strap and place it on the other handrail.

Escort the passenger onto the lift, along with their mobility aid, if they have one.

If they can fit safely, the driver should be standing behind or beside the passenger on the lift, both facing into the bus. Passengers may have one hand on handrail, the other holding the driver's arm, if they so wish.

Attach the safety strap in place.

Using the control panel, raise the lift to the bus floor level.

Escort the passenger to their seat on the bus and attach their seatbelts and shoulder straps (unless they have a medical exemption).

If they have mobility aid equipment which needs to be tied-down (e.g. large walkers), tie down their equipment. First fold the equipment up if you are able to. Ensure the equipment is secured safely.

Go back to the lift door and raise the lift to the "stow" position.

Exit the ambulatory door.

Close the bus lift doors.

Return to the bus and continue on with your route.

Note: Passengers must not sit on their walkers while being loaded on the lift.

4.6. Unloading Passengers



To unload using a lift, the following procedures will be useful:

Put the vehicle parking brake on.

Release tie-downs, seat belts, shoulder straps and mobility aid brakes and stow them to avoid tripping.

Manoeuvre the mobility aid to the interior lift location, ensuring passenger's feet are clear.

Make sure the doors are locked open and cannot swing closed.

Place the mobility aid on the lift, with the passenger facing the lift door, making sure that the passenger's feet and legs or parts of the mobility aid will not get caught between the vehicle and the lift.

Put on the mobility aid's brakes, if available.

Ensure the safety plate on the lift is upright (on some vehicles, this is done automatically).

Drivers should ride on the lift with the passenger when possible, but some scooters and electric chairs are too big to allow this. Drivers must keep one hand on the mobility aid to ensure they are immediately aware of any movement of the chair while on the lift.

Lower lift to ground level, being careful not to pound it into the ground or leave it resting on uneven.

Release the brakes.

Roll the mobility aid off the lift onto the ground surface and apply brakes.

4.7. Passenger Securement



It is the responsibility of drivers to secure passengers in their mobility aids when they board the bus.

Drivers are required to secure all wheelchairs and scooters with the 4 point tie-down system. Tie-downs should be secured to a solid frame member and as close to the seat as possible of the mobility aid. Drivers are also required to assist passengers in putting on their lap belts (for ambulatory passengers) or the lap belt / shoulder strap assembly for passengers travelling in their wheelchair or scooter. There may be medical exemptions or waivers on file that would exclude a passenger from seatbelt use.

Some tips in securing passengers:

- Recommend to your passengers that their lap belts be secured if they have their own lap belts attached to their chair.
- Centre the chair on the four plates on the floor.



- Attach the lap belt to one of the rear tie-downs. Pass it around the passenger, holding it away from the passenger's body.
- Take the other end and secure it to the other rear tie-down.
- Ensure that the belt rests against the passenger and does not wind around any part of the mobility aid.



When using a shoulder strap, be sensitive to your passenger and be as unobtrusive as possible.

Take the shoulder strap from the wall, holding it away from your passenger's body with one hand. While still holding the strap, use your other hand to clip it to the four-point tie-down on the mobility aid.



Gently release the shoulder strap and pull the adjustment snugly.

Secure the two front tie-downs. Attach the clip into the floor plate and pull the belt to the estimated length required to secure the hook.

Attach the hook to a solid frame member on the wheelchair.



Tighten the belt so it is secure but forced, and make sure the belt forms a 40 to 60 degrees angle to the floor.

Over tightening may damage the wheelchair.

Keep the belts clean and off the floor by securing the Velcro tabs.

Repeat the process with the rear belts, again having the belts form a 30 to 45-degree angle to the floor.

For manual wheelchairs, hook the belt to a solid frame member near the place where the chair and back meet.

When tied down, the wheelchair should be snug and not wiggle back and forth, but it should not be driven into the floor.

4.8. Child Safety Seats

The regulation/legislation in Alberta requires that:

- A child under six years whose weight does not exceed 18 kg (40 lb.) must be properly secured in a child safety seat.
- All child passengers must be secured in an approved and properly used child safety seat, which is used and installed according to your vehicle and car seat manufacturer's instructions.
- It is the **driver's legal responsibility** to ensure that each passenger under the age of 16 years is properly secured in the vehicle. Drivers are subject to a fine for each passenger not properly secured.
- Child safety seats used in Canada must have a label on them stating that the seat meets Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.
- For more information on Child Safety Seats, contact Alberta Transportation at 780-427-8901 or 310-0000 or use the following website:
<http://www.saferoads.com/vehicles/child-safety-seats.html>.

5. On The Road

5.1. Attitude

Proper driver attitude is important for safety. This brief video provides some further information about driver attitude on the road:

<http://www.saferoads.com/video/Asphalt%20Jungle%20Videos/Driver-Attitude.mov>

The driver is the most important part of the vehicle operation. Every driver should complete a “mental checklist” every time they get behind the wheel. Ask yourself:

Am I well rested?

Am I feeling healthy and well?

Am I free from alcohol or other drugs, including over the counter medications?

Is my mind clear and free of personal problems?

Will I be fully able to concentrate on my driving?

Is my attitude courteous, careful and considerate?

Do I present myself as a professional driver?

Source: Adapted from Edmonton Transit System's Disabled Adult Transit Services Manual

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, take the necessary time to regroup and reassess your situation. A good driver attitude is essential for a professional driver. All the knowledge in the world will be lost if your attitude is not compatible with safe driving. In short, if your attitude is poor, so is your driving. Good driving has as much to do with attitude as with knowledge. Be positive, be alert, and be professional.

Consider the following:

Get plenty of rest and start the day fresh - you will find the events of the day far less aggravating if you are feeling well rested and happy.

Be courteous and adjust to other drivers on the road.

Treat your passengers with respect. A good relationship with your passengers will remove another potential distraction and leave you free to concentrate on your driving.

5.2. Defensive Driving

Defensive driving, like customer service, starts with attitude. A good driving attitude is absolutely essential for a professional driver. Use the three Cs: Courtesy, Consideration and Caution at all times. A fourth C is Common Sense. Be alert, well rested, and do not expect a lot from other drivers.

As a driver of seniors and persons with disabilities, you must also make an extra effort to plan ahead, know your route and know which lane you should be in to make sure the ride is as smooth as possible.

Think of it this way: imagine a glass of water on a dashboard, and drive carefully and smoothly to make sure the water never spills. Stop and start gently. Take more care and be cautious. Allow extra time to check and double-check. Avoid any action, such as following too closely, which might result in the need to stop suddenly and unexpectedly.

5.3. Reversing

Reversing a large vehicle is always hazardous, but particularly in a van with rear lifts or ramps. Restricted visibility means that you can't always see small vehicles or pedestrians move behind your vehicle. Here are some tips to reduce dangers:

Reverse only when absolutely necessary. Plan your route so you can drive in and out without backing up.

Check for debris on the road, curbs, potholes, snow banks, etc. before reversing.

Make sure the way is clear. Check all the blind spots. Where ever possible, have someone reliable check the rear before you move.

When you leave your vehicle for any reason, make a point of checking the rear before entering the vehicle. Better still, get out and look - don't rely on mirrors only.

Before reversing, give some warning with the horn if your vehicle does not automatically beep when backing up. Remember that using horns and warning devices does not guarantee that pedestrians will move out of the way.

Reverse slowly. It will give people or vehicles a chance to move and will minimize damage if you hit a stationary object.

5.4. Safety Regulations

Familiarize yourself with the safety regulations presented in Appendix C:

- *The Alberta Traffic Safety Act*
- *Distracted Driving Legislation, and*
- *Impaired Driving Legislation*

6. Collision and Emergency

Each company that transports seniors and persons with disabilities has, or should have, a policy to deal with collisions and emergencies. Find out what your policy is and know what to do in an emergency.

The best time to think about emergency procedures is before an emergency occurs. While each emergency is unique, it is important to know beforehand what to do to avoid panic or poor judgement that can be fatal for your passengers. One approach to preparedness for emergency and collisions is to have a mock exercise or run-through to test your plans. Municipalities and healthcare facilities all have emergency plans that you should know about as well, because you could very well have a part to play in a municipal emergency.

Drivers of seniors and persons with disabilities should have training or knowledge of the following:

First Aid and CPR Training:

- Maintain current First Aid and CPR certificates
- Always have a First Aid kit in the vehicle

Emergency Equipment:

- Know where your equipment is (the equipment should be in good working order).
- Know how to use the equipment including flares and fire extinguishers.

Emergency Contacts:

- Know who to contact in an emergency (police, fire, ambulance, and dispatcher).
- Have their phone numbers and know what information to give them.
- Write this in your emergency contacts.

6.1. Collisions – General Procedures

If you're involved in a collision, the following procedures are recommended:

Stop immediately in as safe a location as possible.

Put on your hazard lights and set your parking brake.

Determine the status of the passengers and the vehicle. If the passengers and the vehicle are in stable condition, keep the passengers in the vehicle.

Put out your reflective triangles and/or pylons about 30 metres from the front and the rear of the vehicle.

Turn your vehicle off - this will help determine if there is smoke or fire, and prevent accidental movement of the vehicle. □□

Contact your emergency contacts and advise that you have been involved in a collision.

Source: Adapted from Edmonton Transit System's Disabled Adult Transit Services Manual

6.2. Collisions - Pedestrian Contact

If involved in a collision with a pedestrian, you must:

Remain at the scene of the collision. Provide reasonable assistance.

Contact your emergency contacts.

Provide aid to any others involved in the incident and to anyone sustaining an injury or loss.

Upon request from a police officer:

- Your name and address
- Your employer's name and address
- Your work phone number
- Your driver's licence number
- Your vehicle registration
- Your proof of insurance

Obtain similar information from any other driver involved in the incident, and the names and addresses of all witnesses.

6.3. Evacuation Procedures

There is no common procedure for evacuation, but there are some basic guidelines. First, it is not necessary to evacuate except if there's a fire or danger of fire or if the vehicle is in an unsafe position. Stay calm, reassure passengers and let emergency personnel know your situation.

If you determine that the vehicle is unsafe (smoke or fire, immersed in water, located in the way of traffic/train), seek assistance from passers-by and ask them to help evacuate the people from the vehicle.

If no immediate danger, take ambulatory passengers first (out the front door) and then wheelchair passengers (out the lift or back door).

If danger is immediate, remove passengers through emergency windows if necessary. "Life over Limb".

Standing behind a passenger, put your arms under their armpits and drag them off the bus if necessary.

In an extreme emergency, evacuate the passengers as far as possible (approximately 35 metres) for their safety, without their wheelchairs. If time allows, go back and get the wheelchairs.

Contact your emergency contacts as soon as possible, and let them know that you have been in: a) a vehicle collision, b) a collision involving property damage, and/or c) if there are injuries call 911.

Inform your emergency contacts of the time and location of the collision and what passengers are on the vehicle.

Remain with passengers and provide any necessary attention.

Obtain the names and contact information of any independent witnesses.

Obtain all the information from the other driver involved.

Obtain all the information from all the passengers in the vehicle at the time (attendants, escorts included, with names, phone numbers and addresses).

In addition to the suggestions above, it is your responsibility as a driver of seniors and persons with disabilities to talk to your employer and insurance company to get the specific requirements to follow if you're involved in a collision. A suggested collision report and list of emergency contacts are included in Appendices D and E.

Appendices

Appendix A: Bus Trip Inspection Report

(Print Name)

Carrier's registered name (as per registration): _____

Bus plate number: _____ Trailer plate number: _____

Location of inspection (Municipality or location on highway): _____

Odometer reading _____ or Hub reading _____

I performed an inspection of the vehicle noted above using the criteria set out in **Schedule 2 of Part 2, NSC Standard 13** and as per sections 10(4) and 10(10) of Alberta's *Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation* (AR 121/2009) and report the following:

No defects were found

Defects Detected (Mark "√" for a minor defect, and "X" for a major defect)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility Devices | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel System |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Brake System | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> General |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Cargo Securement | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Glass and Mirrors |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Coupling Device | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Heater/Defroster |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous Goods | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Horn |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Doors and Emergency exits | 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Lamps and Reflector |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Driver Controls | 18. <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger Compartment |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Driver Seat | 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Steering |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Equipment | 20. <input type="checkbox"/> Suspension System |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust System | 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Tires, Wheels, Hubs and Fasteners |
| 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Body and Frame | 22. <input type="checkbox"/> Wipers/Washer |

Provide details of current defect(s) detected:

Name of person completing inspection
(Print name)

Signature of person completing inspection

Provide details of defect(s) detected at any other time(s):

Name of person completing inspection
(Print name)

Signature of person completing inspection

Certification of Repairs Completed:

- I certify all defects have been repaired I certify repair(s) were unnecessary

Remarks:

Certifier's name
(Print name)

Certifier's Signature

Appendix B: Schedule 2 – Bus Application:

This schedule applies to buses designed, constructed and used for the transportation of passengers with a designated seating capacity of more than 10, including the driver, but excluding the operation for personal use, and also applies to any trailer towed by a bus.

1. Accessibility Devices

<p>Defect(s) <i>Accessibility device may not be used if:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alarm fails to operate.• Equipment malfunctions.• Interlock system malfunctions.	<p>Major Defect(s) Vehicle fails to return to normal level after "kneeling." Extendable lift, ramp or other passenger-loading device fails to retract.</p>
--	---

2. Air Brakes System

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audible air leak.• Slow air pressure build-up rate.	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pushrod stroke of any brake exceeds the adjustment limit.• Air loss rate exceeds prescribed limit.• Inoperative towing vehicle (tractor) protection system.• Low air warning system fails or system is activated.• Inoperative service, parking or emergency brake.
--	---

3. Cargo Securement

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insecure or improper load covering (e.g. wrong type or flapping in the wind).	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insecure cargo.• Absence, failure, malfunction or deterioration of required cargo device or load covering.
---	---

4. Coupling Devices

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coupler or mounting has loose or missing fastener 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coupler is insecure or movement exceeds prescribed limit. • Coupling or locking mechanism is damaged or fails to lock. • Defective, incorrect or missing safety chain/cable.
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5. Dangerous Goods

	<p>Major Defect(s) Dangerous goods requirements not met.</p>
--	---

6. Doors and Emergency Exits

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door, window or hatch fails to open or close securely. • Alarm inoperative. 	<p>Major Defect(s) (<i>Passengers may not be carried</i>.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required emergency exit fails to function as intended. <p>_____ ¹ Vehicle may be moved when no passenger carried.</p>
--	--

7. Driver Controls

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerator pedal, clutch, gauges, audible and visual indicators or instruments fail to function properly. 	<p>Major Defect(s) (<i>Passengers may not be carried</i>²)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerator sticking and engine fails to return to idle. <p>_____ ² vehicles may be moved when no passenger carried.</p>
--	--

8. Driver Seat

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat is damaged or fails to remain in set position. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seatbelt or tether belt is insecure, missing or malfunctions.
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9. Electric Brake System

Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Loose or insecure wiring or electrical connection.	Major Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Inoperative breakaway device.Inoperative brake.
---	---

10. Emergency Equipment and Safety Devices

Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Emergency equipment is missing, damaged or defective.	
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11. Exhaust System

Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exhaust leak.	Major Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Leak that causes exhaust gas to enter the occupant compartment.
--	--

12. Exterior Body and Frame

Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Insecure or missing body parts.Insecure or missing compartment door.Damaged frame or body.	Major Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Visibly shifted, cracked, collapsing or sagging frame member(s).
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13. Fuel System

	Major Defect(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Missing fuel tank cap³.Insecure fuel tank.Dripping fuel leak. <p>³Vehicle may be moved when no passenger carried.</p>
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14. General

	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious damage or deterioration that is noticeable and may affect the vehicle's safe operation.
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15. Glass and Mirrors

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required mirror or window glass fails to provide the required view to the driver as a result of being cracked, broken, damaged, missing or maladjusted.• Required mirror or glass has broken or damaged attachments onto vehicle body.	<p>Major Defect(s) <i>(Passengers may not be carried⁴)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Driver's view of the road is obstructed in the area swept by the windshield wipers. <p>⁴Vehicle may be moved when no passenger carried.</p>
---	---

16. Heater/Defroster

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control or system failure.	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defroster fails to provide unobstructed view through the windshield..
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17. Horn

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicle has no operative horn.	
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18. Hydraulic Brake System

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brake fluid level is below indicated minimum level. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking brake is inoperative. • Brake boost or power assist is inoperative. • Brake fluid leak. • Brake pedal fade or insufficient brake pedal reserve. • Activated (other than ABS) warning device. • Brake fluid reservoir is less than ¼ full.
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19. Lamps and Reflectors

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required lamp does not function as intended. • Required reflector is missing or partially missing. • Passenger safety or access lamp does not function. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <p><i>When lamps are required:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of both low-beam headlamps. • Failure of both rearmost tail lamps. <p><i>At all times:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of a rearmost turn-indicator lamp. • Failure of both rearmost brake lamps.
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20. Passenger Compartment

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanchion padding is damaged. • Damaged steps or floor. • Insecure or damaged overhead luggage rack or compartment. • Malfunction or absence of required passenger or mobility device restraints. • Passenger seat is insecure. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <p><i>When affected position is occupied:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malfunction or absence of required passenger or mobility device restraints. • Passenger seat is insecure.
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21. Steering

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering wheel lash (free-play) is greater than normal. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering wheel is insecure, or does not respond normally. • Steering wheel lash (free-play) exceeds required limit.
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22. Suspension System

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air leak in air suspension system. • Broken spring leaf. • Suspension fastener is loose, missing or broken. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged⁵ or deflated air bag. • Cracked or broken main spring leaf or more than one broken spring leaf. • Part of spring leaf or suspension is missing, shifted out of place or in contact with another vehicle component. • Loose U-bolt. <p>⁵Patched, cut, bruised, cracked to braid, mounted insecurely.</p>
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23. Tires

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged tread or sidewall of tire. • Tire leaking (if leak can be felt or heard, tire is to be treated as flat). 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat tire. • Tire tread depth is less than wear limit. • Tire is in contact with another tire or any vehicle component other than mud-flap. • Tire is marked "Not for highway use". • Tire has exposed cords in the tread or outer side wall area.
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24. Wheels, Hubs, and Fasteners

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub oil below minimum level. (When fitted with sight glass.) • Leaking wheel seal. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheel has loose, missing or ineffective fastener. • Damaged, cracked or broken wheel, rim or attaching part. • Evidence of imminent wheel, hub or bearing failure.
---	--

25. Windshield Wipers/Washer

<p>Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control or system malfunction. • Wiper blade damaged, missing or fails to adequately clear driver's field of vision. 	<p>Major Defect(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When necessary for prevailing weather condition. • Wiper or washer fails to adequately clear driver's field of vision in area swept by driver's side wiper.
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Appendix C: Safety Regulations

1. The *Alberta Traffic Safety Act*:

Information on the Alberta Traffic Safety Act can be assessed at the following website: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/t06.pdf>

2. Distracted Driving Legislation

Highlights:

Effective September 1, 2011, the *Distracted Driving Legislation* restricts drivers from:

- using hand-held cell phones
- texting or e-mailing
- using electronic devices like laptop computers, video games, cameras, video entertainment displays and programming
- portable audio players (e.g., MP3 players)
- entering information on GPS units
- reading printed materials in the vehicle
- writing, printing or sketching, and
- personal grooming

In addition, *Distracted Driving Legislation*:

- Complements the current *Driving Without Due Care and Attention* legislation
- Applies to all vehicles as defined by the *Traffic Safety Act*, including bicycles
- Applies to all roads in both urban and rural areas of the province
- The fine for this new offence is \$172.

Activities that are allowed for commercial drivers

These activities are not specifically restricted under the law:

- Using two-way radios or hand-held radios, such as those commonly referred to as CB (Citizen's Band) radios, when escorting oversized vehicles, to contact one's employer, or when participating in search, rescue and emergency management situations.

Display screens that are permitted:

- a GPS navigation system – as long as the system is affixed to the vehicle and programmed before you begin driving or the system is voice activated. You cannot hold the unit or manually enter information while driving.
- a gauge, instrument, device or system that provides information about the vehicle's systems or the vehicle's location.
- a dispatch system for transporting passengers.
- a logistical transportation tracking system that tracks vehicle location, driver status or the delivery of goods for commercial purposes.

More information on Alberta's distracted driving legislation can be found at:
<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/distracteddriving.htm>

3. Impaired Driving Legislation

Alberta's new impaired driving law will help to reduce the number of drinking drivers on our roads – and that means fewer deaths and serious injuries. Drivers who are criminally impaired or refuse to provide a breath sample will receive the harshest penalties. And, these drivers will still be charged with a criminal offence. Tougher consequences at the .05 to .08 level are designed to discourage drinking and driving – before drivers reach the criminally impaired level. Our goal is to create safer roads by ensuring that Albertans take responsibility for their actions behind the wheel.

Penalties:

Implemented September 1, 2012 For drivers with Blood Alcohol .05 to .08:

- 1st offence - Immediate 3-day licence suspension and 3-day vehicle seizure.
- 2nd offence - Immediate 15-day licence suspension, 7-day vehicle seizure, "Planning Ahead" course.
- 3rd offence - Immediate 30-day licence suspension, 7-day vehicle seizure, "Impact" course.

More information on this can be found at:

<http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/impaireddriving.htm>

Appendix D: Suggested Collision Report

Your Vehicle

Location _____ Date _____ Time _____

Make/Model _____ Year _____ Lic. Plate _____

Serial # _____ Ins. Policy & Co. _____

Damage _____ Est. Damage \$ _____

Driver's Name _____ Driver's Licence # _____

Driver's Phone # (Bus.) _____ (Res.) _____ (Cell) _____

Driver's Address _____

Injuries _____

Passenger Names _____

Passenger Phone # _____

Passenger Injuries _____

Second Vehicle

Make/Model _____ Year _____ Lic. Plate _____

Serial # _____ Ins. Policy & Co. _____

Damage _____ Est. Damage \$ _____

Driver's Name _____ Driver's Licence # _____

Driver's Phone # (Bus.) _____ (Res.) _____ (Cell) _____

Driver's Address _____

Injuries / Passengers _____

Witnesses / Phone #s _____

Other Vehicles (if applicable) – Owner/Address/Registration # _____

Other Property Damage (if not auto) – Type/Est. Damage/Owner's Name/Address _____

Description of Collision (Speed) _____ (Direction) _____

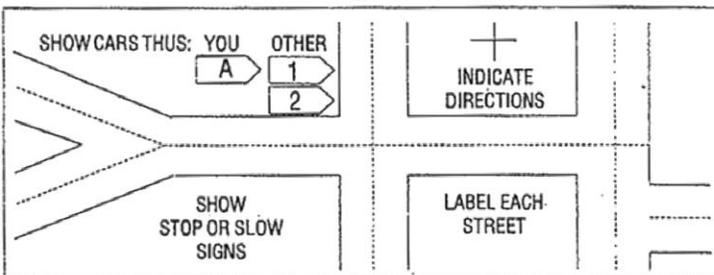
(Full Description) _____

Diagram of Collision

Police Officer _____ Badge # _____

Rank _____ Dept. _____ Report # _____

Sample Diagram



Description of Accident: Illustrate position of cars at time of collision. Show skid marks. If a street is more than two-lane or is one-way only, please indicate.

