

Beach Wheelchair Guidelines

Community Planning and Development



Date 7 September 2023

Objectives

Welcoming, inclusive, and healthy communities. Ensure public spaces cater for a wide range of users including people with disabilities.

Application

The beach wheelchair is designed for use in various environments which are not normally accessible for people in wheelchairs, including sand and uneven tracks. The beach wheelchair can be taken into salt or fresh water.

The beach wheelchair is designed to enable usage by a range of people with disability from small children to large adults. The chair does not need to be adjusted and as it is only used for a short period of time, is generally comfortable for most people. Some people choose to use their own cushion while in the chair.

Definitions

AMR – Augusta Margaret River

Guidelines

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River is committed to ensuring that the Beach Wheelchair is kept in good working order. Persons who use the beach wheelchair have a responsibility to ensure that they take all reasonable steps to avoid an accident by operating it in a safe and careful manner. Persons who use the chair do so at their own risk and the Shire cannot be held liable for any incident, which occurs while it is in the charge of a third party. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure they have read and understood the following Conditions of Use, Safety and Handling and Beach Access information.

1. Conditions of Use

1. The beach wheelchair is available to the public free of charge.
2. Hirers of the beach wheelchair must sign a loan agreement prior to use.
3. All users and carers borrowing the beach wheelchair should thoroughly read all safety warnings and conditions for use, prior to journeying to the beach.
4. The beach wheelchair may be transported in a vehicle but should only used within the boundaries of the shire.

BEACH WHEELCHAIR GUIDELINES

Collection/Return of the Beach wheelchair

1. The beach wheelchair must be collected and returned to the Shire of AMR Turner Caravan Park, 1 Blackwood Avenue Augusta.
2. The beach wheelchair must be inspected upon return. It should be returned clean, free of sand and thoroughly rinsed with fresh water.
3. Any damages or mechanical problems when returning the wheelchair must be reported.

2. Safety and Handling

1. The recommended water access point is the ramp across for the Colour Patch café on Albany Terrace in Augusta.
2. The chair is not a floatation device and should not be used in water deeper than 15 cm.
3. It is recommended that the straps are not used when the chair is in the water.
4. The beach wheelchair should not be used in waves or surf conditions.
5. It is the responsibility of the user to assess the beach and wave conditions before entering the water by observing the waves and checking for holes or steep gradients.
6. Occupants should not exceed the maximum weight allowance for the beach wheelchair, which is 150kg.
7. Occupants should not try to use the chair on their own. It's designed to be pushed by someone other than the person sitting in it.
8. The chair, whether occupied or empty, should never be left alone on a gradient (slope) greater than 5 degrees, or in the water.
9. Users should ensure that there are no loose parts before negotiating the beach and entering the water (check head support, footplate, arm rests, restraints, etc).
10. Users should take a moment to check the chair for any damage or mechanical fatigue.
11. Users should use appropriate lifting and handling procedures. The chair is over 30kg in total weight and lifting without appropriate care and diligence may cause back injury.
12. When adjusting the chair ensure your fingers don't get caught by using an open hand.
13. The chair is not designed to be pulled backwards over the sand (hence the large wheels at the front).

3. Use of the beach wheelchair

3.1 Transportation of the beach wheelchair & beach access.

The total weight of the beach wheelchair is approx. 35kg with the wheels fitted.

The dimensions are as follows:

- Overall width with beach wheels fitted: 1011113 mm
- Overall width with bicycle wheels fitted: 720 mm
- Seat back height: 580mm
- Average seat height from the ground: 550 mm
- Length: 1050mm

If the user will be transporting the chair from the Turner Caravan Park area, a utility vehicle or trailer may be required.

3.2 Lifting/Transfers.

Transferring a person onto the beach wheelchair is not difficult if a lift is well planned and executed.

If you are not experienced at lifting, it may be useful to approach a local rehabilitation centre, hospital or physiotherapist regarding training for transferring and lifting.

When transferring a person into the beach wheelchair it is important to plan the lift carefully to avoid injury to both yourself and the user.

Many people who generally transfer independently can transfer onto the beach wheelchair with little or no assistance. They may need to transfer in two stages by propping on the large wheel, it may be useful to cover the wheel with a towel.

Remove arm rests before transferring.

3.3 General principles of lifting/transferring people with disability.

People who require assistance are usually the experts on the best way to assist them.

- Talk to the person about their needs and ability to assist with lift.
- Assess the environment for obstacles and adequate space to move safely.
- Arrange the area so that lift is for the shortest distance and does not involve twisting.
- If in doubt, ask a second person to assist you with the lift.
- If two people are involved, appoint a leader to call the lift

3.4 Important points when lifting.

- Get close to the person and hold them close to you.
- Take a firm hold, not too tight.
- Position feet well apart.
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- Leader counts '1,2,3 lift'.
- Always lift with use your legs and not your back.
- To change direction, move your feet and don't twist.

It may be advisable to do a two-stage lift onto the beach wheelchair. This will involve using the wheel of the beach wheelchair to rest the person while the people involved in the lift adjust their feet. Make sure the person is supported throughout the whole lift. Use a towel on the wheel when doing this type of lift.

It is advisable to consult with a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist to train you and others in the correct principles of lifting.

3.5 Straps and support.

Leg support straps are provided, however it's easy to attach other straps on the seat or on the leg support bars to meet individual needs.

- Straps should not be used when a person is going into the water.
- Some people may need to use cushions or towels for support and comfort.

3.6 Pushing the beach wheelchair.

The wheelchair has been designed to push and turn as easily as possible over difficult terrain. It is important to remember that it is a manual wheelchair and that the ease of pushing depends on the size of the person in the wheelchair and the slope of the environment. The wheelchair is significantly easier to push over uneven terrain than a standard manual wheelchair.

3.7 Use at water-based environments.

The wheelchair has been designed to go into water. The frame is made from stainless steel and the wheels are non-corrosive. It can be fully submerged in fresh or salt water,. HOWEVER, the manufacturers recommend a depth of 15cm.

Caution needs to be taken around environments where there is a chance of wave action, as unexpected movement of the chair is a risk for users. If used in water do not strap the person into the wheelchair.

The maximum safe weight for this product is 150kgs.

Related documents

Beach Wheelchair Loan Agreement, Surf n Turf Beach Wheelchair Manual