

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN CAPE

GUIDELINES FOR DONATIONS OF WHEELCHAIRS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The need for mobility assistive devices

The need for wheelchairs is a global one. In the Western Cape, the Department of Health annually provides 4 000 persons with wheelchairs and accessories. Due to budget shortfalls, an additional $\pm 1\ 400$ persons have to be waitlisted every year. These clients all are indigent and dependent on State subsidised health care services.

2. Appropriate donations

To ensure optimal function of the user and appropriate durability of the wheelchair, each wheelchair user has to be provided with a device most suited for his / her personal, physical and environmental requirements. In order to achieve this outcome, an in-depth evaluation of the mentioned personal factors should be performed. When identifying the required wheelchair, the following criteria have to be met: adjustability, suitability, durability and sustainability. All chairs prescribed or donated should adhere to minimum durability standards (SABS with minimum user weight per type as set out in the National Tender (RT233) document or ISO 7176). It is therefore crucial that donations be referred to specialists in the field, for their expert opinion and knowledge regarding specific requirements. (Refer to Part 1: Donation needs and Part 2: Factors to consider)

Currently, the biggest need is for children's active- and postural support wheelchairs, adult postural support devices, as well as active and rural wheelchairs. The priority for basic (so called standard) wheelchairs is low. (Refer to Part 1: Donation needs and Part 2: Factors to consider)

3. Managing donations

The Provincial Government of the Western Cape: Mobility Assistive Devices Committee (MADAC) represents all regions in the province, Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). It functions under the auspices of The Head: Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre and the Provincial Directorate: Public Health.

This committee deals with all issues related to mobility assistive devices in the province and co-ordinates a centralised waitlist, categorising both devices and individual users. Where donations are received, the selection process, as well as issuing of devices, is actively monitored and facilitated by the committee. (Refer to Part 1: Donation needs)

Provincial donations are managed by MADAC while donations to institutions are managed by an institutional committee / department.

4. Donation procedures

(Refer to Part 3: Donation procedures)

Informing the intended receiver:

Letters have to be addressed to:

- (a) The Head of the Institution (in the case of Facility-specific donations)
OR
- (b) Attention: Head of Health
Department of Health
PO Box 2060
CAPE TOWN, 8000

OPTIONS

i. Donation of funds:

MADAC and Directorate of Public Health arrange an appropriate order (from suppliers listed on Tender) for specific clients, according to central database requirements. The recipient department needs to complete Annexure A of Finance Instruction: G41/2008 to obtain authorisation of the intended donation in terms of the Public Finance management Act. The State remains responsible for repairs, maintenance and replacement of devices.

ii. Donation of new wheelchairs:

The donor is provided with a detailed list of required wheelchairs with all relevant specifications and the donor purchases chairs according to this list. It is preferable to make use of the existing suppliers as per the National Wheelchair Tender. Alternatively, where the chairs are already purchased, the list of donated chairs is evaluated by MADAC and Directorate of Public Health. Chairs are then matched to persons on the waitlist, and recipients prioritised. Only chairs that meet minimum durability standards (SABS with minimum user weight per type as set out in the National Tender (RT233) document or ISO 7176) and where spares are locally obtainable, will be accepted as donations. In this case, the State also assumes responsibility for repairs, maintenance and replacement.

iii. Donation of wheelchairs directly to persons living with disabilities

NGO's or other organisations can also be approached directly for distribution of donated wheelchairs. In this scenario the wheelchair becomes privately owned, and the client will not be able to access subsidised wheelchair services. As few clients will be able to afford private repairs, this option is not recommended.

Is any wheelchair better than nothing?

For most users, inappropriate wheelchairs can cause very serious health problems and chairs often break down within a few months. Clients are then waitlisted again at the bottom of the waitlist.

“Indeed, isn't something appropriate and long lasting better than just something?”

(Motivation UK)

Your assistance is appreciated! Thank you!
