

SUMMER 2005

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TRIPLINK STATS

As of August, 2005 there are 30 companies contracted to provide transportation.

164 vehicles in the program

285 drivers eligible for TripLink service.

Total rides:

January	12,593
February	11,624
March	13,424
April	12,972
May	13,394
June	13,380

TRANSPORTING WHEELCHAIRS

Each year, TripLink assigns almost 40,000 trips for people in wheelchairs. Fifteen of the thirty companies under contract with TripLink operate some kind of vehicle capable of transporting wheelchairs. Wheelchair vehicles serving TripLink are required to meet federal ADA guidelines. Wheelchair securement location within a vehicle must be designed to limit movement of an occupied wheelchair when the vehicle is in normal operation using a four point tie down system. Separate from the wheelchair system, an occupant securement system consisting of (1) a lap belt, or (2) a lap and shoulder belt must be provided.

"I see lots of drivers using wheelchair lifts in a way that contradicts the wheelchair lift manufacturers recommendation on proper use." according to Dave Kussman, Contract Coordinator. "In addition, some of the wheelchair vehicles I see in the field do not have functioning equipment, such as brake interlocks restricting the use of the lift unless the emergency brake is engaged. This is a violation of our contract and a major safety issue."

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) offers a 16-hour Passenger Service and Safety Certification (PASS) program to drivers transporting passengers in wheelchairs. TripLink will be offering this certified PASS training to all drivers this Fall. The following procedures are from the PASS Training Manual.

LIFT OPERATING PROCEDURES

Lifts can be potentially hazardous equipment. They must be maintained and operated properly. Upon arriving at your destination, stop on level ground, and put the vehicle transmission in "park" and secure the emergency brake (the lift should not work without the emergency brake engaged.) Make certain your hazard lights are flashing. Make sure to follow the manufacturers recommendation for how the lift should be used. Know how much weight your lift is designed to handle.

The lift must always be operated from the ground. Do not ride on the lift with passengers who are using a mobility device, or step on the lift while the passenger and chair are still on the lift.

Always make sure the chair wheels are locked. Power chairs should have their power sources disengaged during lift operations.

All drivers should know how to operate the lift manually.

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ONE RIDE = MANY STEPS

Trip-Link currently employees seven call takers. The call takers work 10 hour shifts with varying days off. Each and every one does an exceptional job with the amount of issues that can come up daily.

TRIP RESERVATIONS

To get an idea of what is going on in the call center; we receive about 450 calls per day. From clients, care takers, care homes, hospitals, providers and more. On an average day each call taker takes 75 to 100 calls. An average call lasts around 3 minutes, but can vary depending on several factors.

Call takers have difficulty if the caller does not know the address where they are going, the physician's name, the appointment time or length. The call taker will try to assist the caller in finding this information but generally this is the caller's responsibility.

Call takers make trip reservations up to 30 days in advance. Each day they add about 500 additional trips!

RIDE IS SCHEDULED

After the call taker has completed the trip reservation the ride information awaits the scheduler's special touch.

We have two schedulers on staff. Together they schedule about 600 rides per day. Each ride is scheduled individually on to a carrier based on several variables.

First and foremost is appropriateness, but a very close second is cost. We could schedule rides to the least expensive carrier but if we are not meeting the personalized medical needs of our clients then we are failing to

provide the type of service we strive for.

Next the schedulers try to design a run that will keep the driver busy all day long. This is not always possible; it depends on the rides that come in. Schedulers are always working to keep clients and providers satisfied. This proves to be difficult on a daily basis.

CANCELLATIONS

One pitfall we often encounter is our numerous trip cancellations.

Often times the client cannot control the circumstances that cause their appointment to change or cancel.

The schedulers cannot always predict spaces in the manifest cancellations may possibly cause. Because of this, runs can't always come out the way they were planned.

RIDE COMPLETION

After the rides have been completed each provider checks in their own rides into our Mobility Master software. Each provider has this set up on their own computer in their office.

BILLING

Once the rides are checked in they go to the billing department. Trip-Link has one billing clerk. The billing clerk processes trips on a weekly basis and sends an electronic file to OMAP. This is how we receive payment for trips we are paying providers to do. The billing clerk also generates an accounts payable file for each provider so they can collect payment for the rides they have done.

The billing clerk must also do weekly auditing of provider's

billing entries into Mobility Master. If possible errors are found, the billing clerk will call the provider to discuss them.

The billing clerk will assist providers with the trip check in process. The billing clerk also trains new provider employees on how to get trips checked in using Mobility Master.

PAYMENT

Once payment has been received from OMAP the reconciliation process begins. If there are trips that were not paid we have to re-bill these trips by hand. Usually, rides don't get paid because of a billing code error. These can be easily fixed and resubmitted.

As you can see there is a lot going on in the office here at Trip-Link. Yet, everyone still finds time to be friendly and out going to our provider and client community. This is because we truly enjoy our jobs and see the difference we are making in our community.

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THE TRIPLINK TEAM



Left to right - Kristie, Amanda, Mark, Missy, LoAnn, Phyllis, Dave (back), Caleb, Laura. Not pictured, Joe, Maggie, LeAnn, Heather, Darla

TRANSPORTING WHEELCHAIRS (cont.)

Passengers should be facing out, or away from the vehicle, as recommended by both Ricon and Braun wheelchair lift manufacturers.

WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT IN THE VEHICLE

The wheelchair and occupant must face toward the front of the vehicle. The wheelchair should be centered between the floor tracks or plates. The wheels should be locked on a manual wheelchair.

Attach the front straps. The track/pocket fitting on the belt must be attached to the floor track/pocket three to eight inches outside the front wheel, providing side-to-side stability. Do not permit the strap to interfere with the passenger's footrest or to conform around any part of the wheelchair. When inserting the track/pocket fitting into the floor track, pull on it to make certain it is secure. The other end of the strap must be looped around a permanent part of the chair as close to the seat cushion as possible. Ideally there should be a 45-degree angle from the floor to the wheelchair.



Attach the rear straps. After moving to the rear of the wheelchair release the wheel locks and pull the chair rearward, re-apply the wheel locks. When securing a motorized wheelchair ask the occupant to move the chair rearward and then turn off all power. Doing this removes all slack in the front securement belts.



Attach the track/pocket fitting in the floor just to the inside of the rear wheels. Pull upward on the strap to make certain it is secure.

The other end of the strap must be looped around a permanent

part of the chair as close to the seat cushion as possible. Ideally there should be a 45-degree angle from floor to wheelchair.

When using a retractor type system retract the belts until tight. If not, pull the loose end of the strap toward the point the belt is attached to the wheelchair and tension through the buckle. Lock the buckle while holding tension as needed.

Check to ensure that all securement belts are properly attached and tensioned, and that the wheelchair is secure and does not have any excess movement front to rear, or side-to-side.

Sometimes, the hooks on securement straps are too big to properly hook onto the wheelchair. Q'Strain and Sure-Lok have developed a Webbing Loop/Quick Strap that can be used in places the strap hooks won't fit. The loops come in various sizes and are relatively inexpensive.

CAUTIONS

- Do not attach the straps to the wheels or any detachable portion of the wheelchair.
- Do not allow the straps to conform or bend around wheels, footrests or any other object.
- Never use only the cam buckle straps on all four points of attachment to the wheelchair frame. The cam buckle is a slack-removing device and can only tension to the extent of the driver's strength and angle of pull. At least two of the securement straps must have full tensioning capability.
- Do not use different styles of buckle straps for attachment to the same end of the wheelchair.
- Do not cross the securement straps or attach to the cross piece under the seat. This may place added stress or unequal load forces on the wheelchair frame and may contribute to collapsing or tipping of the wheelchair.



Attach the front straps first, 3 to 8 inches outside the front wheel, providing side to side stability. Attach the rear straps second, and align just to the inside of the rear wheels. Try to maintain a 45-degree angle with all securement straps.

TRAINING IN SEPTEMBER

We are offering **CTAA PASSENGER SERVICE AND SAFETY (PASS) CERTIFICATION** training in September. The objective of the training is to become familiar and proficient with customer assistance, sensitivity and evacuation techniques. This training program consists of: Coaching, Exercises, and Hands-On Applications. It is recognized nationally as a key training program for the Paratransit industry.

This **two day class** runs from 8:00AM until 5:00PM on the following dates:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2005

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2005

This training will be held at the TripLink Offices located at 3140 Del Webb Ave. NE in Salem.

Normally, PASS training costs \$35.00 for the workbook per driver. **PASS is being offered to all TripLink Contractors and drivers at no cost.** The certification training is intended to raise the skill level of all drivers in service with TripLink.

Remember, contractually, *"Contractors will inform drivers of their job duties and responsibilities and provide adequate, documented training for all equipment related to their vehicles. This will include, but not be limited to: Completion of Passenger Assistance and Sensitivity Training, within six months of date of hire."*



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**"THE WISEST MIND HAS SOMETHING YET
TO LEARN."**

George Santayana (1863–1952)



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888-315-5544

FAX NUMBERS

BILLING 503-315-5513

BID SHEETS 503-315-5514

RATES 503-588-5119