

Power Wheelchair Criteria - Outdoor

The following are criteria developed to help determine if a client is appropriate for driving a power wheelchair outdoors. These criteria are assessed after a client has demonstrated competence driving indoors. Please refer to the Power Wheelchair Criteria – Indoor checklist.

If a client is able to demonstrate the following criteria during an initial assessment and/or during any other subsequent training sessions, driving a power wheelchair outdoors is deemed appropriate. If the client only meets some of these criteria, training guidelines can be provided to the family/caregivers to help develop these skills. The intention of this tool is to provide as appropriate a recommendation as possible for the client.

Mark each item Independent (I), Needs Supervision (NS) or Dependent (D).

- _____ The client demonstrates the ability to follow directions while driving the power wheelchair outdoors.
Demonstrated by: the client will follow directions such as “Stop”, “Go” and “Wait” in a variety of outdoor situations, including crossing a street.
- _____ The client demonstrates adequate judgement for their age while driving the power wheelchair outdoors.
Demonstrated by: the client stops at all driveways and street crossings, accurately determines if crossing is safe, and completes crossing. The client understands the meanings of crosswalk signs and traffic lights. The client does not attempt to drive up or off a curb unless the power wheelchair is designed for this task and the curb is within specified parameters.
- _____ The client demonstrates adequate problem solving for their age while driving the power wheelchair outdoors.
Demonstrated by: the client recognizes unsafe situations, such as the lack of a curb cut, and is able to problem solve a solution, such as going back to a driveway and driving in the gutter until reaching the crossing.
- _____ The client demonstrates adequate functional vision to safely drive the power wheelchair outdoors.
Demonstrated by: the client is able to discriminate boundaries of a sidewalk, curb edges, and changes of terrain. The client is able to adequately see display, as necessary, in sunlight.
- _____ The client is able to use an access method with adequate activation, sustained contact, and release over varied terrain.
Demonstrated by: the client is able to consistently and accurately activate access method (i.e. switch), sustain contact as needed, and release to stop while driving the power wheelchair outdoors over varied terrain. The client demonstrates adequate endurance and consistency of motor control over varied terrain.
- Optional:
- _____ The client will be able to use accessible public transportation with the power wheelchair.
Demonstrated by: the client will be able get to correct bus or light rail stop at the correct time. The client will be able to determine when correct bus or train has arrived at stop for boarding and for departure. The client will be able to enter and exit the bus or train.

For more Resources, check out:

Power Wheelchair Criteria – Indoors
Pre-Mobility Training Guidelines
Mobility Training Guidelines

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