

BEST

PRACTICE

GUIDELINES

FOR

VEHICLE

PURCHASING

2011

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FOREWORD

South West Community Transport (SWCT) provides accessible transport for the frail aged, younger people with disabilities and their carers from within the local government areas of Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool and Wollondilly.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the members of SWCT Transport Working Party 2004 who assisted in the development of this manual.

This booklet has been developed as Best Practice Guidelines ONLY. The information provided is meant as a guide for community groups considering purchasing or replacing a vehicle.

South West Community Transport and the Authors of these Guidelines do not accept any responsibility or liability for any error, omission, discrepancy or inaccuracy in this information or from its interpretation and presentation. Nor do the Authors accept any responsibility or liability for any loss, injury or damage however suffered as a result of the use, interpretation or implementation of these Guidelines

SWCT strongly encourages individuals to always check the accuracy and relevance of the information provided within these Guidelines before proceeding with purchase or modification of vehicle as information may change/alter without prior notice.

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PURCHASING A VEHICLE

Prior to placing an order for a new or replacement vehicle you have to ensure that the new vehicle will be capable of meeting your future passenger needs and service requirements.

The type of issues you may need to address could include;

- The type and size of the vehicle required. In some instances it may be cheaper to purchase a van and have it modified into a bus. It is advisable to communicate with the firm you are subcontracting the modifications to before continuing with purchase.
- Seating – type and number of seats
- Seat belts
- Seat belt buckles fitted to storks
- Air conditioning
- Window tinting
- Mud flaps
- Provision for baby capsules and child booster seats
- Storage bays for equipment
- Hand / grab rails
- Wheelchair access
 - hoist,
 - wheelchair restraints,
 - tracking seats etc.
- Access Step
- Availability of spare parts
- (Local) expertise to maintain vehicle
- License required to drive vehicle

ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE PLACING AN ORDER

1.1 SEAT BELTS

When purchasing your vehicle you should consider the type of seat belts needed by a) current legal requirements b) passengers needs - could be either lap or lap/sash belts

You can purchase XL seat belts but you need to be aware that with small framed passengers these belts may not retract enough to ensure the passenger is safely secured.

One option may be to have a variety of seat belts fitted in the vehicle e.g. two seat belts replaced with two XL seat belts.

Seat Belt buckles fitted to storks raises the buckle above the level of the seat and provides easier access when clipping together. This minimizes the 'inappropriate touching' which sometimes happens when team member assists with the fitting of a seat belt.

1.2 TYPE OF SEATS

You can normally purchase a bus with vinyl or cloth seats. Vinyl seat covers are easy to wipe and keep clean especially if there has been spillages on or near the seat.

1.3 NUMBER OF SEATS

Can you include the front seats when calculating the number of passenger seats?

- As an example a group providing transport for people with limited mobility may not be able to physically access the front seats beside the driver.

- If the group is providing transport for people with challenging behaviors it may not be safe to access the front seats near the driver/controls.

- Are there any steps inside the vehicle which will restrict your passenger's access to a particular seat? These types of steps may be found near the wheel arch and or motor bay. Are your passengers of a small or large body type. If large can you fit two passengers on a double seat or would only one passenger per double seat be the safest form of transport?

Tracking Seats

Will your group benefit, long term, from tracking seats?

Tracking Seating is that which has been modified so that the seats may be installed or removed depending on the passenger needs e.g. wheelchair access.

Seats modified with wheels for easy removal and installation will assist with OH&S Risk minimization.

1.4

AIR CONDITIONING

- Will the air conditioning meet your passenger needs?
- Is it ducted air?
- Consider the engine's capacity and air conditioning demands. How effective will it be if you have a full passenger load on a hot day driving up a steep hill?

1.5

WINDOW TINTING

- Will your passengers be affected by the sun's rays?
- Will your passengers be in the vehicle for long periods of time?
- Do you need to obtain a heavier level of tinting on the windows? If so, how much will this cost and is it legal?
- Could the use of blinds/shades be used as an alternative to or in conjunction with tinting? Ensuring that the visual needs of the driver are not impaired.
- Sun block could also be carried in the vehicle.

1.6

BABY CAPSULES—BOOSTER SEATS

Will you be required to transport children? If so, what type of restraint system are you legally obliged to provide?

Does the vehicle need to have restraint system installed?

For information on the type of restraints required access the internet site

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/> which is the web site for the Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (R.T.A.).

1.7

MUD FLAPS

Consider the terrain your vehicle may be covering. Even on city streets mud flaps will restrict the amount of dirt sprayed up on the vehicle. This is an extra expense at purchase time but may save you money and time in cleaning and maintenance costs during the life of the vehicle

1.8

HAND / GRAB RAILS

Hand or grab rails assist passengers accessing the vehicle.

These may be placed both outside and inside the vehicle.

The type and number of rails you require will depend on the mobility of the passengers and the type of vehicle being modified.

All such rails should be painted safety yellow to assist in addressing safety issues when accessing the vehicle.

1.9

FLOORING

Floor mats in cars and protection for flooring e.g. rubber floors in buses, will minimize damage to the floor as well as cleaning costs and may also affect the resale of the vehicle.

1.10

STORAGE BAYS

In each vehicle it is advisable to carry

- First Aid Kit,
- Universal Precaution Kit,
- Breakdown Kit,
- Umbrella,
- Street Directory,
- Vehicle procedure manual etc.

Where will these be stored in the vehicle?

Will your passengers be carrying personal belongings which may need to be secured?

If so, where in the vehicle can you safely store these items?



You may think about having the vehicle modified with a storage bay. This may be at the cost of seating but will ensure all loose items are stored in a safe manner.

There should be no loose items on the vehicle which may become projectiles in the case of an accident.

Ocky straps are not the safest form of restraint for such items as the straps tend to fray and the hooks may slip off. Vehicle tie down straps with a ratchet system provide a safe manner of securing items as long as you can identify a safe connection point.

If modifying a vehicle for wheelchair access and or tracking seats the same system may be used to secure storage box in vehicle. This will provide an option of having the storage box either in or out of the vehicle, depending on the needs of each trip. It is advisable to communicate with the firm you are subcontracting the modifications to before continuing with purchase.

1.11

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Is your organisation required to purchase accessible vehicles under the Disability Standards or the Passenger Transport Act—clarification could be sought from Transport NSW

Will your passengers require wheelchair access?

If so, this will mean modifications to the vehicle including the installation of a hoist and the removal of some seats.

You need to consider how many wheelchair positions you may require in the future. Remembering it is probably cheaper to have all the modifications done at the start rather than later on in the life of the vehicle as this would reduce the labor costs and only one Engineers Certificate would be required.

Vehicle modifiers now provide tracking seats. This means that you can configure the vehicles seating capacity depending on the number of wheelchairs you are transporting at any given time e.g. 1 wheelchair 15 passengers or 3 wheelchairs 11 passengers. Tracking seats normally work in conjunction with the wheelchair restraint systems.

A storage box for the wheelchair restraint system, when not in use, will be needed for safety purposes.

1.12

THE LOWEST STEP

Do you need an extra step fitted to the vehicle? It is advisable to communicate with the firm you are subcontracting the modifications to before continuing with purchase.

Depending on the mobility of the passengers the lowest step provided on the vehicle may not be low enough for people with disabilities. If you are unable to park close to a curb will the step down be too great for your passengers?

You can obtain either a manual or automatic step which is stored under the floor of the vehicle, in line with the access door.

The manual step requires someone on the outside of the vehicle to pull it out and to push it back under the vehicle. Drivers have been known to drive off with step in 'out' position.

The automatic step can operate in conjunction with the opening and closing of the door. As the door opens, be it manual or automatic, the step automatically comes out and vice versa when closing the door.

Other options may be available for different model of vehicles.

It is not advisable to have a step which is not fitted to the vehicle as there may be legal ramifications should an incident occur causing harm to staff and or passengers when using the step.



*An example
of an
additional
automatic
step*

1.13

USAGE OF THE VEHICLE

- Will you be using the vehicle 7 days a week day and on evenings or could you enter into an arrangement with another group to use the vehicle on your down days thus decreasing the overall purchase and maintenance costs?
- If so, what are the passenger requirements for the other group?
- You may wish to purchase the vehicle and broker it out on a permanent arrangement with another group. Such strategies assist in the payment for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of the vehicle.
- You may consider subcontracting the management of your fleet to an expert e.g your local community transport provider.

2. FUEL

2.1 PURCHASING FUEL

Consider the type of fuel which will best suit your needs e.g. Unleaded, Diesel, LPG

If you meet the guidelines for purchasing goods at the government contract rate you may also obtain Fuel at the contract rate via government supplies. For further information contact the fuel company directly.

2.2 FUELING VEHICLES

To assist Drivers in undertaking smooth transference of fuel following steps are recommended

- Provide an indication on the dash as to what side of the vehicle the fuel cap is located
- Mark vehicle with type of fuel required e.g. Unleaded, Diesel, LPG

2.3 FUEL CARDS

A Fuel Card could be attached to each set of keys. Fuel card MUST be kept in separate compartments in the key ring holder. Each card has a magnetic strip which contains information required by the supplier's computer. If these strips are placed in direct contact with each other they can cancel each other out resulting in embarrassment when you attempt to pay for fuel.

3. VEHICLE KITS

3.1 FIRST AID KIT

There are several groups who can provide the appropriate level of First Aid Kits for your needs. The type of First Aid Kit used will depend on the environment, number of people accessing the kit etc. This information can be obtained from your supplier.

First Aid Kits may be purchased from the following suppliers;

- The Red Cross – Merchandise and First Aid Kits – 1300 367 418
- St. Johns Ambulance – First Aid Kits, Supplies and Services – 1300 360 455

3.2

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTION KIT

The aim of the Universal Precaution Kit is to provide both your staff and passengers with protection against inadvertent spillage of body fluids in the vehicle e.g. urine, vomit, blood etc.

The **Universal Precaution Kit** should contain at a minimum

- 1 bottle x Clean water,
- 3 sets x Disposable gloves
- 5 x Em bags (vomit bags)
- 3 x Cleaning cloths
- 3 x Bag for waste products
- 3 x Super scoop (to assist in picking up more solid spillages)

It is recommended that you do not include substances such as disinfectants in the kit as these may leave a scent which could have a negative impact on a passenger with breathing problems such as emphysema. This may apply even if the passenger enters the vehicle sometime after the substance has been used and the vehicle has not been aired thoroughly.

3.3

BIOHAZARD SPILL KIT

The aim of the Biohazard Spill Kit is to provide suppliers required to safely clean up contaminated waste such as body fluid spills.

Biohazard Spill Kits may be obtained from Majac Medical products P/1 1300 138 575. Size and contents of kits depend on need of organisation.

3.4

BREAKDOWN KIT

The Breakdown Kit will provide assistance for staff and passengers should the vehicle be broken down or caught in a traffic jam for long periods of time. The items in the Kit will assist should the passenger be a diabetic or need to take medications.

The **Breakdown Kit** should contain at a minimum

- 1 x Blanket
- 1 packet x Barley sugar
- 2 x Juice
- 1 bottle x Drinking water
- 5 x Plastic drinking cups

A regular check of supplies to ensure 'use by dates' are current is recommended

4. WHEELCHAIR HOISTS

There are several types of hoists and these may be fitted as

- internal hoist
- external hoist
- undercarriage hoist

Hoists may also be fitted as

- rear loading hoist
- side loading hoist

The type of hoist installed may be dependant on

- the vehicle being modified
- financial implications
- passenger needs.

All hoists have different operating instructions, which will be supplied by the manufacturer at the time of purchase. Training on all aspects of operation should be provided by the manufacturer. A copy of the manufacturer's instructions should be placed in the vehicle to allow access by all operators.

Maximum lifting capacity for a hoist is normally 340kg. All hoists are fitted with a manual backup/override system should the hydraulic system fail. **It is recommended that all operators be instructed in both the hydraulic and manual procedures.** To ensure accuracy of orientation it is suggested that a checklist be developed for each individual hoist which the instructor and driver sign at completion of orientation.

Manufacturers recommend that the hoist be operated through one complete cycle at the beginning of each service day, to ensure hydraulics have not dropped during down time. The hoist should also be incorporated into the vehicle maintenance plan.



Side Loading Hoist



Under Floor Cartridge Hoist



Rear Loading Hoist

5. VEHICLE PROCEDURE MANUAL

It is recommended that a Procedure Manual be in place in each vehicle detailing all aspects of operation of the vehicle, including comprehensive instructions on the operation of equipment specific to that vehicle, Occupational Health and Safety Issues Safe Operating Procedures etc.

6. HEAVY VEHICLE INSPECTION SCHEME

Regulations change regularly without prior notice—always confirm current requirements before proceeding. RTA information may be access via there website http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/heavyvehicles/registration/about_hvis.html

The Heavy Vehicle Inspection Scheme (HVIS) is a roadworthiness inspection scheme. Most classes of NSW registered heavy vehicles require an HVIS inspection. All inspections are carried out by the RTA's vehicle inspectors.



8. FINAL WORD ON PURCHASING

**Remember
Purchasing
is not always
the best option.
Partnerships
co-ownership,
leasing or
brokerage may be
a viable
option**

VEHICLE PURCHASE / REPLACEMENT CHECK LIST

Have you considered ??

**The items identified on this list should be considered,
as a minimum prior to purchasing / replacing a vehicle**

Is the vehicle the most appropriate vehicle to suit the passenger needs and service requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Would it be cheaper to purchase a van and have it modified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the vehicle low enough to warrant skids to protect under carriage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you identified the most appropriate fuel to suit your needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are spare parts readily available for vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have access to local, licensed expert to maintain vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you identified an appropriate/safe site for garaging vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you considered the level of licence required to drive the vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Would you need to obtain Accreditation under the Passenger Transport Act	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you arranged for Seat Belts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you considered retractable lap belts rather than fixed seat belts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Retractable	<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed
Do you require XL Seat Belts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require storks (ie extensions) on the seat belt buckle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require cloth or vinyl seats?	<input type="checkbox"/> Cloth	<input type="checkbox"/> Vinyl
Have you identified the number of seats required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the air conditioning meet the passenger needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the engine capacity meet demands of the air conditioning / heater?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do the windows need to be tinted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require mud flaps?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require internal and external grab rails?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you identified the type of flooring / protection?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require reversing sensors or camera?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the accessory system have enough outlets to cope with all your needs e.g. camera, GPS, phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

VEHICLE PURCHASE / REPLACEMENT CHECK LIST

Continued

Do you require storage bay/s for equipment and or luggage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Can the storage box be removed with safety?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require storage area for first aid kits etc?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require restraining system for Baby Capsules/booster seats?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require an Engineers Certificate if modifying vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require hoist access?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the vehicle provide option for rear and or side loading hoist?	<input type="checkbox"/> Rear	<input type="checkbox"/> Side
Does the hoist meet the needs of your wheelchair and or mobile passengers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the hoist door have a safety cut out switch?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the wheelchair restraint system the most appropriate for passenger needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does wheelchair restraint system provide sufficient room for staff to install?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require the restraint tracks to be colour coded?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require a restraint belt storage box?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you identified the number of wheelchair positions required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you agreed to the number of seats to be removed for wheelchair positions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require seating track system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the track seats have wheels fitted for safety when loading/unloading?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you legally require flashing lights, for safety, to indicate hoist in operation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require an extra access step?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you considered the needs of other groups who may access the vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require rear flashing lights to indicate children being loaded/unloaded?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require reversing sensor system to be fitted to vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you require restraint system on rear walls for frames, wheelchairs etc?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No