

Survey Question: Pushing Heavy Manual wheelchairs

Madison Metro Paratransit recently switched to all low floor paratransit vehicles that are ramped instead of lift equipped.

An unexpected difficulty in using the ramped vehicles has arisen with particularly heavy passengers in manual wheelchairs. In the best case scenario, drivers are able to deploy the ramp on the curb which creates a level bridge to the vehicle.

The problem lies in the following scenarios: In a lesser scenario, the ramp is deployed to the road level creating an incline which drivers are not able to overcome with heavier persons in manual wheelchairs. Secondly, and this has nothing to do with the ramp or lift, the driver is not able to move the heavier person in the manual wheelchair from a dead stop in order to even approach the vehicle as the combined weight is too much for the driver(s) to push.

Are there requirements / regulations for being able to push an occupied wheelchair? If so what are they? What suggestions are there to effectively serve affected individuals or establish appropriate expectations of the service?

Thank you for any help or suggestions.