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Marketing brochure distributed on board buses and Metro Rail cars and through accessibility groups illustrates new tether strap program for mobility devices. Patrons are offered pre-marking of fasten locations and new tether straps.

Metro launches Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program

By Michael D. White
Staff Writer

(April 16, 2009) Metro's Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program was officially launched this month to insure that all wheelchair and scooter riders are properly secured on Metro buses, officials announced.

Estimates show that about 750 wheelchair or scooter riders board Metro buses daily, said Chip Hazen, Metro ADA Compliance Officer. The goal of the program is to make it faster and easier for bus operators to secure wheelchairs, reduce the number of wheelchair-related incidents on buses, and insure the safe transport of all passengers, he said.

"The safety of all our passengers, particularly those who use assistive devices, is an absolute priority for us," said Hazen, who oversees Metro's accessibility standards compliance.

The program, which is partially funded with an \$108,000 Federal New Freedom Grant, calls for an ongoing bus operator training program which teaches operators how to utilize the specially-designed nylon tether straps to secure wheelchairs onto buses.

As part of the training component, OCI Assistant Manager Mike Turk has begun developing an operator's instruction manual to specify how to attach mobility

How it works: Trainer Douglas Cross demonstrates the tether strap in training class for bus operators.



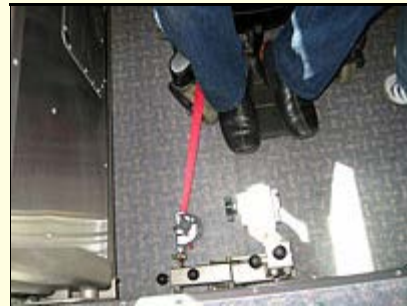
devices to buses. The idea is to get operators to complete the task in a uniform manner, and to shorten the time it takes to secure the straps.

"The fasten points where a wheelchair can be secured, varies from design model to model, as well as by the need of the user," said Hazen. "Currently, many of Metro's bus operators are having to make a determination of the best location to place the bus securement hooks, and if they can't find one quickly, the wheelchair may not be secured."

Some wheelchairs meet the American National Standards (ANS) WC 19 profile, while others don't, making the issue of safely and efficiently securing them a genuine challenge for even the most veteran bus operator, Hazen said.

Those that don't comply with the WC 19 standards will be "taped" to mark points where a Metro operator can attach a standard tie-down strap already in place on the bus. If a tie-on point isn't "taped," the wheelchair will be secured by linking the bus tie-down to one of the new nylon tether strap that, in turn, would be connected to the wheelchair frame.

Application of the marking tape and installation of the tether straps has begun with the goal of equipping 1,000-plus wheelchairs and electric scooters at the request of their owners over the next several months.



Application of the marking tape and installation of the tether straps, as illustrated above, is done at the request of the patron.

The program is voluntary for riders and those who would like their wheelchair evaluated for marking tape or a tether strap can get one installed by calling 213-922-8800.

[MORE>](#) New program will help keep wheelchair riders safe and secure aboard Metro buses

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