

## A guide for patients about the safe use of a pelvic lap belt or safety belt

If not used correctly, pelvic lap belts and safety belts can be dangerous to people using wheelchairs. When you first received your equipment, your therapist will have informed you how to use it safely.

It may be helpful to know there are different types of belts that can be used with wheelchair equipment. For example, a **safety belt** is used to help maintain someone's safety when being pushed in the wheelchair, whilst a **pelvic lap belt** is designed to help maintain the correct sitting position in the wheelchair and can often be used in combination with other types of harnessing to provide specific postural support.

To help further and to make sure you are able to continue to use the equipment correctly and safely, please read this leaflet and keep it safe for further reference.

### Do's

- Before each use, ensure the pelvic lap belt or safety belt is in good condition, is appropriate for use and adjusted correctly. Your therapist will have shown you how to do this.
- Check the condition of the belt before each use to ensure there are no frayed areas, broken clasps or mounting brackets. Also ensure the belt is fitted from the mounting brackets or from the secure fixings as per manufacturer's instructions.
- The belt should be fitted low down across the pelvis (not at the waist) and especially if it is a pelvic lap belt, it should be tight enough to get one finger's width space between the user and the belt.
- When not in use, fasten the belt and place on the seat or back board to prevent contact with moving parts of the wheelchair. If this advice is not followed the belt become trapped in the wheels.
- Always follow manufacturer's guidelines for correct use.
- If a fault is identified, please talk to the Wheelchair Service immediately: contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet.
- When folding and unfolding the wheelchair, ensure the belt is correctly located and not trapped round the wheelchair framework.

### Don'ts

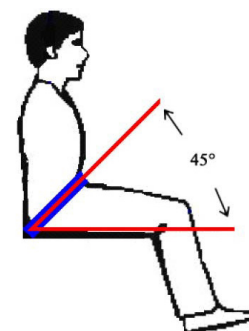
- Do not adjust the belt anchoring points.
- Do not attach any foreign objects to the belt.
- Do not use the wheelchair without first ensuring the belt is correctly positioned and fastened.
- Do not use the equipment for any other purpose other than identified by your therapist and/or the instructions provided.
- If after reading this leaflet you feel your pelvic lap belt needs adjusting, please contact the Wheelchair Service, using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

### Correct posture and pelvic lap belt position

The position of a pelvic lap belt will be dependent upon the clinical need of the individual wheelchair user but in general terms the wheelchair user should be in or near a 90 degree sitting position (see diagram).

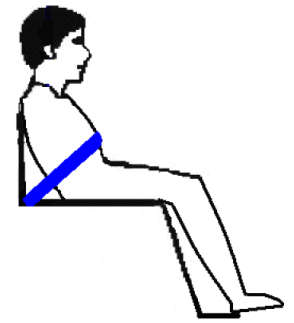
The pelvic lap belt should either:

- have the fixing points located near the corner of the seat or base with the belt at about 45 degrees to the seat base, with a snug fit over the pelvis.  
**or**
- have the fixing points forward of the corner position on the seat rails, with the belt in a more upright position across the top of the person's thighs, again with a snug fit to ensure the position is maintained.



### Correct position of a safety belt

This is similar to the guidance above for a lap belt (see number one above), so it is important that the wheelchair user sits well back in the seat of the wheelchair with the safety belt positioned as low as possible over the pelvis.



### Incorrect posture and safety belt position

The pelvic lap belt or safety belt positioned above the pelvis against soft tissue area or lower abdomen, with the hips forward in the seat, giving a reclined posture (see diagram). In this situation, the belt will not generally stop the person slipping further down in the wheelchair seat. There is the further risk of strangulation if the person continues to slip further down in the wheelchair as a result of an incorrectly applied belt.

Incorrect position can be caused by:

- The wheelchair user being unable to achieve a 90 degree sitting position
- The wheelchair user slipping down in the wheelchair due to inappropriate fitting and/or adjustment or the belt being 'held away' from the wheelchair user by a part of the seating system or wheelchair, for example the belt being positioned over the top of the armrest.

### Contact us

0300 7900128

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. During busy periods your call may be diverted to an answer machine.

[kcht.wheelchairservice-kent@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.wheelchairservice-kent@nhs.net)

### Wheelchair Service

Central Administration Office  
Norman House  
Beaver Business Park  
Beaver Road  
Ashford  
Kent TN23 7SH

### Wheelchair approved repairer service and delivery team

01304 842321 Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.

An out-of-hours service operates for emergency repairs between 7am and 11pm.

[wheelchairs@ajmhealthcare.org](mailto:wheelchairs@ajmhealthcare.org)

### AJM Healthcare

Unit 17A  
CT3 Business Park  
Cooting Road  
Aylesham  
Nr Canterbury  
Kent CT3 3EP

### Customer Care Team

If you have a query about our health services, or would like to comment, compliment or complain about Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, you can contact the **Customer Care Team**.

**Phone:** 0300 123 1807, 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Please say if you would like the team to call you back

**Text:** 07943 091958 **Email:** [kcht.cct@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.cct@nhs.net)

**Address:** Customer Care Team, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Trinity House, 110-120 Upper Pemberton, Eureka Park, Ashford, Kent TN25 4AZ **Web:** [www.kentcht.nhs.uk](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk)

If you would like this information in another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read or large print, please ask a member of staff.

You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

**Leaflet code:** 00429

**Published:** October 2015

**Expires:** October 2018

Page 2 of 2