

To Whom It May Concern:

At times we recommend both a manual and power wheelchair for a client. In these cases, the power wheelchair provides independent mobility for the client and is often the primary wheelchair. However, a manual wheelchair is still necessary as a “back-up” to the power wheelchair. The manual wheelchair provides appropriate seating and dependent mobility when the power wheelchair is not able to be used.

The power wheelchair may not be used for the following reasons:

- The power wheelchair is not functioning. The wheelchair may require repairs, the batteries may need charging or the batteries may need replacing. The client still requires something to sit in that provides adequate support, comfort and pressure distribution. The client also requires a mobile base so that caregivers do not have to carry the client. Placing the client in bed during this time is not a viable option. The power wheelchair may not be repaired for months, depending on the funding approval process, part availability and schedules. Being in bed, even for a few days, is not only a hardship on the client and caregivers, but puts the client at risk for respiratory complications, pressure sores and aspiration from eating in a supine position.
- The power wheelchair cannot be transported. If the available vehicle is not accessible to a power wheelchair, the client cannot be transported. The client’s accessible vehicle may need repair or the lift may need repair. Other accessible transportation (such as community based services) may not be available. A manual wheelchair can be placed in most vehicles.
- The destination is not accessible. If the client is visiting a residence, business or recreational facility that is not accessible (i.e. ramps, wide doorways), the client cannot use the power wheelchair. A manual wheelchair can access these locations. A power wheelchair is too heavy to lift over obstacles (often weighing 200 – 300 pounds).

We realize that you are trying to manage your resources wisely. We do believe, however, that a manual wheelchair, in addition to a power wheelchair, is a medical necessity for these clients.

Sincerely,

