



# Adaptive Driving for Persons with Physical Limitations

## Driver Rehabilitation Programs

According to the Association of Driver Educators for the Disabled, a driver rehabilitation program should have a qualified driver rehabilitation specialist, the appropriate vehicle(s), and equipment to provide comprehensive services in the following areas:

1. Clinical Evaluation – applicable testing in the area of physical functioning and visual/perceptual/cognitive screening. Where applicable, a wheelchair/seating assessment should be completed.
2. Driving Evaluation – shall include an on-the-road performance assessment of the client in an actual driving environment using equipment similar to the prescribed equipment.
3. Vehicle Modification/Prescription – all prescriptions shall be based on the client's demonstrated performance in an actual driving experience with equipment similar to that which is being prescribed. The prescription should include appropriate description and dimensions of the client's vehicle and mobility aid (wheelchair, scooter).
4. Driver Education – shall include sufficient practice and training to enable the client to operate a motor vehicle with the prescribed equipment at a level that

meets the client's need for a driver's license.

5. Final Fitting – the client shall receive a final fitting and operational assessment in their modified vehicle.

## Adaptive Driving Aids/Modifications

With the use of appropriate adaptive aids an individual with most types of physical disability can continue to drive safely. A variety of devices are available to meet the individual driver's needs and preferences. The following is a list of the more common modifications available. They should be tried in an actual driving situation before making a final decision. (For liability issues work with a certified adaptive driving specialist).

Automatic transmission – replaces clutch and manual shift

Power Steering – permits one-hand steering wheel operation

Power Brakes – needed for hand controls and other adaptive aids

Steering Devices – spinner knob, amputee ring, quad fork, tri pin, or custom device

Floor Mounted Steering – floor steering wheel for foot control

Modified Effort Steering – reduces strength needed to operate power steering or brake to accommodate low strength and/or endurance.

Left Foot Accelerator – eliminates left leg cross-over

Foot Pedal Extensions – raises height of brake and accelerator

Hand Controls – control operates brake/accelerator with single lever and activates secondary controls (horn, wipers, turn signals, etc.) \* temporary or mounted hand controls are not recommended by Veterans

Administration

Electric Gear Selector – permits left hand operation

Right Hand Turn Signal – permits right hand operation without cross-over

Remote Switches – reposition or build up secondary controls (horn, wipers, turn signals, etc.) to accommodate driver's specific disability

Seat Belts – shoulder and lap belt adjustments may be needed

Power Seats – eases access for transferring to a regular captain's seat

Custom Seats – creates balance, positioning, and stability

Lifts and Ramps – permits access into and out of vehicle

Wheelchair/Scooter Lifts – assists in lifting wheelchairs and scooters in and out of vehicles

Wheelchair Carriers – permits carrying of wheelchair outside of vehicle

## **Vehicle Selection**

When choosing a vehicle for transportation there are several areas to

consider. Your doctor, physical therapist or occupation therapist will have input and can help answer any questions, but a certified adaptive driving specialist can assist in making a vehicle selection with completion of the driver rehabilitation program.

Following are some areas to consider:

- What are your transportation needs? Do you need a car, truck, full-size van or mini-van? Are you able to take public transportation?
- What are your physical limitations that will effect your ability to access a vehicle or drive?
- Will you be a driver or passenger?
- Will you be able to handle the mental and physical stress of driving?
- What is your ability to transfer into and out of the vehicle?
- Will you require an assistive seat or lift to get into or out of the vehicle?
- If you require a lift, what options do you prefer? Side door or rear door entrance/exit; electric; hydraulic; platform swing out or superarm, etc.?
- Do you require a lowered floor or raised top and doors? What is your height, head to ground when sitting, and the length and width of your wheelchair or scooter?
- Will you drive from a wheelchair or use a power seat?
- Will you need special modifications to operate the vehicle?

- What are the services & warranty programs on your vehicle of choice? What parts are covered, and where can emergency repair work be done if you are out of town?
- What alternative funding sources are you eligible for (Veteran's Administration, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Services, or Insurance – Health or Workman's Compensation)?
- Have you checked with a qualified accountant to determine eligibility for tax credits for modifications?
- Have you checked with the manufacturer for information on a rebate program to help pay for modifications?
- Did you check with the dealer for a finance package?

### **Colorado Modification Vendors**

Adaptive Automobility  
 333 E. 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Denver, CO 80229  
 303/288-6342  
 800/748-3695

FreeWheel Vans, Inc.  
 4901 Ward Rd  
 Wheat Ridge, CO 80033  
 303/467-9981

Handicaps, Inc.  
 4335 S Santa Fe Dr  
 Englewood, CO 80110  
 303/781-4544  
 800/782-4335

Morning Star Mobility, Inc.  
 3508 E St Vrain  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
 719/380-1200  
 800/854-7463

Morning Star Mobility, Inc.  
 7100 Broadway, #7-A  
 Denver, CO 80221  
 303/412-8700

### **Colorado Adaptive Driving Programs**

Behind the Wheel Rehabilitation  
 Driving Program  
 Columbia Spalding  
 Rehabilitation Hospital  
 900 Potomac St  
 Aurora, CO 80011  
 303/367-1166

Capron Rehabilitation  
 2215 N Cascade Ave  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80933  
 719/776-5200

Craig Hospital  
 OT/Driving & Transportation  
 3425 Clarkson  
 Englewood, CO 80110  
 303/789-8218  
 limited participation, doctor's orders  
 required

Front Range Driving School  
 PO Box 253  
 Longmont, CO 80502  
 303/772-6050

McKee Medical Center

1824 W Vine Dr  
Fort Collins, CO 80521  
970/635-4179

Rocky Mountain Rehab  
900 Potomac  
Aurora, CO 80011  
303/363-5351

VAMC  
1055 Clermont  
Denver, CO 80231  
303/393-2819

### **Other Resources**

Adaptive Mobility Services  
2201A E Michigan St  
Orlando, FL 32856  
407/897-7074

American Automobile Association  
Adaptive Driving School  
4100 E Arkansas  
Denver, CO 80222  
303/753-8800

American Driver & Traffic Safety  
Education Association  
800 Florida Ave, NE Gallaudet  
Salisbury, MD 21801  
301/850-0075

Assistive Technology Partners  
601 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 130  
Denver, CO 80203  
303/315-1280 Main  
800/255-3477 within Colorado  
303/837-8964 TTY  
303/837-1208 FAX  
[www.uchsc.edu/atp](http://www.uchsc.edu/atp)

Assistive Technology Partners  
Western Slope Technical Assistance  
Center (WesTAC)  
2897 North Ave., Module 3A  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
970/248-0876 Main  
970/248-0877 FAX/TTY  
[www.uchsc.edu/atp](http://www.uchsc.edu/atp)

Association of Driver Educators  
PO Box 49  
Edgerton, WI 53534  
608/884-8833

Braun Corp  
1014 S Monticello, PO Box 310  
Winamac, IN 46996  
800/843-5438

Bruno Independent Aids  
1780 Executive Dr, PO Box 84  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066  
800/882-8183

Chrysler Motors  
Physically Challenged Resource Center  
800/255-9877

Dept of Veterans Affairs  
Prosthetic & Sensory Aids Services  
Mailing Code 117C  
Washington, DC 20420  
202/535-7293

Ford Motor Company  
Mobility Motoring Program  
800/952-2248  
800/833-0312 (TTY)

General Motors

Mobility Assistance Center  
800/323-9935  
800/833-9935 (TTY)

Handicapped Driver's Mobility Guide  
American Automobile Association  
4100 E Arkansas  
Denver, CO 80222  
303/753-8800

National Mobility Equipment  
Dealers Association  
909 E Skagway Ave  
Tampa, FL 33604  
813/932-8566

RESNA  
1100 Connecticut Ave  
Washington, DC 22209  
202/857-1199

Volkswagen  
Mobility Access Program  
800/444-8987

**For more information contact:  
Assistive Technology Partners  
601 East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 130  
Denver, CO 80203**

**303.315.1280 office  
303.837.1208 fax  
303.837.3477 TTY  
800.255.3477 toll free**

**[generalinfo@at-partners.org](mailto:generalinfo@at-partners.org)  
[www.assistivetechologypartners.org](http://www.assistivetechologypartners.org)**

This publication may be reproduced without the written permission of ATP  
provided that the source is appropriately credited.