

Stanislaus Regional Transit (StaRT) Policy Regarding Transporting Persons Who Use Electric Powered Mobility Devices

September 2011

Stanislaus County, through its public transportation system, StaRT, is committed to the support and use of all mobility devices on StaRT buses. These mobility devices include manual wheelchairs, electric powered wheelchairs, as well as three and four wheeled scooters.

In the transit industry, a concern has arisen where electric mobility devices have been inoperable due to a low or completely uncharged battery. These incidents can result in cancelled and delayed rides on dial-a-ride type services and delayed services on fixed route services. Drivers are also susceptible to injury and there is also the potential for damage to the mobility device since its mobility is based on the use of electrical power. Local fire, sheriff and police departments have had to assist with the loading/unloading of these devices because there have been times when this is not something one individual can do.

The mobility devices this policy is addressing fall under the following definition: "A motorized wheelchair, powerchair, electric wheelchair or electric-powered wheelchair is a wheelchair that is propelled by means of an electric motor rather than manual power. The electric motors of powerchairs are usually powered by 4 or 5 amp deep cycle rechargeable battery. Many powerchairs carry an on-board charger which can be plugged into a standard wall outlet, whereas older or more portable models may have a separate charger unit".

To insure uninterrupted service, riders are encouraged to make sure that their electrically-powered mobility devices are sufficiently charged to operate properly for the duration of their trip on StaRT.

Based on how these electric-powered mobility devices are made and the intent of how they are designed to be used, the following steps will be taken should a device be inoperable:

- **Electric Powered Mobility Device breakdown at place of residence** (StaRT Dial-a-Ride type services) – Passenger will not be transported and will need to contact the StaRT office to reschedule a reservation when the device has been charged.
- **Electric Powered Mobility Device breakdown at bus stop** (StaRT Fixed Route services) – Passenger will not be transported and will need to charge the device before being transported.
- **Electric Powered Mobility Device breakdown while on board a bus** (StaRT Dial-a-Ride type services) – Passenger will be returned home as soon as possible. The assistance of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will be required to push passenger off the wheelchair lift and to the door of their residents. If a PCA is not available, the Fire Department or other emergency personnel will be called to provide this assistance.

- **Electric Powered Mobility Device breakdown while on board a bus** (StaRT Fixed Route services) – Passenger will be returned home as soon as possible after the charging of the mobility device.. The assistance of a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will be required to push the passenger off the wheelchair lift. If a PCA is not available, the Fire Department or other emergency personnel will be called to provide this assistance.

- **Electric Powered Mobility Device breakdown at a place other than residence (i.e., doctors office, hair salon, store, etc.)** (StaRT Dial-a-Ride type services) – Every effort will be made to safely transport the passenger to their residence. A PCA is required to push the passenger onto the wheelchair lift, inside the bus, off the bus, and to the door of the resident. Should a PCA not be available, the Fire Department or other emergency personnel will be called to provide this assistance.

This policy is being enacted to insure passengers are transported safely. StaRT is committed to safely transporting all passengers.