

## **Revised guidance to bus staff following the Supreme Court ruling**

### **Boarding procedure for wheelchair users**

Wheelchair users are to be given access to the wheelchair priority area even if it is occupied by buggies and other customers.

It is often stressful travelling on the bus if using a wheelchair as there are a number of challenges to overcome. Your professionalism and patience will help wheelchair users feel confident about travelling independently.

### **When there's a wheelchair user at a bus stop**

1. You must pull in close to the kerb and ensure your bus is not parked where obstacles on the pavement will obstruct the ramp - such as litter bins or railings.
2. Acknowledge the wheelchair user, if they acknowledge you, so they know you have seen them. Be prepared to ask the wheelchair user if they want your bus
3. You must keep the front doors closed on two-door buses. This ensures the wheelchair user is given priority access and can board in safety and comfort.
4. Check the wheelchair priority area is free. If not, play the first pre-recorded iBus message asking for customers to make room or use your PA system.
5. Let other customers off then close the centre doors and extend the ramp. Reopen the centre doors and let the wheelchair user on. You must make sure they are safely positioned in the priority area – with their back against the backrest and wheelchair brake on. Give the wheelchair user the time to do this.
6. Now you can open the front doors to let other customers on.

Drivers of the New Routemaster should also follow the above procedure. All three doors open at once, operated by a single button, but you can use your PA system to ask boarding customers to keep the priority area clear for a wheelchair user who is waiting to board your bus.

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### Letting the wheelchair user off the bus

1. Listen out in case the wheelchair user tells you where they're going or you can ask. If not, **listen and look for the distinctive bell and dashboard light**
2. Let the wheelchair user know you are aware they want to get off at the next stop.
3. The most important thing to remember is to pull as close to the kerb as you can. This ensures the wheelchair user can leave the bus in safety and comfort and helps the ramp extend correctly. Be prepared to move to a different part of the kerb if this helps the ramp to extend properly.
4. Let other customers off then close the centre doors and extend the ramp. Reopen the centre doors and let the wheelchair user off. Keep the front doors closed on two-door buses to prevent conflicting movement.
5. When the wheelchair user is safely off the bus you can open the front doors to let customers on.

### What if people don't make room?

You **must** ask customers to move. The wheelchair priority area is the only place wheelchair users can travel safely.

Having used the first iBus pre-recorded message, if other customers are initially unwilling to make space for a wheelchair user:

- You must take further steps to speak to the customers in the wheelchair space to encourage them to vacate the space as the wheelchair user has priority. By being polite, you will be more likely to make space in the priority area. You can get out of your cab if you feel safe but you should not put yourself at risk if you choose to do this.
- If you choose to leave your cab:
  - There are various things you can discuss with the wheelchair user and other customers. Sometimes it is possible for a wheelchair user and an unfolded buggy to share the priority area. Explain this to the wheelchair user and buggy owner, as this may resolve the situation. You should

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allow this provided the wheelchair user is in the correct position and the buggy is not completely blocking the gangway

- Explain to buggy owners you'll wait to give them the time they need to move or fold down their buggy and will not move off until they are safely repositioned
- If a buggy owner or another customer already on the bus is willing to get off to provide more space for another buggy or wheelchair user, issue a transfer voucher to allow them to travel on another bus
- If you choose to stay in your cab and customers are still unwilling to move from the priority area:
  - You should make a PA announcement to emphasise customers are required to make space in the wheelchair priority area, as it is the only place wheelchair users can travel safely.
  - If you do not feel comfortable making a PA announcement, play the second pre-recorded iBus message instead that explains to customers they are required to move to make space for the wheelchair user.

Should other customers make space, it would be helpful to both you and them to say thank you as that will help customers to feel valued and you will be seen as a professional.

However, if despite all of your efforts, customers remain unwilling to move from the priority area, do **not** force them to leave the bus:

- Explain to the wheelchair user they will need to catch the next bus, why you were unable to make space for them and that you will contact your garage. Then contact your garage to ensure the next driver can be made aware they are waiting.
- **Do not close the doors and move off until you have done this.**