

BHMP BEACH WHEELCHAIR – SAFETY PROCEDURES

HIPPOCAMPE LEISURE AND MOBI WHEELCHAIR

In these Safety Procedures Beach Wheelchair refers to either or both the Hippocampe Leisure Wheelchair and/or Mobi Chair.

The beach wheelchairs are designed for outdoor use, on the beach (on hard or soft sand), in low water, and on grass or surfaced roads.

The beach wheelchairs are to **ONLY** be used at Burleigh Heads Beach and **ONLY** between the flags if entering the water as patrolled by Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club.

Water entry should be in low water **ONLY** with the water level not exceeding the centre of the rear wheels. The beach wheelchairs are not to be used in deep water and are not a floating device.

It is important to be prepared before you use the beach wheelchair.
*Please refer to the **Safety Procedures** below prior to using either beach wheelchair.*

*Please review and sign the **Safety Procedures Checklist** (attached to this document) after you have reviewed and understood the safety procedures.*

If you have any doubts about using the beach wheelchairs, please talk to the patrolling members at **Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club**.

First Use – Hippocampe

As is the case with classic wheelchairs, there is a period of adaptation for using the Hippocampe.

The exterior wheel serves as a hand rim. The grip inside the rim provides better handling.

You can turn the Hippocampe:

- By forcing the front wheel to skid (to the right or left)
- By turning on 2 wheels alone or with help (with the attendant pushing down on the handle bar)

When entering water, the buoyancy of the front wheel means you will need to lean forward in order to remain stable on the Hippocampe. Do not immerse the Hippocampe wheelchair. It must not go above the height of the rear axle / centre of the rear wheels.

Your Carer should help you to ensure stability by holding the handlebar.

Precautions For Use - Hippocampe

Before any use of the wheelchair, verify that the wheels are correctly locked (by the clips), that the straps are suitably tightened and that the buckles are fastened. The Hippocampe is designed for a maximum weight of 130kg.

The Hippocampe is not a boat. It allows entry into water to the centre of the rear wheels and is not designed to float with the user in it. Wearing a lifejacket is obligatory, as is use within a guarded and controlled swimming area.

Precaution on entering water: it is recommended that you lean forward. (The buoyancy of the front wheel can throw you off balance backwards.)

Your Carer is required for entering water. Users must be pushed exclusively by capable adults. Watch out for the incoming tide, currents and shore breaks. For wheelchairs not equipped with brakes we recommend the utmost caution on beaches and steep slipways. Do not use the Hippocampe when a wheel is punctured or flat. Using the Hippocampe with more than one person in it is prohibited. Standing up on the seat or the footrest guard is prohibited.

Modifying the structure of the wheelchair is prohibited. Avoid going under obstacles with the wheelchair. Avoid hand-braking on steep surfaces due to the risk of heating and injury. Do not move about on inclinations greater than 15%.

Do not attempt to clear obstacles larger than 10cm. The seat is designed not to catch fire (within 15 seconds) on contact with cigarettes or matches, allowing the user time to react. You must always be accompanied, especially for entering water, when you use a harness.

Operating the wheelchair – Mobi

The wheelchair is well suited for normal weather conditions and firm surfaces. For safety purposes, please avoid using the wheelchair in adverse weather and other poor conditions.

User indications

Operating the wheelchair may injure the user or damage the wheelchair if the user is unable to have full control. If the user is not mentally or physically able to keep full control of the vehicle at all times. Your Carer must be present at all times.

Safety and Operating information

Techniques of safe operation and maintenance of the wheelchair are mandatory. In order to handle your wheelchair safely, please follow all instructions in this document.

Stability

Your wheelchair has been designed to provide the stability you need during normal daily activities. Therefore, proper operation of your wheelchair will maintain balance at all times. The impact on the position of the center of gravity is under any wheelchair movement. A change in the center of gravity may lead to the wheelchair tipping over and a fall. When you move or transfer your weight from one place to another, we recommend using seat belts to improve your safety.

Weight Limit

The maximum limitation weight for the Mobi Wheelchair user is 150 kg.

CAUTION !

- Do not use parts that can be detached, such as armrests, for support or any other reasons other than the intended purposes. Do not use them as a means for lifting the product, as they may be inadvertently released. This may result in injury to the user and / or attendant.

CAUTION !

- Avoid turning suddenly and never try to climb and descend a ramp diagonally.

Safety Procedures before use

- check the weather for incoming tides as well as the strength of the waves, wind strength, storms and heat prior to hiring the beach wheelchair. The patrolling members at Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club will be able to provide you with helpful information about weather conditions and suitability for the beach wheelchair
- ensure walkway / routes to be taken are clear of hazards
- visually inspect seating, tyres and moving parts for possible damage
- ensure the foot rest is lowered and the parking break is activated prior to a person being seated
- if possible, get another person to hold the handles of the beach wheelchairs so that it will not move when a person is being seated. If this is not possible then stand behind the chair and hold the handles yourself
- if you are not experienced at lifting, it may be useful to approach a local rehabilitation center, hospital or physiotherapist regarding training for transferring and lifting
- the beach wheelchairs have been designed to go into low water **ONLY**.

Safety Procedures during use

- the beach wheelchair has been designed to be used on dry sand and wet sand at the water's edge.
- the beach wheelchair is stable in low water levels up to the centre of the tyres, in still water conditions.
- the beach wheelchair is **NOT** to be used in deep water
- do not exceed maximum recommended loading of 120kg
- do not leave a person unattended when in the beach wheelchair
- when parking find a level surface and ensure the parking brake is securely locked down
- gradients steeper than a standard ramp rise are not recommended unless two people are assisting with pushing the chair
- in dry soft sand it is often easier to pull the chair backwards rather than to push it forwards. Two people are recommended to pull the chair backwards through the sand or up a slope
- ensure heavy items are not placed on back of wheelchair or the handles
- always keep the passenger informed about what you are intending to do (turning, entering water, crossing road)
- the beach wheelchair must not be propelled by towing behind a motor vehicle, kite or other means, other than being pushed by an assistant
- the beach wheelchair is not designed for self-propelling and must be supervised and pushed by a responsible assistant
- the chair has tyres which do have a tendency to float, depending on weight being carried and will become unstable once the chair and the passenger become buoyant. At all times in the water an assistant must be present to push the beach wheelchair and to ensure its stability in the water
- when in low water, the use of the safety belt is recommended, depending on the passengers understanding of their capacity to move around freely. If a passenger experiences unsteadiness such as with epilepsy, the seat belt should be used
- always use the safety belt when using the chair on dry land, including soft and hard sand. If a passenger experiences unsteadiness (such as epilepsy), the seat belt should be used at all times
- the wheelchair is not to be removed from the designated Burleigh Heads beach area.

Safety Procedures after use

- ensure seat and foot rests are in the correct position and wheel brakes applied prior to a person exiting the beach wheelchair.
- where possible the hirer should use a shower or hose to clean down the chair before returning to **Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club**.
- any safety, mechanical or accessibility concerns with the use of the beach wheelchair should be reported immediately to **Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club**.
- the beach wheelchair has been made available to the community through a collaboration between **Gold Coast City Council** and **Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park Surf Life Saving Club**. We welcome your feedback on your experience with the beach wheelchair, on the use of the chair, suitable beach access points and any hazards or barriers identified whilst using the chair?

Strictly adhering to the recommendations and advice in this document is mandatory.