

Safety First!

(Prescribers please complete)

This chest harness has been supplied for the use of:

_____ ONLY

On this date

_____ To Use On

_____ (chair)

This harness is not an approved safety restraint for travel in a vehicle.

The Victorian Aids and Equipment Program guidelines recommend regular follow up and review for some types of equipment. For more information visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

If it is necessary to remove or refit the harness refer to the manufacturers guidelines.

Published October 2006
Review October 2008

Further Information

(Prescribers please complete)

Should you require more information or adjustments to the supplied harness contact:

_____ (Harness Prescriber)

Phone:

_____ or if they are uncontactable

Contact Department of Human Services
on 1800 783 783

This brochure was developed by The Victorian Harness Safety Industry Working Group as part of a project auspiced by Department of Human Services Victoria. The Group would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Spastic Centre of NSW to this work.

Harness safety guidelines for therapists have also been developed.

Copies of this brochure and the guidelines are available at www.scopevic.org.au/harness

For more information contact:
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Safe Use of A Chest Harness



Developed by the
Victorian Harness Safety Industry Working
Group
Supported by
Department of Human Services Victoria

Chest harnesses provide postural support for people whilst they are sitting in wheelchairs or other seats.

When used correctly a chest harness can help a person to sit comfortably and safely for long periods. They can also assist people to use their arms and hands to the best of their abilities.

However, if not used correctly chest harnesses can become a SAFETY RISK.

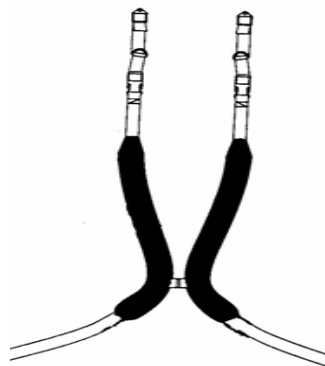
Safety Risks

There is a risk of the person not being able to breathe if:

- The lower straps of the harness become loose and the harness rides up near the person's neck blocking their windpipe.
- The person slides down in their chair so that the harness is around their neck and blocks their windpipe.
- The shoulder straps of the harness cut across the person's neck blocking the windpipe. This can happen if the side supports on the chair that support the person's trunk are not in place.
- The harness is done up so tightly that the person cannot take a breath.

Instructions for use

1. Ensure that the person is sitting in the best possible position
 - a. in the middle of their seat
 - b. with their bottom well back in the seat
2. Secure the lap belt
3. Ensure that the chair side supports (if present) are in the correct place
4. Secure the harness
 - a. fasten the lower straps of the harness
 - b. fasten the horizontal strap
 - c. fasten shoulder straps
5. Check positioning
 - a. ensure the harness cannot ride up the person's chest
 - b. ensure that you can slide your hand between the person's body and the harness
 - c. ensure the upper edge of the horizontal harness strap is positioned at the bottom of the rib cage



To Prevent Injury

- The chest harness **MUST** be worn with a **FIRMLY FASTENED** lap belt or pelvic strap **at all times**.
- The position of the harness **MUST** be checked after reclining or sitting the person up.
- Alterations to a harness should only be made by an experienced prescriber

Looking after a Chest Harness

A chest harness will only work effectively if it is well maintained.

Every time you apply the harness check that:

- Straps are not frayed or worn. If so they will need to be replaced.
- Straps are not caught in wheels.
- Screws that attach the harness to the chair are not loose. If so tighten screws and replace lost nuts and washers.
- Buckles are not damaged. If damaged these will need to be replaced.
- Hook and loop (velcro) fastening holds securely. If it does not remove any lint in the fastening or replace.
- There are no changes in the harness fit, due to growth, weight gain or loss or due to seasonal changes. Harness straps should be adjusted to ensure they are not too loose or too tight.
- Clean the harness regularly with warm soapy water and dry away from direct sunlight.

If you notice any of the above problems and are unsure how to solve them contact the prescriber of the chair.