

FAQs on Wheelchair Restraints in Vehicles

What is the definition of disabled person's belt? "A safety belt which has been specifically designed or adapted for use by a person with a physical handicap or disability and which is intended for use solely by such a person."

What is the law in relation to wheelchairs in vehicles? Wheelchairs must be securely attached to the vehicle using proper tie down (designed to keep the wheelchair restrained within the wheelchair space) and occupant restraint systems so that no danger is likely to be caused. The same applies to securing disability aids e.g. walking sticks.

By law, do wheelchair passengers have to wear seat belts? No. A person who is wearing a belt as part of a wheelchair restraint system, and/or who holds a cert from a registered medical practitioner, does not have to wear a regular seatbelt.

Where do I find information on the proper installation of wheelchair restraints? The National Standards Authority of Ireland ([NSAI](https://www.nsai.ie)) can provide more specific guidance on recommended/approved standards for the installation of wheelchair restraints in vehicles. Please contact them on 01 8073800 or email info@nsai.ie.

Is there training available for the handling/operation of wheelchair restraints? Yes. You can contact The Irish Wheelchair Association ([IWA](https://www.iwa.ie)) on Tel. 090 647 1118 or email athlone@iwa.ie.

How do I get certification for wheelchair restraints or wheelchair lifts? The National Standards Authority of Ireland ([NSAI](https://www.nsai.ie)) can provide more specific guidance on this matter. Please contact them on 01 8073800 or email info@nsai.ie.

I want to remove seats from a vehicle to accommodate wheelchair/stretchers passengers. What are the steps?

Step 1. Contact the vehicle's original manufacturer (or authorised distributor) to find out if it's possible to carry out these modifications (changes) and whether there are any safety implications.

Step 2. Contact your local motor tax office (MTO) to ensure that this type of modification is permitted and what documentation they require. Click [here](#) for a list of local MTO contact details.

Step 3. Ensure the conversion / modification is carried out to a safe standard. The NSAI has a [list of Approved Test Centres](#) (ATCs) to choose from.

Will wheelchair restraints be inspected at the roadworthiness test (i.e. CVRT / NCT)? Yes. If your vehicle is a bus you will need seatbelt certification. If your vehicle has been physically modified since its last roadworthiness test then you will also need to present a modifications report, certified by an [Approved Test Centre](#) or [suitably qualified individual](#) (e.g. mechanical engineer) on [Engineers Ireland](#) or [SIMI](#). A modifications report can be downloaded from either [NCT](#) or [HCV/LCV Manuals](#).

By law do I have to fit head restraints for wheelchairs on buses? No. There is currently no legal requirement for this. However, the RSA recommends that wheelchair tie-down and occupant-restraint systems meet with the requirements of ISO 10542; and there are wheelchair back support solutions (incorporating a head rest) available to fit to vehicles equipped with appropriate floor tracking systems. Please contact the [NSAI](#) for more info.

Should I install child locks for people with learning disabilities on a bus? This is not a legal requirement for transporting disabled persons. If, in the event of an accident, the driver became incapacitated, the occupants would encounter difficulties exiting the vehicle. The RSA would recommend installing buzzers which would alert the driver should one of the rear doors open (either accidentally or otherwise).

I modified my vehicle for wheelchair access. Where do I apply for a VRT rebate/discount? Please contact [The Revenue Commissioners](#) to enquire whether you need to declare the conversion and whether changes to your Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) may apply.

Do I require a PSV Permit for operating a bus with wheelchair restraints? For specific queries in relation to PSV permits please contact your [local Garda PSV Officer](#).