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DRIVE FROM WHEELCHAIR VEHICLE BUYERS GUIDE

Choosing a drive-from wheelchair vehicle is more complex than a WAV. There are more factors to consider which makes selecting the right car more of a challenge. Find out more in our Drive-From Wheelchair Buyers Guide

ABOUT GM COACHWORK



Since 1988 GM Coachwork have been providing new and used adapted vehicles to people with medical conditions, disabilities and mobility issues. We offer the biggest range of new drive-from wheelchair vehicles on the market and are one of only a handful of specialists in used drive-from wheelchair vehicles. We hope this guide provides you with some valuable information to help you choose the right vehicle for your needs.

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WHAT IS A DRIVE-FROM WHEELCHAIR VEHICLE?



Drive From Wheelchair vehicles (or wheelchair driver cars as they're also called) are highly specialised vehicles which have undergone significant engineering to allow wheelchair users to drive them from a wheelchair. There are only a few companies in the UK who convert vehicles into drive from wheelchair cars. All wheelchair driver cars start as a standard vehicles which are subject to significant alterations to allow a wheelchair user to access and remain in their wheelchair when driving the vehicle. A wheelchair driver car will either feature a levelled floor, a lowered floor or in some instances a channelled floor. All GM vehicles feature either a levelled floor or a lowered floor.

DID YOU KNOW?

GM Coachwork were the first, and still the only, convertor to have engineered a low floor conversion on the VW Transporter which passed scrutiny by Volkswagen AG in Wolfsburg, Germany.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ACCESS?



Access into the vehicle will be either from the side, (always the nearside of the vehicle), or the rear of the vehicle. Regardless of whether the vehicle is rear or side access you will have a key fob which remotely operates the powered tailgate or side door. Once inside the remote fob will close the tailgate or side door. The majority of vehicles will have rear access either by a ramp or a lift.

CONSIDER

Which access type would suit you best? Is parking a problem where you live? If you park on a slope your vehicle may need air suspension to level the vehicle prior to you boarding.

ENTRANCE AND DRIVER HEADROOM

Some convertors will lower the floor or a section of the floor to optimise entrance headroom. It is also for this reason that only a handful of cars lend themselves to being converted to wheelchair driver cars. Headroom will also be an issue behind the wheel. A convertor needs to take into consideration the height of the driver when seated in their powerchair or ensure the driver has the best eye line.

REMEMBER...

If you need more headroom then you may need to shortlist vehicles with a lowered floor. If you use a large powerchair you will need more room inside.

There are three common types of conversion:

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONVERSION?



1. A car with a lowered floor - A vehicle with a lowered floor will offer the most entrance headroom and the most driver headroom. Lowered floors may be the full length or width of the vehicle.

2. A car with a levelled floor – A car may feature a levelled floor if it already has sufficient headroom. A levelled floor gives the driver a flat and consistent surface for entry, exit and manoeuvring.

3. A car with a channelled floor – This design features a floor with a channel cut out for the wheelchair user to travel down. This is the only part of the floor which would have been lowered.

For both a lowered floor and levelled floor conversion the advantage is the wheelchair driver can exit the vehicle facing forwards and gives them a flat floor for manoeuvring.

QUESTION

How do you want to exit the vehicle? How much room do you need? Do you need a car with luggage space?

DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SEATING?



If you require additional seating you have two options:

1. Tip and Fold Seats

Some vehicles will have the option of tip and fold seats. These are a space efficient folding seat which are typically fitted to the rear of the vehicle.



2. Interchangeable Seats

These are seats which can be unlocked from the floor, picked up and moved to a different position in the car. Where a vehicle has a front passenger seat this can be unlocked and repositioned in the driver position. What this means is that the wheelchair driver can change places with the passenger and take a break from driving.

ASK YOURSELF

Will you be taking passengers? Will they share the driving?

**YOUR
PERSONALISED
ADAPTATIONS
THAT ALLOW
YOU TO DRIVE**



PERSONALISED ADAPTATIONS

Having chosen your vehicle you can turn your attention to what you will need to operate the car. This will be totally personalised for each driver as everybody's requirements will be different. This may range from simple hand controls to a full drive-by-wire system.

LOCKDOWNS



After you have chosen your car and adaptations you will require a wheelchair lockdown. This is a device which is installed into the floor of the car where your powerchair will be located. When you have accessed the car you will

manoeuvre your powerchair and dock into a lockdown device which will keep your chair safe in transit. To exit the vehicle there will be a switch on the dashboard which will release your powerchair from the lockdown.

ANNUAL CARE



If your vehicle is fitted with a lift it will require an annual service to ensure it receives the correct lubrication, any faults are remedied and it remains operational for the year ahead. GM have a mobile lift servicing team who will visit and service and test your wheelchair lift once a year.

Ready to get started?

To explore our range of used Drive-From Wheelchair vehicles visit gmselect.co.uk or speak to one of our team on 01626 855057



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