

New Forest & District Sailability

Fitting a Sling for a Sailor who uses a Wheelchair

Our sailors have a range of abilities and preferences, so try to get to know these as much as possible. Introduce yourself; find out the sailor's name and use it. If the sailor is unable to communicate, look at them when asking questions, even though their Carer will be responding.

In this handout we meet Eddie, she has limited mobility and it will take 3 volunteers to fit her sling.

- 2 volunteers to assist when Eddie needs to lean forward.
- 1 volunteer to position the life jacket.

1



Apply handbrakes on wheelchair.

Ensure the sailor is wearing a buoyancy aid and this is fastened correctly.
(Please see separate handout)

2



The sling is reversible so it does not matter whether the yellow or blue is on the inside.

3



It is **essential** the sling is positioned the right way up:

- **S**hort for **S**houlders
- **L**ong for **L**egs

4



The aim is to slide the sling down the back and then under the sailor's buttocks, so it is important to keep the lower dark blue seam as flat as possible.

Remember, let the sailor do as much as they are able.

Ask your sailor how much assistance they require; take your time and constantly check your sailor is okay.

5

Positioning the sling down the sailor's back.

If your sailor is able to lean forward, ask them to do so.

Eddie needs assistance – so remember

- **Always** have 2 volunteers to assist a sailor when they need to lean.
- Each volunteer should place one hand against the sailor's shoulder – **not** under the sailor's armpit
- Explain that you will want them to lean when you say "go"
- Say "Ready, Steady, Go" aloud so everyone is working together (Not 1,2,3)
- As she leans, each volunteer should place their arm behind the sailor's back to support her.
- The third volunteer slides the sling down back of wheelchair.

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Tuck sling under sailor's buttocks.

- Ensure dark blue seam is flat and tuck it as far as possible under the buttocks.
- Ask permission from your sailor
- Talk to them to keep them informed.

Pull strap down side of wheelchair

- Pull the leg strap forward
- Keep it straight.
- Hold your hand between the sailor's hip and the side of the wheelchair and press down on the sling.
- Ensure dark blue seam is flat.

Pass leg strap under thigh

- If the sailor needs assistance moving their leg, ask their permission,
- When you raise their leg, support it by placing your hand underneath.
- Bend your knees, if possible. Try to use your leg muscles, not your arms or back when you do this.



Pull the other leg strap forward

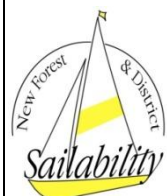
- Position other leg strap in same way.

Pass leg strap under thigh

Cross the leg straps

- Right strap to left side
- Left to right side

***Please see how to secure sling with Velcro in separate guide:
Fitting sling for sailor who can walk
Eddie is now ready to be hoisted into a boat***



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Charity No. 1105212