

## **NHTSA Finalizes Rule to Improve Auto Accessibility for People with Disabilities**

Rule increases access to rental cars, simplifies transportation of wheelchairs and power scooters

**March 9, 2022 | Washington, DC**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has finalized a [new rule](#) that would improve equity and mobility for drivers and passengers with disabilities. This final rulemaking allows three specific modifications to vehicles to allow for adaptive equipment:

- The first change would allow rental car companies to temporarily disable a driver's knee bolster air bag to install hand controls for people with disabilities. Should they deploy in a crash, knee bolster air bags could interfere with the safe use of physical hand controls.
- The second modification permits the installation of rear-mounted transporters for wheelchairs and power scooters. These transporters may partially block the backup camera's view and would not be allowed without this exemption.
- The third change allows modifiers to lawfully raise the height of a vehicle's roof to accommodate drivers and passengers with disabilities.

"Everyone should have access to safe transportation," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "These new changes will eliminate some of the barriers faced by drivers and passengers with disabilities, so they can get where they need to go safely."

"Everyone deserves equitable access to safe transportation and this rule will remove certain obstacles that have prevented people with disabilities the freedom to travel safely and comfortably," said Dr. Steven Cliff, NHTSA's Deputy Administrator. "At NHTSA, we are wholly committed to improving everyone's safety by integrating the needs of all road users – not just drivers and passengers but pedestrians, cyclists, children, older Americans, and people with disabilities."

Federal law generally prohibits a manufacturer, distributor, dealer, rental company or motor vehicle repair business from knowingly disabling any part of a device or element of design installed on or in a motor vehicle in compliance with a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard. By issuing specific exemptions that balance mobility and safety, NHTSA allows motor vehicle dealers and repair businesses to improve the mobility of drivers and passengers with disabilities.

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