Emergency Evacuation: Assisting a Person in a Wheelchair – In Situations of EXTREME DANGER

NOTE: ONLY in situations of EXTREME DANGER should untrained people attempt to carry a person in a wheelchair

BUMPING ON A SERIES OF STEPS

In situations where the wheelchair user **MUST** be carried up or down a flight of steps due to an **IMMEDIATE DANGER**, it is necessary to have a minimum of two persons assisting. Four persons may be needed in the case of a heavy adult. The strongest person(s) should be placed at the back of the chair. If an assisting person has a medical condition that prohibits lifting, it is advisable to enlist the assistance of a different volunteer.

PROCEDURE:

- The wheelchair should be gripped by the handles on the back of the chair. If two people are assisting, one person holds the hand grips; the other person assists in front. If there are four people, at least two people should assist in the back; each person gripping one of the handles. Hand placement for those people who are assisting in the front depends upon which parts of the wheelchair are removable. This will need to be determined at that time of evacuation. Be advised of the following: if the wheelchair arms are removable, do NOT grip them. This must be stressed because it is the first place an assisting person will be inclined to grip. If the leg rests are removable, do NOT grip them. The persons who are assisting in the front of the wheelchair should grip a part of the wheelchair that is non-removable, such as the front seat frame or leg rest (if non removable).
- AVOID carrying the wheelchair up or downstairs. This can quickly cause back trouble for those who are trying to be of assistance. Instead, ROLL the wheelchair up or down the stairs. Allow the wheelchair to bear its own weight.
- Keep the wheelchair slightly tilted back to keep the wheelchair user secure; however, do not tilt too far; this may cause the person who is assisting behind the wheelchair to bend too far forward and could cause the person(s) to lose balance and pitch forward.