

# 441.00 Vehicle Modification Policy

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## Description

**Vehicle Modification** is any structural or non-structural modification to a motor vehicle. It can include adaptive equipment or a product system, acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve an individual's functional capacity to safely drive or to ride as a passenger. Structural motor vehicle modification services are alterations made to a vehicle that alter the structure of the vehicle such as raising the roof, lowering a floor, widening the doors, etc. Nonstructural motor vehicle modifications are the addition of adaptive equipment to a vehicle that does not alter the structure of the vehicle such as pedal blocks, left foot brake and accelerator and wide-angle mirrors.

## Policy

Vehicle modification may be provided for an eligible individual who owns\* or has the use of an appropriate vehicle. The individual must require these services to drive or to ride as a passenger to meet his or her employment outcome. The provision of vehicle modification should preclude the need for special transportation.

***Note: It is not a requirement for an individual to own a vehicle prior to the initiation of vehicle modification services.***

ACCES-VR does not purchase, rent or lease vehicles. ACCES-VR will not be responsible for restoring any vehicle, either owned by the individual or made available to them for their use, to its pre-modified state. ACCES-VR will not retroactively pay for any vehicle modification.

A financial need review is required before the provision of vehicle modification services. Comparable benefits such as those available from the Veterans Administration, the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, the Medicaid Waiver Program, Worker's Compensation, other insurances, etc. are to be considered and used before

ACCES-VR provides this service. The modifications that are provided must be the most cost-effective without compromising the individual's safety and ability to transport him/her self to training or a job.

Driver evaluation, and driver training when necessary, is required for all individuals before providing vehicle modification services. Vehicle modification is provided only after the individual has completed or is near completion of driver training, and the individual has obtained a motor vehicle license that lists the appropriate restrictions for the operation of a motor vehicle.

ACCES-VR, the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant, and the individual will work together to determine the necessary vehicle modification and adaptive equipment that will meet the individual's functional needs to achieve the employment outcome. Vehicle modification may be provided only when there is a written recommendation and justification by a Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator that details the specific equipment required to address the individual's functional limitations.

**Note: Prior to the individual acquiring a vehicle, ACCES-VR will provide recommendations for vehicle models to ensure adaptive equipment will fit into and work effectively in the vehicle.**

### **Used Vehicles/Previously Modified Vehicles**

There are two options when an individual considers the purchase of a used vehicle: (1) a used vehicle *without* modification or (2) a used vehicle that has been previously modified. In both situations the vehicle must be structurally and mechanically sound and not in need of mechanical repair, as determined by a DMV approved motor vehicle repair and inspection shop.

When an individual considers the purchase of a used vehicle *without* modification the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant will determine whether the vehicle can accept the modifications that the individual requires. ACCES-VR will not consider modification unless the vehicle to be modified has been approved by the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant.

When an individual considers the purchase of a used vehicle *that has been previously* modified, the existing modifications must meet the individual's functional needs as determined by the Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator and the modifications must be in good working condition, as determined by Driver Rehabilitation Consultant.

ACCES-VR will not purchase used equipment separate from the vehicle.

### **Limitation on Vehicle Modification Service**

When vocationally necessary, ACCES-VR provides a vehicle modification service **once** within a five year period, or when the vehicle that ACCES-VR has modified,

accumulates an additional 70,000 miles on its odometer from the onset of the initial vehicle modification, whichever comes first. Additional modifications can be considered sooner if, as a result of a change or progression in the individual's disability, that warrants additional modification.

### **Insurance Coverage**

It is the individual's responsibility to carry all required insurances on the vehicle. The insurance policy must include mandatory coverage on all adaptive equipment and modifications. ACCES-VR is not responsible for either repair or replacement of modifications which are not covered by insurance.

### **Vehicle Modification Services**

**Vehicle Modification Assessment** – ACCES-VR requires an evaluation report from the Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator before approving a vehicle modification. The report must provide details about the specific disability-related modifications. The individual, with assistance from the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant, must be able to identify the make, model and year of vehicle to be modified. If the individual already owns a vehicle, a determination will be made by the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant as to whether that vehicle can be modified to meet the individual's needs.

The vehicle's owner must sign a Vehicle Availability Agreement (VR-730) prior to the assessment and subsequent modification.

### **Vehicle Modification Final Assessment Services**

The Driver Rehabilitation Consultant performs a final assessment for all vehicle modification. This assessment has two components; vehicle modification inspection and performance evaluation. Routinely, both services are done at the same time.

**Vehicle Modification Inspection** is required for all vehicle modification and is conducted by the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant. The Driver Rehabilitation Consultant specifically inspects the modification and equipment installed in the vehicle, and the quality of the installation, to ensure compliance with modification specifications.

**Performance Assessment** - At the completion of the vehicle modification, a performance assessment with the individual is conducted by the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant. The performance assessment is to ensure that all adaptive equipment and modifications to the vehicle meet the individual's functional needs and the individual can safely operate the vehicle. The performance assessment may identify additional training required for the individual to safely operate the vehicle.

### **The Responsibilities of the ACCES-VR Counselor for Securing Vehicle Modification**

The ACCES-VR counselor provides overall guidance and case coordination for the delivery of vehicle modification services, authorizes assessments, develops the individual plan for employment with the individual, and assures compliance with all ACCES- VR Policy and Procedures.

The VR counselor is responsible for communicating with the individual and other service providers regarding vehicle modification services and must document the process in the record of service. As part of the vehicle modification process the VR counselor will:

- Advise the individual that a driver evaluation is required and authorize the driver evaluation;
- Advise the individual **not to purchase a vehicle** until both (1) the driver evaluation has occurred and the Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator has provided the recommendations for modification; and (2) the consultation with the Driver Rehabilitation Consultant has occurred;
- Ensure that the vehicle's owner signs a Vehicle Availability Agreement (VES-730) before a vehicle is modified.
- Complete a financial need review and apply comparable benefits;
- Explain to the individual that vehicle repair, adaptive equipment maintenance, and insurance costs are the responsibility of the individual and obtain individuals signature on the *ACCES-VR Vehicle Modification Fact Sheet*;
- Review with the individual the need to set aside individual earnings for the vehicle purchase as well as for the insurance, maintenance and operation of the vehicle. The review should include the options of Social Security working incentives such as the PASS plan.
- Determine the services and type of equipment needed by the individual after considering the recommendations made by the Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator and the Driver Rehabilitation Evaluator Consultant.

### **Other Considerations**

When modifications are being provided for an individual who will be a passenger and not the vehicle operator, ACCES-VR will not pay for a quick release driver's seat or a power lockdown for a wheelchair. Services to an individual who will not be the operator of the motor vehicle will only be those which are essential to insure safe transportation and to provide exit from and entrance into the vehicle.

### **Selection of Vendors**

Vehicle modifications can only be provided by ACCES-VR contracted vendors who are selected through the standard bidding process.

### **Reference:**

Related Policies and Procedures:

- 100.00 Consumer Involvement
- 208.00 Comparable Benefits and Services
- 440.00 Driver Evaluation and Training
- 441.00P Vehicle Modifications
- 1125.00 Financial Need Review

Other: Related Memos

- [PRO-12-02](#) Financial Need Review: One-Time Service - Job Save
- FIS 07-01 Contracted Services: Vehicle Modifications
- Standards for Automotive Adaptive Equipment
- Standards for Driver Rehabilitation