



Revised Definition – “WHEELCHAIR”: Article m.25.9 and the provision of the need for transparent sideguards.

In December 2020, the Executive Committee agreed a modified definition of the fencing wheelchair. This rule, article m.25.9 should now read:

THE FENCING WHEELCHAIR (see Figure 13.1)

1. The wheelchair is part of the fencing equipment and must be subjected to control checks prior to use in each tournament.
2. The back of the wheelchair, the cushion, the frame, the armrest and both large wheels will be tagged with a matching numbered marker by the controller. The tags fitted to the wheels should not be fitted to the spoke protectors. No tag should appear except the control marker for the current competition/tournament.
3. Gauges similar to the type illustrated below in Figure 13.2 should be used to check the dimensions of the wheelchair.
4. Any athlete who needs to modify the wheelchair to cope with their own specific needs must gain the approval of both the SEMI Commission and the CLASSIFIERS if the modification takes the wheelchair outside of the parameters of this rule.

THE BACK OF THE WHEELCHAIR

5. All of the back of the wheelchair must have a minimum height of 15cm from the seat of the chair or the cushion when the fencer is seated upon it and must be 90° to the horizontal. (+2°). For wheelchair fencers who have a physical need for the back and the material be changed from 90° to the horizontal. (+2°), it is the decision of the wheelchair controller and a classifier.
6. The material of the back, whilst it can be padded, must be rigid (for example, manufactured of wood, acrylic or metal) and must not be capable of being compressed below the minimum height of 15 cm required by article 5 above.
7. A vertical line 10cm long by 2.5 cm wide should be marked in the centre of the back of the wheelchair on the outer side with the top of the line coinciding with the top edge of the seat back. This line will be marked in a contrasting colour to that of the seat back and should be sewn on or applied in another reliable manner. (cf. m.25.4.d, m.28.7 and m.34.6; t.17.4. and t.17.6).

THE SEATING PLATFORM (RAIL) AND SEATING

8. The full area of the seating platform/ rail has a maximum height of 53 cm from the floor. Only for Cat. A fencers: the sitting platform on the frame has to be parallel to the floor. The height of the wheelchair seating platform is measured at all four corners, where a maximum difference of 10mm between the four measured values is allowed.
9. The material of the seating of the wheelchair (but not that of the cushion) can be rigid or flexible.



10. The width of the seat must not exceed 3 cm from the fencers' hips when the fencer is seated in the centre of the wheelchair. The seat width must not exceed the width of the seated fencer's hips by more than 6cm.
11. A cushion is not obligatory. When a cushion is used it must be of the same dimensions as the seat of the wheelchair. The maximum cushion thickness is 10cm and must have an even thickness and not wedge-shaped and must be able to bend corner to corner by the wheelchair controller. The use of a medical cushion must be authorised by the classifier.

THE SIDE GUARD

12. No side guard to be used on the fencing arm side of the wheelchair at any time during the competition.
13.
 - a. **The side guard on the non-fencing arm of the wheelchair must have a minimum height of 10 cm from the seat of the wheelchair or the cushion, when the fencer is seated upon it, and a minimum length of 20 cm beginning at the back of the chair. This side guard must be securely fixed and of rigid material which allows the side guard to maintain an angle of 90 degrees to the back of the wheelchair. (Tapes to secure the side guard will not be accepted).**
 - b. **The side guard should be made of a clear, transparent, uncoloured material. If the sideguard is fitted with a reinforcement, then the available transparent area should still be a minimum of 18cm by 9 cm.**

THE GRAB HANDLE

14. A grab handle for the unarmed hand is optional. If a grab handle is fitted, then this should be mounted vertically above the side guard on the non-fencing arm side of the wheelchair.
The mounting can take the grab handle away from the fencer but under no circumstances can this fitting extend towards the fencer.

STRAPPING

15. Strapping of the fencer to the wheelchair is permissible.
16. If a belt/strap is used to fasten the unarmed hand, it must not be elastic or loose and should bind the hand to the grab handle, unless an exception approved by a Classifier exists.
17. If a belt/strap is used to fasten the legs steady to the wheelchair, it must not be elastic.
18. Any strapping used **must not cover the valid target.**

THE FRAME



19. The frame of the wheelchair must be fully insulated by permanent durable insulation coating or by the use of a detachable covering. When a covering is used it must be of robust construction and securely fixed. Any covering used can be padded in order to prevent damage or injury to the user.

THE FOOTREST

20. A footrest must be fitted to the wheelchair. The footrest, on its long edges, will cover the entire width of the wheelchair between the two vertical struts of the frame and will have a depth of no more than 40cm. For uniped users a vertical strut no more than 5cm in height may be fitted across the transverse width of the footrest in order to prevent the sliding of the foot across the platform of the footrest. If a fencer cannot use a footrest, then this must be confirmed and documented by a classifier.

THE WHEELS

21. The wheels fitted to the wheelchair can be of any size, but their use should not bring the height of the seating platform above the maximum of 53cm.

22. The tyres can either be solid or pneumatic.

23. All measurements *are* taken with all tyres fully inflated (pumped up).

24. The camber of the wheels must fit the official wheelchair-fencing frame and should be no more than 5 degrees from the vertical position. (cf. m.61)

25. Spoke protectors are required to be fitted to both rear wheels of the wheelchair. (cf. m.25.3.g)

Remarks:

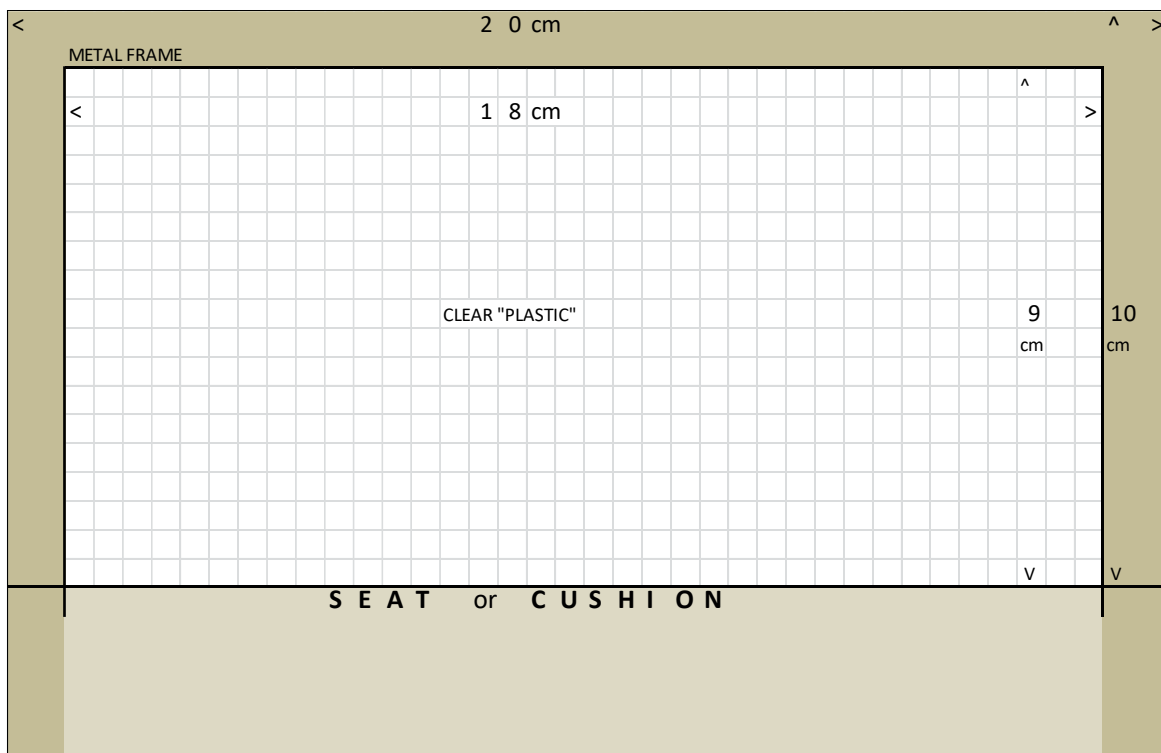
It can be seen from the above that paragraphs 13.a. and b. require that “The side guard on the non-fencing arm of the wheelchair must have a minimum height of 10 cm from the seat of the wheelchair or the cushion, when the fencer is seated upon it, and a minimum length of 20 cm beginning at the back of the chair. This side guard must be securely fixed and of rigid material which allows the side guard to maintain an angle of 90 degrees to the back of the wheelchair. (Tapes to secure the side guard will not be accepted).

b. The side guard should be made of a clear, transparent, uncoloured material.

Obviously, there is no change in the provisions contained in paragraph 13.a. but paragraph 13.b. introduces the need for the sideguard to be made of clear material. This change has come about to assist the referees in their duties when endeavouring to enforce article t.26 i.e., the rule that forbids lifting from the wheelchair’s seat during active play. **Thus, the side guard should be made of a material such as “Lexan” or “Plexiglas”**. Carbon fibre material is not recommended as this can conduct electricity and has been found to cause problems when fencing sabre or foil. In relation to the other types of material it is recommended that when these “plastics” are used they **should be reinforced by placing them in a frame to prevent flexing that might cause cracks and breakages**. To this end the frame should

not impose greatly on the area of the side panel but will cover part of the field of vision.

Article 13.a. requires that the side guard should have a minimum height of 10cm from the seat and a minimum length of 20cm beginning at the back of the wheelchair. It is therefore accepted that a frame can impinge upon this area, but this will only be allowed if the transparent area remains at no less than 18cm by 9cm. (see suggestion below):



Examples of sideguards that are reinforced by elements of the wheelchair:

