

## ASSESSING ABILOADER VEHICLE SUITABILITY

Vehicle suitability for a particular person and their wheelchair depends on the following:

- The size and shape of the trunk of the car
- The length of the car
- The size and shape of the wheelchair

For this reason, Abiliquip and the dealer will make this call, once we have the accurate dimensions of your chair, from our *Wheelchair Information Sheet* (see our website Contacts page). We have very good information on almost all cars, and can recommend cars once we know the style of vehicle and use you will put it to.

Our website list at <http://abiliquip.com/vehicles> has many suggestions but will never be fully complete as vehicles keep changing and appearing or dropping out of production.

There is however *A First Cut Approach* you can do yourself easily to allow you to discount cars that will definitely NOT WORK.

If you want to go around car yards and try cars to see if you find the transfer in suitable, the controls are accessible and other aspects like comfort and room, as you look at cars please do this simple test:

1. Check to see if either
  - a. The rear seat back has different angle positions - *if so move it as far forward as possible.*
  - b. The whole rear seat has forward / aft adjustment, - *if so move it to the forward most position.*
2. Open the rear hatch
3. Remove the cushion from the wheelchair
4. Fold the wheelchair back down as far as it will go
5. Place your wheelchair centrally in the trunk, castors to the door and large wheels pushed back into the car rear seat back.
6. **See if the hatch will close fully and the latch shut.**
7. If it does, climb in the back seat and note the distance the wheelchair can move forward aft. We just want to know that there is at least a little movement to confirm the chair is not 'jammed in' and it really does fit. If you can estimate the free movement in inches or cms this is also helpful to report to us.

From this you can assume:

- **If 6 is a FAIL**, this car is almost certainly not viable, it is too small for the Abiloader
- **If 6 is a PASS**, this car looks a possible and is worth checking if its other features are appealing for you. (We then need the full *Wheelchair Information Sheet* sent to us to assess the width and other aspects of the chair to confirm if this vehicle is viable.

Just report the results of this test on any cars you have tried.

*This is as far as we suggest most people go in assessing vehicles themselves, leaving the rest to Abiliquip / the dealer to figure.*

### Other Points to Note:

- You need to allow for changes in the size of your wheelchair - if you pick a vehicle that is a very tight fit now, and you later need your chair adjusted larger, you may have a problem that requires a car change!
- Many people want a car that is / feels small and manoeuvrable. But the ACTUAL size of cars varies much less than most realise. Almost no cars are less than 4.0m long. Very few cars are longer than 5.0m. Most cars are within the range of 4.3 to 4.7m long. This is a very small range in fact when it comes to manoeuvring!
- Manoeuvrability is more about steering lock and mirror visibility (and in modern cars the huge benefit that comes from 360 degree cameras, and auto-parking capability)
- Pay attention to important features like:
  - seat transfer height at the lowest setting, and the type of height control
  - full-electric seat controls. Lower spec models rarely have these, and they are possibly the first feature you should use to filter suitable cars. It is very difficult to retro-fit electric seat controls. Stored seat positions are a huge benefit if you alter the seat each time you transfer.
  - electric hatch availability
- Larger models of car mostly are more comfortable, quieter, better finished, ride better, have more features and are safer in an accident.
- So, in summary, beware of false economy in the car decision, especially when changing cars is more costly with disability products fitted ...

*See over for some more advanced information*

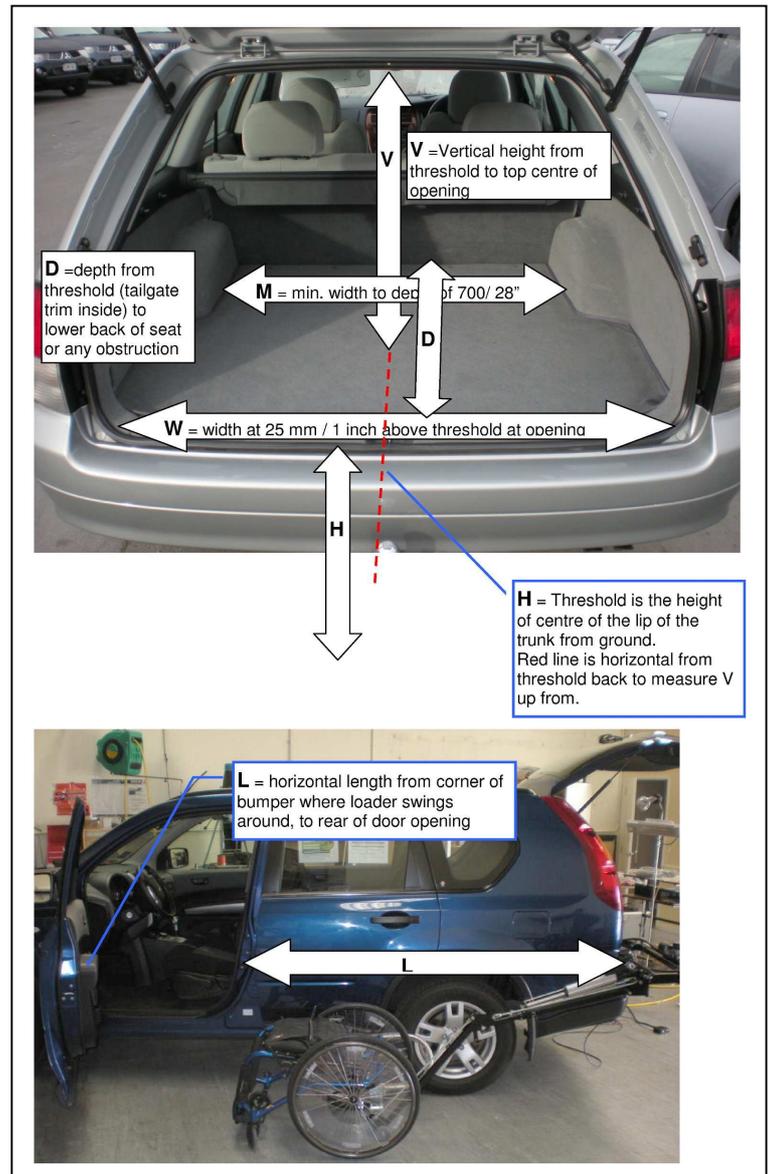
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### More Advanced Assessment

If you want some greater understanding of what makes a suitable / unsuitable vehicle for the Abiloader, see the picture below, and work thru these checks:

1. we like at least 1m / 39.5" for dimension **W**, about 30mm/1" above the boot threshold
2. if **V** is less than **H**, this is not a good sign, and likely not be suitable.
3. if **M** is less than 1m / 39.5" this is not a good sign. If much less it will be unsuitable.
4. if **V** is less than 66cm / 26" this is not a good sign.
5. The hatch normally hinges at the Top. Side hinge on the delivery side (eg 'barn' doors) is a **definite fail**.

This check, and supplying us these 5 dimensions is mainly of use if the car is either a model we have never seen (newly released or a special local model).



### Sources of Vehicle Dimensions

You can save a lot of time visiting car yards by doing some homework at home first. Figure what dimensions of a car are important, and research ones that meet your needs.

As well as our website list mentioned above, you can follow links to <http://rica.org.uk> from specific cars, and then do a search on that site.

It has the best up-to-date list of vehicles and dimensions and photos, specifically for the purpose of vehicle access and fitting of mobility aids. It requires no fee or login and you can print information to review.

You may not find the exact model you are considering, but most major models can be figured from this list, and a lot of even quite unusual ones. It does relate to the Eu market, with pictures showing LHD versions, but expect RHD to be the same generally.

Few car manufacturers provide any detail in specifications on internal dimensions. Mercedes is one exception, they always have a fully dimensioned drawing available for all vehicles.

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