

Power Mobility Devices

Guideline Number: CS187.D
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[Instructions for Use](#)

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Related Community Plan Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics, Medical Supplies and Repairs/Replacements • Manual Wheelchairs • Wheelchair Options and Accessories • Wheelchair Seating
Commercial Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Mobility Devices

Application

This Coverage Determination Guideline does not apply to the states listed below; refer to the state-specific policy/guideline, if noted:

State	Policy/Guideline
Indiana	Power Mobility Devices (for Indiana Only)
Kentucky	Power Mobility Devices (for Kentucky Only)
Louisiana	Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics, Ostomy Supplies, Medical Supplies and Repairs/Replacements (for Louisiana Only)
Mississippi	Power Mobility Devices (for Mississippi Only)
Nebraska	Power Mobility Devices (for Nebraska Only)
New Jersey	Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics, Medical Supplies and Repairs/Replacements (for New Jersey Only)
North Carolina	Power Mobility Devices (for North Carolina Only)
Pennsylvania	Power Mobility Devices (for Pennsylvania Only)
Tennessee	Power Mobility Devices (for Tennessee Only)

Coverage Rationale

Indications for Coverage

Power Mobility Devices are proven and Medically Necessary in certain circumstances. For medical necessity clinical coverage criteria, refer to the InterQual® Medicare: Durable Medical Equipment, Power Mobility Devices.

Click [here](#) to view the InterQual® criteria.

Repair, Replacement, and Upgrade

Replacement

Replacement of DME is for the same or similar type of equipment which is beyond its reasonable useful life span and has become irreparable.

Upgrade

The physician provides documentation that the condition of the member changes (e.g., impaired function necessitates an upgrade to an electric wheelchair from a manual one).

General Criteria

- Routine wear on the equipment renders it non-functional and the member still requires the equipment.
 - Vendors/manufacturers are responsible for repairs, replacements, and maintenance for rented equipment and for purchased equipment covered by warranty
 - Coverage includes DME obtained in a physician's office, DME vendor, or any other provider authorized to provide/dispense DME
- Unless otherwise stated, DME has a Reasonable Useful Lifetime (RUL) of 5 years

Note: A new prescription isn't needed if the needs of the patient are the same.

Equipment Upgrades

- A change in the member's medical condition and equipment needs requires the same documentation as a new request
- Equipment upgrades are equivalent to a new service

Coverage Limitations and Exclusions

When more than one piece of DME can meet the member's functional needs, benefits are available only for the item that meets the minimum specifications for member needs. Examples include but are not limited to, standard electric wheelchair vs. custom wheelchair.

The following services are excluded from coverage:

- Replacement of items due to malicious damage, neglect or abuse.
- Replacement of lost or stolen items.
- Upgrade or replacement of DME when the existing equipment is still functional. Refer to [Repair, Replacement, and Upgrade](#) section.

Definitions

The following definitions may not apply to all plans. Refer to the member specific benefit plan document for applicable definitions.

Actuator: A motor that operates a specific function of a power seating system – i.e., tilt, back recline, power sliding back, elevating leg rest(s), seat elevation, or standing.

Alternative Control Device: A device that transforms a user's drive commands by physical actions initiated by the user to input control directions to a power wheelchair that replaces a standard proportional joystick. Includes mini-proportional, compact, or short throw joysticks, head arrays, sip and puff and other types of different input control devices.

Captain's Chair: A one or two-piece automotive-style seat with rigid frame, cushioning material in both seat and back sections, covered in cloth, vinyl, leather or equal as upholstery, and designed to serve as a complete seating, support, and cushioning system for the user. It may have armrests that can be fixed, swing away, or detachable. It may or may not have a headrest, either integrated or separate.

Crash Testing: Successful completion of WC-19 testing.

Cross Brace Chair: A type of construction for a power wheelchair in which opposing rigid braces hinge on pivot points to allow the device to fold.

Durable Medical Equipment (DME): Medical Equipment that is all of the following:

- Ordered or provided by a Physician for outpatient use primarily in a home setting
- Used for medical purposes
- Not consumable or disposable except as needed for the effective use of covered DME
- Not of use to a person in the absence of a disease or disability
- Serves a medical purpose for the treatment of a Sickness or injury
- Primarily used within the home

Dynamic Stability Incline: The minimum degree of slope at which the PMD in the most common seating and positioning configuration(s) remains stable at the required member weight capacity. If the PMD is stable at only one configuration, the PMD may have protective mechanisms that prevent climbing inclines in configurations that may be unstable.

Expandable Controller: An electronic system that is capable of accommodating one or more of the following additional functions:

- Proportional input devices (e.g., mini, compact, or short throw joysticks, touchpads, chin control, head control, etc.) other than a standard proportional joystick.
- Non-proportional input devices (e.g., sip and puff, head array, etc.)
- Operate 3 or more powered seating actuators through the drive control. (Note: Control of the power seating actuators through the Control Input Device would require the use of an additional component, E2310 or E2311.)

An expandable controller may also be able to operate one or more of the following:

- A separate display (i.e., for alternate control devices)
- Other electronic devices (e.g., control of an augmentative speech device or computer through the chair's drive control)
- An attendant control

Highway Use: Mobility devices that are powered and configured to operate legally on public streets.

Integral Control System: Non-expandable wheelchair control system where the joystick is housed in the same box as the controller. The entire unit is located and mounted near the hand of the user. A direct electrical connection is made from the Integral Control box to the motors and batteries through a high-power wire harness.

Medically Necessary: Health Care Services that are all of the following as determined by us or our designee.

- In accordance with *Generally Accepted Standards of Medical Practice*
- Clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, service site and duration, and considered effective for your Sickness, Injury, Mental Illness, substance-related and addictive disorders, disease or its symptoms
- Not mainly for your convenience or that of your doctor or other health care provider
- Not more costly than an alternative drug, service(s), service site or supply that is at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of your Sickness, Injury, disease or symptoms

Member Weight Capacity: The terms Standard Duty, Heavy Duty, etc., refer to weight capacity, not performance. For example, the term Group 3 heavy duty power wheelchair denotes that the PWC has Group 3 performance characteristics and member weight handling capacity between 301 and 450 pounds. A device is not required to carry all the weight listed in the class of devices but must have a member weight capacity within the range to be included. For example, a PMD that has a weight capacity of 400 pounds is coded as a Heavy-Duty device.

Mobility Device: A manual wheelchair, electric wheelchair, transfer chair or scooter.

Multiple Power Options: A category of PWCs with the capability to accept and operate a combination power tilt and recline seating system. It may also be able to accommodate power elevating leg rests, a power seat elevator, and/or a power standing system. A PWC does not have to accommodate all features to qualify for this code.

Non-Expandable Controller: An electronic system that controls the speed and direction of the power wheelchair drive mechanism. Only a standard proportional joystick (used for hand or chin control) can be used as the input device. This system may be in the form of an integral controller or a remotely placed controller. The non-expandable controller:

- May have the ability to control up to 2 power seating actuators through the drive control (for example, seat elevator and single actuator power elevating leg rests). (Note: Control of the power seating actuators through the Control Input Device would require the use of an additional component, E2310 or E2311.)
- May allow for the incorporation of an attendant control.

Non-Proportional Control Input Device: A device that transforms a user's discrete drive command (a physical action initiated by the wheelchair user, such as activation of a switch) into perceptually discrete changes in the wheelchair's speed, direction, or both.

No Power Options: A category of PWCs that is incapable of accommodating a power tilt, recline, seat elevation, or standing system. If a PWC can only accept power elevating leg rests, it is considered to be a No Power Option chair.

Obstacle Climb: Vertical height of a solid obstruction that can be climbed using the standing and/or 0.5-meter run-up RESNA test.

Performance Testing: Term used to denote the RESNA based test parameters used to test PMDs. The PMD is expected to meet or exceed the listed performance and durability figures for the category in which it is to be used when tested. There is no requirement to test the PMD with all possible accessories.

Portable: A category of devices with lightweight construction or ability to disassemble into lightweight components that allows easy placement into a vehicle for use in a distant location.

Power Options: Tilt, recline, elevating leg rests, seat elevators, or standing systems that may be added to a PWC to accommodate a member's specific need for seating assistance.

Power Mobility Device (PMD): Base codes include both integral frame and modular construction type power wheelchairs (PWCs) and power operated vehicles (POVs).

Power Operated Vehicle: Chair-like battery powered mobility device for people with difficulty walking due to illness or disability, with integrated seating system, tiller steering, and three or four-wheel non-highway construction.

POV Basic Equipment Package: Each POV is to include all these items on initial issue (i.e., do not request separately at the time of initial issue):

- Battery or batteries required for operation
- Battery charger, single mode
- Weight appropriate upholstery and seating system
- Tiller steering
- Non-expandable controller with proportional response to input
- Complete set of tires
- All accessories needed for safe operation

Power Wheelchair: Chair-like battery powered mobility device for people with difficulty walking due to illness or disability, with integrated or modular seating system, electronic steering, and four or more-wheel non-highway construction.

Proportional Control Input Device: A device that transforms a user's drive command (a physical action initiated by the wheelchair user) into a corresponding and comparative movement, both in direction and in speed, of the wheelchair. The input device shall be considered proportional if it allows for both a non-discrete directional command and a non-discrete speed command from a single drive command movement. (Note: In the Coverage Determination Guideline titled Wheelchair Options and Accessories, the term "interface" is used instead of "control input device".)

Push-Rim Activated Power Assist (E0986): An option for a manual wheelchair in which sensors in specially designed wheels determines the force that is exerted by the member upon the wheel. Additional propulsive and/or braking force is then provided

by motors in each wheel. E0986 is all-inclusive. All components, e.g., drive wheels, batteries, chargers, controls, mounting hardware, etc., for a manual wheelchair conversion are considered as included in 1 unit of service.

Radius Pivot Turn: The distance required for the smallest turning radius of the PMD base. This measurement is equivalent to the “minimum turning radius” specified in the ANSI/RESNA bulletins.

Range: Minimum distance acceptable for a given category of devices on a single charge of the batteries. It is to be determined by the appropriate RESNA test for range.

Reasonable Useful Lifetime: RUL is the expected minimum lifespan for the item. It starts on the initial date of service and runs for the defined length of time. The default RUL for durable medical equipment is set at 5 years. RUL is also applied to other non-DME items such as orthoses and prostheses. RUL is not applied to supply items.

Remotely Placed Controller: Non-expandable or expandable wheelchair control system where the joystick (or alternative control device) and the controller box are housed in separate locations. The joystick (or alternative control device) is connected to the controller through a low power wire harness. The separate controller connects directly to the motors and batteries through a high-power wire harness.

Codes E2310 and E2311 describe electronic components that allow the patient to control two or more of the following motors from a single interface, e.g., proportional joystick, touchpad, or nonproportional interface:

- Power tilt
- Power recline, with or without shear reduction

Combination power tilt and recline, with or without shear reduction Power leg elevation with or without articulation, power center mount elevating foot platform with or without articulating properties.

The interface includes a function selection switch that allows the patient to select the motor that is being controlled and an indicator feature to visually show which function has been selected. When the wheelchair drive function has been selected, the indicator feature may also show the direction that has been selected (forward, reverse, left, right). This indicator feature may be in a separate display box or may be integrated into the wheelchair interface. The interface code includes an allowance for fixed mounting hardware for the control box and the display box, if present.

A harness (E2313) describes all the wires, fuse boxes, fuses, circuits, switches, etc. that are required for the operation of an expandable controller (E2377). It also includes all the necessary fasteners, connectors, and mounting hardware.

Single Power Option: A category of PWCs with the capability to accept and operate a power tilt or power recline or power standing or, for Groups 3, 4, and 5, a power seat elevation system, but not a combination power tilt and recline seating system. It may be able to accommodate power elevating leg rests, seat elevator, and/or standing system in combination with a power tilt or power recline. A PMD does not have to be able to accommodate all features to qualify for this code. For example, a power wheelchair that can only accommodate a power tilt could qualify for this code.

Sling Seat/Back: Flexible cloth, vinyl, leather or equal material designed to serve as the support for buttocks or back of the user respectively. They may or may not have thin padding but are not intended to provide cushioning or positioning for the user.

Solid Seat/Back: Rigid metal or plastic material usually covered with cloth, vinyl, leather or equal material, with or without some padding material designed to serve as the support for the buttocks or back of the user respectively. They may or may not have thin padding but are not intended to provide cushioning or positioning for the user. PWCs with an automotive-style back and a solid seat pan are considered as a solid seat/back system, not a captain’s chair.

Stadium Style Seat: A one- or two-piece stadium-style seat with rigid frame and cushioning material in both seat and back sections, covered in cloth, vinyl, leather or equal as upholstery, and designed to serve as a complete seating, support, and cushioning system for the user. It may have armrests that can be fixed, swing away, or detachable. It will not have a headrest. Chairs with stadium style seats are billed using the captain’s chair codes.

Test Standards: Performance and durability acceptance criteria defined by ANSI/RESNA standard testing protocols.

Top End Speed: Minimum speed acceptable for a given category of devices. It is to be determined by the RESNA test for maximum speed on a flat hard surface.

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this guideline does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

UnitedHealthcare has adopted the requirements and intent of the National Correct Coding Initiative. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has contracted with Palmetto to manage Pricing, Data and Coding (PDAC) for Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS). This notice is to confirm UnitedHealthcare has established the PDAC as a source for correct coding and coding clarification.

HCPCS Code	Description
E0983	Manual wheelchair accessory, power add-on to convert manual wheelchair to motorized wheelchair, joystick control
E0984	Manual wheelchair accessory, power add-on to convert manual wheelchair to motorized wheelchair, tiller control
E0986	Manual wheelchair accessory, push-rim activated power assist system
K0013	Customized Durable Medical Equipment, Other Than Wheelchair
K0800	Power operated vehicle, group 1 standard, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0801	Power operated vehicle, group 1 heavy-duty, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0802	Power operated vehicle, group 1 very heavy-duty, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0806	Power operated vehicle, group 2 standard, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0807	Power operated vehicle, group 2 heavy-duty, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0808	Power operated vehicle, group 2 very heavy-duty, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0812	Power operated vehicle, not otherwise classified
K0813	Power wheelchair, group 1 standard, portable, sling/solid seat and back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0814	Power wheelchair, group 1 standard, portable, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0815	Power wheelchair, group 1 standard, sling/solid seat and back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0816	Power wheelchair, group 1 standard, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0820	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, portable, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0821	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, portable, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0822	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0823	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0824	Power wheelchair, group 2 heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds

HCPCS Code	Description
K0825	Power wheelchair, group 2 heavy-duty, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0826	Power wheelchair, group 2 very heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0827	Power wheelchair, group 2 very heavy-duty, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0828	Power wheelchair, group 2 extra heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 601 pounds or more
K0829	Power wheelchair, group 2 extra heavy-duty, captain's chair, patient weight 601 pounds or more
K0830	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, seat elevator, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0831	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, seat elevator, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0835	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0836	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, single power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0837	Power wheelchair, group 2 heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0838	Power wheelchair, group 2 heavy-duty, single power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0839	Power wheelchair, group 2 very heavy-duty, single power option sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0840	Power wheelchair, group 2 extra heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 601 pounds or more
K0841	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0842	Power wheelchair, group 2 standard, multiple power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0843	Power wheelchair, group 2 heavy-duty, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0848	Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0849	Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0850	Power wheelchair, group 3 heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0851	Power wheelchair, group 3 heavy-duty, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0852	Power wheelchair, group 3 very heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0853	Power wheelchair, group 3 very heavy-duty, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0854	Power wheelchair, group 3 extra heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 601 pounds or more
K0855	Power wheelchair, group 3 extra heavy duty, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 601 pounds or more
K0856	Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0857	Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, single power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds

HCPCS Code	Description
K0858	Power wheelchair, group 3 heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight 301 to 450 pounds
K0859	Power wheelchair, group 3 heavy-duty, single power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0860	Power wheelchair, group 3 very heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0861	Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0862	Power wheelchair, group 3 heavy-duty, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0863	Power wheelchair, group 3 very heavy-duty, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0864	Power wheelchair, group 3 extra heavy-duty, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 601 pounds or more
K0868	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0869	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0870	Power wheelchair, group 4 heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0871	Power wheelchair, group 4 very heavy-duty, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 451 to 600 pounds
K0877	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0878	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, single power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0879	Power wheelchair, group 4 heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0880	Power wheelchair, group 4 very heavy-duty, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight 451 to 600 pounds
K0884	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0885	Power wheelchair, group 4 standard, multiple power option, captain's chair, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds
K0886	Power wheelchair, group 4 heavy-duty, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity 301 to 450 pounds
K0890	Power wheelchair, group 5 pediatric, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 125 pounds
K0891	Power wheelchair, group 5 pediatric, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 125 pounds
K0898	Power wheelchair, not otherwise classified
K0899	Power mobility device, not coded by DME PDAC or does not meet criteria

References

Noridian Healthcare Solutions: <https://med.noridianmedicare.com/web/jddme/article-detail/-/view/2230703/reasonable-useful-lifetime-and-duplicate-items-billing-reminder>. Accessed July 29, 2020.

UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company Generic Certificate of Coverage 2018.

Guideline History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
06/01/2022	<p>Coverage Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removed reference to specific InterQual® release date; refer to the most current InterQual® criteria <p>Supporting Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Archived previous policy version CS187.C

Instructions for Use

This Coverage Determination Guideline provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage must be referenced as the terms of the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage may differ from the standard benefit plan. In the event of a conflict, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage govern. Before using this guideline, please check the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Coverage Determination Guideline is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

UnitedHealthcare may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the InterQual® criteria, to assist us in administering health benefits. The UnitedHealthcare Coverage Determination Guidelines are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.