Safety Tips for the Law School Handicapped Awareness Event

✓ Mobility Disability Awareness: consider **variety of devices** for the space available for this event, e.g., walkers, crutches, canes, braces, wheel chairs.
   - Consider **type, size, weight, dimensions, and limit speed** of wheel chair for the space to be used in.
   - Consider **facility's volume of pedestrian traffic and** what type of equipment could safely be used.

✓ Train participant on how to safely use mobility equipment. Below are some safety tips:

✓ How to help **ensure your wheelchair is stable and balanced**:
   - Remember to use your seat-positioning strap if it is available.
   - Do not lean forward out of the wheelchair any further than the length of the armrests, when leaning forward, always ensure that the wheel casters are pointing forward to provide more stability.
   - Do not try to pick up objects from the floor by reaching down in between your knees.
   - Do not shift your weight toward the direction you are reaching as the wheelchair may tip over.
   - Do not lean over the top of the back upholstery as this may cause you to tip over.
   - Do not attempt to ride over curbs or obstacles.
   - Do not tilt the wheelchair without assistance.
   - Do not use an escalator to move between floors without assistance.
   - Do not attempt to move up or down an incline with water, ice or oil film on it.
   - Do not move across, go up, or go down ramps or slopes greater than a 9-degree angle.

✓ Tips on how to **assist a wheelchair user**:
   - Assistant must always let the wheelchair user know what he or she is doing, and to avoid sudden movements.
   - He should always use good body posture for his own safety and keep his back straight and bend knees slightly when tipping the wheelchair or moving over curbs.
   - Tipping a wheelchair without a tipping bar requires two people, one at either end.

✓ Always **lock the brakes** before getting in and out of the wheelchair. On power wheelchairs, always turn the power off before transferring. This can prevent someone from bumping the joystick and it saves battery juice.

✓ **Don’t pull backward** on doors or other objects when sitting in a manual wheelchair. A door could suddenly release and you could tip over backwards.

✓ **Lift the footplates** up before getting in or out of the chair.

✓ If you have a wheelchair with removable **arm or leg rests, make sure they are secure** by lifting the arms and gently trying to swing the leg rest away from the chair. Do this before each use.

✓ Avoid putting **heavy loads on the back of a wheelchair**. This could cause the chair to tip over backwards. Don’t remove the anti-tip wheels or bars on any wheelchair. This should prevent the chair from tipping backwards.

✓ Keep **loose objects or lap cover** away from the wheel **spokes**.

✓ **Don’t let anyone ride** on the battery cases or on the footrest; these will break if you do.

✓ Use a flag if you ride in the streets. Use headlights and flashing taillights if you ride in the streets at night. Pick bright colored wheelchairs.

✓ **Avoid going up or down steep inclines** or slopes. You might lose control and tip your chair over.

✓ Beware of **caster flutter**. This is the side to side motion of the caster which usually happens at high speeds. If the casters flutter, replace them immediately.

✓ Have the programming of your power wheelchair set so that it **does not go faster than you can handle**, especially in reverse.

✓ Just **be careful and think of ways to prevent problems** before they occur. **Plan ahead for emergencies** such as brake failure, tipping backwards. or the power wheelchair moving by itself.

Listed above are some of the common safety issues to look out for and is definitely not comprehensive. The wheelchair is meant to allow greater freedom and independence to its user, not to become the tool of further harm.
Adaptive Equipment Training Log

Staff’s Name: ___________________________ Date: ______________

By initialing below I state that I have been properly instructed to use that consumer’s wheelchair, wheelchair accessories and/or walkers, or standing frames, standing frame accessories.

Individual: __________________________________________________________

Piece of equipment
Wheelchair: Standing Frame:

_____ wheelchair chest harness  _____ chest harness
_____ lab belt  _____ lap belt
_____ foot plates/straps  _____ foot plates/straps
_____ seating system  _____ knee block
_____ tilt in space  _____ hip guides
_____ brakes lock/unlock  _____ lateral guides
_____ tray  _____ adjustable tray
_____ hoyer lift and sling  _____ brakes lock/unlock
_____ transferring with 2 staff  _____ helmet
_____ implementing range of motion  _____ gait belt
_____ implementing PT/OT  _____ hand splints

Supervisor: _________________________________________________________ Date: ______________

Staff’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: ______________