

Paragraph one:

CONFINED TO A WHEEL CHAIR: Wheelchairs enable people to be mobile. Better: “Using a wheelchair or in a wheelchair.” Refer to people’s assistive aids only when essential to the story.

Paragraph two:

SUFFERING FROM: This assumes that the person has a reduced quality of life. Use neutral language such as “who has cerebral palsy.” Refer to people’s conditions only when essential to the story. In this case, the diagnosis of cerebral palsy isn’t clearly necessary.

Paragraph three:

It is appropriate to refer to the wheelchair in this context because it provides details as to how the robbery occurred. It makes no judgments

Paragraph four:

The terms “handicapped” and “cripple” are offensive to many. Since they are part of the woman’s quote, it’s not appropriate to substitute other words, but you could seek another quote or cut the quote altogether.

Paragraph five:

SPASTIC: This description is derogatory when applied to a person. People aren’t spastic, muscles are.

Paragraph seven:

Referencing a wheelchair in this context is appropriate but the term “wheelchair-bound” is not.

Paragraph eight:

CRIPPLED: The word is derogatory and unnecessary.

Paragraph nine:

This is speculation and infers that a medical condition led to a robbery. Simply state the facts: Police said they don’t know the motive for the robbery