



*for the slow walker, wheelchair traveler, their friends and family*



## Cruise Travel: Tender vs. Docking

To "tender" is to disembark the ship by a small boat that is used to ferry passengers to shore from a ship at anchor. During a tender operation the ship is not at a pier and can be as far as 1/2 mile from shore. Disembarking by tender is handled differently by every cruise line but most provide plenty of hearty physical assistance to carry your wheelchair onto the tender. Passenger disembarkation by tender is always under the final control of the ship Captain. Weather, sea and tidal conditions, or mechanical failure can prohibit some or all of the passengers from disembarking the ship by tender.

Disembarking at a pier can involve three forms of assistance. If you are mobile, you can walk down the gangway with assistance. If you are a mandatory wheelchair traveler, the crew can gently carry you down the gangway in your wheelchair (if you don't mind), or the crew will use what we call "the creepy crawler" to mechanically take you and your wheelchair down the gangway. The "creepy crawler" mounts under your wheelchair and actually "walks" your wheelchair down the stairs of the gangway while you remain seated in your wheelchair. Some folks like the "creepy crawler" while others like the personal attention of being carried down the gangway by hearty men.

If you bring a scooter or an electric wheelchair on your cruise, you can not expect the crew to carry you off the ship while you are seated in your electric wheelchair or scooter. There's too much weight, too much bulk and the center of gravity is too high to attempt a seated transfer. To safely disembark in an electric wheelchair or scooter at a pier, or by tender, you should transfer into a manual wheelchair and be portered down the gangway separate from your scooter or electric wheelchair. At the bottom of the gangway the crew will reunite you with your chariot...and off you go.

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