

A guide to
staying safe



Older and Wiser

Guidelines for
Mobility Scooter Users



Maintaining independence

Mobility scooters give you a sense of freedom. They offer an excellent way of keeping your independence, and give you the ability to visit shops, friends and family whenever you wish. They are simple to use, easy to maintain and economical to run. There is a wide range of mobility scooters available, and so it is vital for you to find the scooter that fits your needs.

Please remember a mobility scooter can cause considerable damage to the user or to other people if it collides with someone or something. The following guidelines have been produced for the people who use electric mobility scooters, and other road users and pedestrians. If you ride a mobility scooter, you are responsible for your own and other people's safety and we hope this information will help you to enjoy your freedom safely.



Definitions

Three types of invalid carriage are defined in **The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988**.

Class 1 – manual wheelchairs

These wheelchairs are not electrically powered. You use your arms to move the wheelchair forward, or another person pushes you.

Class 2 – powered wheelchairs and scooters

These are only suitable for riding on pavements or footpaths, and have a top speed of 4 miles an hour (6 kilometres an hour).



Class 3 – powered wheelchairs and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters

These are suitable for riding on roads, and have a top speed of 8 miles an hour (12 kilometres an hour) and must not weigh more than 150 kilograms without the driver and any load. These also have a switch to limit the top speed to 4 miles an hour (6 kilometres an hour) on pavements or footpaths.

A Class 3 vehicle is not legally defined as a motor vehicle and the user does not need a driving licence or to take a test.

However, a Class 3 vehicle can only be used by a disabled person aged 14 or over, or by a person who is demonstrating a vehicle before selling it, training a disabled user, or taking a vehicle to or from a place for maintenance or repair.

Registration

Class 1 and **Class 2** invalid carriages do not have to be registered with the driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). You must register a **Class 3** vehicle with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). It must be licensed in the disabled taxation class and display a free disabled tax disc. There is no fee to pay and the vehicle does not need registration plates. However, you must renew your tax disc each year.

To register and license a **Class 3** vehicle you should fill in form **V55/4** (for new vehicles) or **V55/5** (for used vehicles) and take or send it to your nearest DVLA local office, not to DVLA headquarters in Swansea. These are available from main post offices or online.

Guidance on filling in the forms is given in the DVLA's leaflets **INF210** and **INF211**. You can find the address of your local DVLA office:

- at www.direct.gov/motoring
- in the **V100** information leaflet available from post offices that issue tax discs
- **by phoning 0870 243 0444.**



Important basic advice

- Make sure that you get a scooter appropriate for your needs, eg. size, height, weight, and restricted movement.
- Get professional advice before buying a mobility scooter. This could mean getting an assessment and advice from your local occupational therapist (contact **Disabled Living**) or reputable dealer. **Ask for a test drive! Look for all contact details on the back of this booklet.**
- If you are using a powered vehicle for the first time, or if it is a while since you have driven on the road, we strongly advise you to go on a training course. **Contact Shopmobility for further information.**
- For details of courses, contact your local Disabled Living centre or Shopmobility.
- Make sure that you are familiar with all the controls on your scooter before you go out.
- Make sure that the scooter is properly maintained. Have it thoroughly checked (the manufacturer's handbook will tell you how often to do this). A second-hand scooter may not have instructions or still be under warranty, so seek advice.
- Keep the battery fully charged and get to know how far your scooter can go before it will need recharging.
- Remember that the distance you can travel will depend on the condition of the battery, the weight you have on the scooter and the kind of route you follow.
- Cold weather, travelling on rough surfaces and travelling up hills will use more power and reduce the distance you can travel.
- Scooters should be maintained and serviced annually.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you have at least third-party insurance. It is also a good idea to be covered for fire, theft, and damage.



Plan your journey

The most direct or the shortest route will not always be the best route to take. Steep hills, high kerbs or other obstructions may make it impossible to tackle certain routes. **Do not put yourself into dangerous or risky situations by overstretching your own or the scooter's capabilities.**

You may take a Class 1 wheelchair on *some* buses and trains, but always check this service is available for both outward and return journeys for your class of scooter.

Check with your local community bus company and Ring & Ride to see if they allow mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs on their service.

Tip: ask for slow transfers between trains to plan your journey so that you can make connections if required.

Mobility scooters are allowed on trams in Manchester but **be aware that to get on and off the platform there is a steep slope on both sides.** Contact www.metrolink.co.uk or phone **0161 205 2000**.

GMPTE Traveline
Tel: 0871 200 2233

Out and about

- Drivers of mobility scooters **should not** drive their vehicles if they have consumed alcohol or are impaired by the use of any drugs. Police have confirmed they have successfully prosecuted people for driving their vehicles while impaired through drink.
- Check patient information on any medication your doctor prescribes or that you buy over the counter. **If the information says the medication could cause drowsiness, don't use your scooter.**
- See and be seen! If you are using anything to protect you from the weather, make sure that it does not restrict your vision. Wear fluorescent and reflective materials and have fluorescent and reflective markings on your scooter, and put on your lights to help other road users see you. **Contact your local Road Safety Team for advice on hi-visibility wear.**
- Think carefully. Do not wear loose-fitting clothing, scarves and long coats, which can easily be caught in the wheels.
- Mobility scooters are constructed and designed for the **driver only**. Think! **Don't** put yourself in any danger by carrying passengers.
- Mobile phones can be a distraction, so pull over and stop before using one.
- Carrying or leading a pet while you are on your scooter would also present major safety risks.
- Overloading your scooter with shopping or other goods can also make the vehicle unstable.
- Bags hanging from the handlebars will also make the scooter more difficult to control.
- Not turning the scooter off when you get on or off is dangerous – controls can easily be knocked by your body or catch on clothing; this can cause a serious collision to you, and other people or property.
- Leaning forward and reaching to put items into your scooter basket on the tiller is also dangerous. If the scooter is turned on again, you can knock the controls and move the scooter forward.
- A tiller that is too close to your stomach can hinder steering, knock controls and cause collisions.
- Having the speed control on full, stopping (to have a chat or look at something in a shop) and then moving off, not realising the scooter is on full power, can cause collisions.

On the move

Be careful when going up and down kerbs. Always approach at right angles and do not go up or down kerbs higher than recommended for the type and size of your wheels (look in the handbook for information). Wherever possible cross roads where there is a dropped kerb and use pedestrian crossings.

Take extra care when you cannot see ahead clearly, for example, when you are approaching a corner where there is a wall or hedge restricting your view. Also, beware of pedestrians when going round corners. Your scooter could topple over if you go round too quickly. Pay particular attention to hills and slopes and where there is loose gravel or a slippery surface.

Slow down in plenty of time. There may be a delay in braking on some scooters.

Always be aware of pedestrians and other road users. Pedestrians may not see or hear you approaching them, especially from behind. When reversing, look behind you before you move off or change direction.

If you have to use a lift, drive in and reverse straight out safely. Most lifts will not allow you to turn around in them; be aware of other lift users.



On the pavement

Some scooters are designed only to be driven safely on pavement or footpaths, except when you are crossing roads.

If you are riding a Class 3 vehicle, you must switch over to the 4 miles an hour (6 kilometres an hour) setting when you are using it on a pavement or footpath.

Pedestrians have right of way!

If you are riding your scooter on a pavement or footpath, give way to pedestrians. Be courteous – saying ‘excuse me’ is better than a beep of the horn! The top speed allowed on pavements and footpaths is 4 miles an hour (6 kilometres an hour), but even this is too fast where there are pedestrians about.

In a crowded area, such as shops and shopping precincts, you must make sure that you do not run into anyone or cause any damage with your scooter. Think about the space that may be available for you in crowded shops and such areas.



On the road

To drive on the road you need a vehicle that can travel at up to 8 miles an hour (12 kilometres an hour). It must also have headlights, rear lights, flashing indicators, a wing mirror and a horn.

You must NOT use your scooter on motorways.

- You should follow the Highway Code and drive on the left-hand side.
 - Please be aware that currently you are *not* allowed to use bus lanes or cycle tracks. A read-through of the Highway Code will help in your understanding of signs and road markings.
 - You should obey traffic lights and all other road signals and instructions, including stop signs, give-way signs and signs for one-way streets.
 - Always give way to pedestrians.
 - At night, you must have your headlights and rear lights on.
 - Remember that other vehicles are driving faster than you. Be sure that you have plenty of time to carry out your actions.
 - Don't rely on your mirror. It may give a false impression of distance.
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- A photograph showing a man in a blue jacket and cap riding a blue motor scooter on a city sidewalk. He is positioned next to a traffic light pole. The traffic light is red. In the background, there is a modern building with large glass windows and a street with other pedestrians.
- Also, look behind when turning right. It may be safer to turn on to the pavement and use a pedestrian crossing to cross the road. If there is no pavement, it may be safer to stop on the left and wait for a gap in the traffic.

Medical advice

Mobility scooters will give you more independence and will play an important part in your daily life. However, please consider your safety and the safety of other road users before buying a scooter.

- Check with your doctor to ensure that you are fit to use a scooter.
- Strong medication can affect you, so always read the instructions carefully and ask your GP or pharmacist about any side effects that could affect your ability to drive your scooter.
- If you have a disability that will restrict your movement, eg. looking behind you, a simple adaptation to the scooter may be all that's needed. **Contact Shopmobility for further information or advice.**
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, make sure you wear them every time you drive.
- Have your eyesight tested regularly.

Remember

Make sure you seek advice before buying a mobility scooter – there are many different types and you need to find one that is suitable for your needs. **Contact Shopmobility or an authorised dealer in mobility scooters.**

Allow plenty of time for your journey and plan your route in advance. Before setting out, make sure you've checked your scooter to ensure that your journey will be a safe one.



Need more information?

Manchester Road Safety aims to reduce the number and severity of road traffic casualties in Manchester by working together with other agencies.

Manchester Road Safety

Chief Executive's Department
Room 8003, 8th floor
Town Hall Extension
Manchester M60 3NY

Tel: 0161 234 4480

Fax: 0161 274 7027

Email: roadsafetyenquiry@manchester.gov.uk

Web: www.manchester.gov.uk/roadsafety

Valuing Older People (VOP) is a multi-agency initiative to improve the quality of life for older people in Manchester.

The VOP team is part of the jointly funded Manchester Joint Health Unit.

You can contact the VOP project at:

Valuing Older People

Joint Health Unit
Chief Executive's Department
Room 4042, 4th floor
Town Hall Extension
Manchester M60 2LA

Tel: 0161 234 3391

Fax: 0161 234 3269

Email: vop@manchester.gov.uk

Web: www.manchester.gov.uk/health/older

Shopmobility

L18 New Arkwright Way
Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3AJ

Tel: 0161 839 4060

Email: info@shopmanchester.co.uk

Web: www.shopmobilitymanchester.org.uk

Rail Travel

To arrange a train journey in the UK, contact National Rail Enquiries.

Tel: 0845 7484 950

Textphone: 0845 6050 600

Disabled Living

Redbank House
4 St Chad's Street
Cheetham M8 8QA

Tel: 0161 214 5959

Web: www.disabledliving.co.uk

Manchester Ring and Ride

Registering and general enquiries.

Tel: 08456 884 933

Email: manchester@ringandride.info