

HELP

My Mobility



Owning and Operating your **Mobility Scooter**



Owning and operating your first mobility scooter can be a life changing time, but also a time of learning how to safely operate and drive the scooter.

This document should be used as a general guideline only, and professional and legal advice should be obtained prior to buying and operating a scooter.



Introduction

Purchasing a [mobility scooter](#) can be a very straight forward procedure. However, rushing into buying a scooter may turn out to be a very expensive mistake. You need to consider first which scooter best suits your requirements and also which retailer to buy from. We recommend undertaking an assessment before purchasing to ensure you buy the right scooter for you needs.

Often, especially if you buy from an internet only based company the scooter will be delivered in a box.... With no instructions on how you operate the scooter safely. We recommend buying a scooter from a company who not only deliver but will fully assemble and check your new scooter. Also offering training on how the scooter is operated.

A scooter in the wrong hands can cause serious damage to pedestrians, road users and even the user themselves. For first time owners it is recommended that a training course is undertaken.

Legal Requirements

There are in fact very few legal requirements to owning a mobility scooter. Unlike driving a car a valid license is not required, nor is an MOT to ensure the scooter is in safe working condition, or that valid insurance is purchased.



Here at Help My Mobility we strongly believe that it is the owners obligation to ensure;

- 1. The scooter can be operated safely and in full control*
- 2. The scooter is in full working order and regularly maintained*
- 3. Valid insurance is purchased*

The only legal requirement is that any Class 3 Mobility Scooter (8mph scooter which can be used on the road) must be registered with the DVLA [click here for further information](#).

Operating the scooter

A scooter is actually relatively easy to operate. Most scooters have two levers on either side of the steering tiller – Pull one side to move forward and the other to reverse, release to come to a stop. The other important control to master is the power/speed setting, which allows the user to set the power/speed of the scooter. Pay particular attention to this setting and ensure it is set to suit the environment your are in. “Slow”

setting for areas of high population (i.e. shops) or difficult to maneuver areas, and “High” setting for open pavement/road use (Class 3 only for road use). If this setting is on high you will pull away quickly and often this can catch the user off guard. Set on “Slow” pull away and adjust as required.

Other controls may include lights, horn, indicators etc depending on the type of scooter you have. Familiarise yourself with all the controls before setting off. Pay particular attention to the battery charge level ensuring you have plenty of charge for your journey.





Insurance

Even though it is not legally required to have valid insurance here at Help My Mobility we strongly recommend insurance is purchased. A good policy can cost as little as £63.50 per year and not only covers the scooter itself against theft and accidental damage, but also just as importantly is offer third party liability to cover claims against damage to other peoples property and person in the event of an accident. There has been a lot of bad press about mobility scooters hitting people and property – insurance is essential if a claim is made against the scooter user.

Maintenance

A well maintained scooter will not only last, but also ensure it remains safe to use. Follow the manufactures schedule to not only keep the scooter in good working condition, but this will also be required to validate any warranty you may have. Pay particular attention to the battery to keep in top condition.



High Way Code for Mobility Users

The below is an extract:

Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters (36-46)

(Called Invalid Carriages in law)

- 36** There is one class of manual wheelchair (called a Class 1 invalid carriage) and two classes of powered wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters. Manual wheelchairs and Class 2 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 4 mph (6 km/h) and are designed to be used on pavements. Class 3 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 8 mph (12 km/h) and are equipped to be used on the road as well as the pavement.
- 37** When you are on the road you should obey the guidance and rules for other vehicles; when on the pavement you should follow the guidance and rules for pedestrians.

On Pavements

- 38** Pavements are safer than roads and should be used when available. You should give pedestrians priority and show consideration for other pavement users, particularly those with a hearing or visual impairment who may not be aware that you are there.
- 39** Powered wheelchairs and scooters **MUST NOT** travel faster than 4 mph (6 km/h) on pavements or in pedestrian areas. You may need to reduce your speed to adjust to other pavement users who may not be able to move out of your way quickly enough or where the pavement is too narrow.
[Law UICHR 1988 reg 4]
- 40** When moving off the pavement onto the road, you should take special care. Before moving off, always look round and make sure it's safe to join the traffic. Always try to use dropped kerbs when moving off the pavement, even if this means travelling further to locate one. If you have to climb or descend a kerb, always approach it at right angles and don't try to negotiate a kerb higher than the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations.

On the Road

- 41** You should take care when travelling on the road as you may be travelling more slowly than other traffic (your machine is restricted to 8 mph (12 km/h) and may be less visible).
- 42** When on the road, Class 3 vehicles should travel in the direction of the traffic. Class 2 users should always use the pavement when it is available. When there is no pavement, you should use caution when on the road. Class 2 users should, where possible, travel in the direction of the traffic. If you are travelling at night when lights **MUST** be used, you should travel in the direction of the traffic to avoid confusing other road users.
[Law UICHR 1988 reg 9]

43 You MUST follow the same rules about using lights, indicators and horns as for other road vehicles, if your vehicle is fitted with them. At night, lights MUST be used. Be aware that other road users may not see you and you should make yourself more visible - even in the daytime and also at dusk - by, for instance, wearing a reflective jacket or reflective strips on the back of the vehicle.

[Law UICHR 1988 reg 9]

44 Take extra care at road junctions. When going straight ahead, check to make sure there are no vehicles about to cross your path from the left, the right, or overtaking you and turning left. There are several options for dealing with right turns, especially turning from a major road. If moving into the middle of the road is difficult or dangerous, you can:

- *stop on the left-hand side of the road and wait for a safe gap in the traffic*
- *negotiate the turn as a pedestrian, i.e. travel along the pavement and cross the road between pavements where it is safe to do so. Class 3 users should switch the vehicle to the lower speed limit when on pavements*

If the junction is too hazardous, it may be worth considering an alternative route. Similarly, when negotiating major roundabouts (i.e. with two or more lanes) it may be safer for you to use the pavement or find a route which avoids the roundabout altogether.

45 All normal parking restrictions should be observed. Your vehicle should not be left unattended if it causes an obstruction to other pedestrians - especially those in wheelchairs. Parking concessions provided under the Blue Badge scheme (see 'Other information') will apply to those vehicles displaying a valid badge.

[Other information](#)

46 These vehicles MUST NOT be used on motorways (see Rule 253). They should not be used on unrestricted dual carriageways where the speed limit exceeds 50 mph (80 km/h) but if they are used on these dual carriageways, they MUST have a flashing amber beacon. A flashing amber beacon should be used on all other dual carriageways (see Rule 220).

Highway Code produced by Road Safety GB

Introduction

A mobility scooter could cause considerable damage to the user or to other people if it collided with someone or something. We have written this highway code to protect the safety of people who use electric mobility scooters and the safety of other road users and pedestrians. If you ride a scooter, you must follow this highway code whether you ride on the pavement, footpath or on the road. You are responsible for your own, and other people's safety.

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. For details of courses, contact your local disabled living centre, mobility centre or your local authority road safety unit.

Definitions

Three types of *'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 you are pushed by another person.

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 have to have a driving licence or take a driving test.

However, a **Class 3** vehicle can only be used by a disabled person aged 14 or over, or by an able-bodied 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.

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; or
- by phoning 0870 243 0444.

Important basic advice

- 1 Make sure that you get a scooter that is appropriate for your needs. Get professional advice before buying a mobility scooter. This could mean getting an assessment and advice from your local occupational therapist or a reputable dealer.
- 2 Make sure that you know what all the switches and levers on your scooter do, and that you can control it properly before you go out on it.
- 3 Make sure that the scooter is properly maintained. Have it thoroughly checked (the manufacturer's handbook will tell you how often to do this).
- 4 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.

Insurance

- 5 Although you do not have to be insured by law, we strongly recommend that you have at least third-party cover. It is also a good idea to be covered for fire, theft, and damage.

Plan your journey

- 6 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.
- 7 You may take a Class 1 wheelchair on some buses and trains but always check that this service is available for both your outward and return journeys before you set off.

Out and About

- 8 Do not use your scooter if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Check the patient information on any medication your doctor prescribes or which you buy over the counter. If the information says the medication could cause drowsiness, don't use the scooter.
- 9 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 materials or have fluorescent markings on your scooter and put on your lights to help other road users see you.
- 10 Do not wear loose-fitting clothes. Make sure any belts or scarves are tucked away so they can't catch in one of the wheels.
- 11 Do not carry another person (child or adult) with you on the scooter.

- 12 Do not carry or lead a pet while you are on your scooter. Even trained and well-behaved animals can be unpredictable and cause crashes.
- 13 Don't overload your scooter with shopping or other goods as this could make the vehicle unstable. Do not have anything hanging from the handlebars as this will make it more difficult to control the scooter.

On the move

- 14 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 manufacturer's handbook for guidance). Wherever possible, cross roads where there is a dropped kerb.
- 15 Take extra care when you cannot see clearly ahead, for example, when you are approaching a corner where there is a wall or hedge restricting your view.
- 16 Take great care when going round corners. Your scooter could topple over if you go round a corner too quickly, especially if the ground is sloping.
- 17 Be very careful when you are approaching corners or junctions on loose gravel, on a slippery surface or downhill.
- 18 Slow down in plenty of time. There may be delay in braking on some scooters.
- 19 Always be aware of pedestrians and road users. Pedestrians may not see or hear you approaching them, especially from behind. Look carefully before you move off or change direction.

On the pavement

- 20 Some scooters are designed only to be driven safely on pavements or footpaths, except when you are crossing roads.
- 21 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.
- 22 Pedestrians have right of way If you are riding your scooter on a pavement or footpath, give way to pedestrians. The top speed allowed on pavements or footpaths is 4 miles an hour (6 kilometres an hour), but even this is too fast where there are pedestrians about.
- 23 In a crowded area, such as a shopping precinct or shop, you must make sure that you do not run into anyone or cause any damage with your scooter.

On the road

- 24 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 and a horn.
- 25 Remember that you are not driving a car but a very small and slow vehicle, which is very vulnerable. It is wise to avoid using busy roads.
- 26 When on the road, you must follow the same rules as other traffic.
- 27 You must keep to the left.
- 28 You must obey traffic lights and all other road signals and instructions, including stop signs, give –way signs and signs for one-way streets.
- 29 You must give way to pedestrians on crossing.
- 30 At night, you must have your headlights and rear lights on.
- 31 Although it is not recommended, you can use dual carriageways if you have an extra flashing amber warning light.
- 32 You must not use your scooter on motorways.
- 33 You are not allowed to use bus lanes or cycle tracks.
- 34 Always indicate before pulling out or turning left or right.
- 35 When you are passing parked cars, look out for doors opening.
- 36 Remember that other vehicles are almost certainly moving much faster than you are and may reach you before you expect them to. Be sure that you have plenty of time to carry out your actions.
- 37 Don't rely on your mirror. It may give a false impression of distance.
- 38 To turn 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 safe gap in the traffic.
- 39 Use your hazard lights if you cannot move for any reason, or if you are in a difficult or dangerous situation. Do not drive with them on unnecessarily.
- 40 Do not park your scooter where it would cause an obstruction and make it difficult for others to use the pavement or footpath.

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