



**Safer
Mobility**

From  **Surewise**
Live Life Confidently



Mobility Scooter Safety Guide

Be Safe and Secure on
Your Mobility Scooter

A Mobility Scooter Safety Guide

We have produced this Mobility scooter safety guide to help you stay safe and secure on your mobility scooter. The aim of this guide is to help you increase your confidence using a mobility scooter in a safe and responsible manner to help maintain your independence and freedom. This guide will help to protect the safety of people who use mobility scooters, other road users and pedestrians.



Your mobility scooter will get you where you want to go, provided you follow the rules of the road, exercise proper caution, and are aware of your environment. Naturally you can't control what other road users do, but you can take steps to make travelling on your mobility scooter as safe as possible.

Important: If you use a mobility scooter you must follow The Highway Code whether you ride on pavements, pedestrian areas or the road. The information and advice contained in this guide should be read in conjunction with The Highway Code and it's 'Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters' (36-46), which are called Invalid Carriages in law and are included within this guide. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are up to date with any changes to these rules within The Highway Code and any other laws that affect your use of a Mobility Scooter.

NOTE: Some of the information throughout this booklet pertains to sections of the Highway Code, this means that contravening the rules of the road is illegal and that if you do so you could end up with a criminal record. Familiarise yourself with the Rules for users of Powered Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters sections 36-46.

The Surewise Safer Mobility Campaign

Mobility scooter drivers are more than twice as likely to be killed in a road crash than other road users, our research into the Department of Transport data has revealed.



Road casualty data shows that in 2022 alone, nine mobility scooter users were killed and 270 were injured in collisions on UK roads.

Alarming, the figures show that over the last decade, mobility scooter casualties have increased by an average of 20 percent, year on year.*

These figures have increased our concern about the safety of mobility scooter users, leading us to launch our 'Safer Mobility' campaign.

The campaign aims to educate all road users about the risks facing mobility scooter users, who are particularly vulnerable if they are involved in a crash.

As part of our Safer Mobility campaign, we have a reflective sticker pack bundle for your mobility scooter to give out for free.

To sign up to receive yours head to www.surewise.com/safer-mobility/ or email resources@surewise.com.

As featured on:



Some Technical Details

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters are called invalid carriages in law.

According to the High Way Code, they fall into three classes:

- **CLASS 1:** Manual wheelchairs (No mechanical propulsion)
- **CLASS 2:** Powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters with a maximum speed of 4mph. They are designed for use on footpaths and pavements.
- **CLASS 3:** Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs with a maximum speed of 8mph. When travelling on roads, the scooters can travel between 4mph and 8mph. When they are driven on pavements and footpaths they are not allowed to exceed 4mph.

Section 36 of the Highway Code states:

There is one class of manual wheelchair (called 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.

Section 37 of the Highway Code states:

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.

When you're driving your scooter, it's advisable to stick to footpaths and pavements, as they are preferable to roads. If you have to drive on roads, try to stick to quieter areas as this is usually safer than busy streets. While you are allowed to drive your Class 3 mobility scooter (max. speed of 8 mph) on dual carriageways with a speed limit of 50 mph, it's best to avoid them. However, if you have to drive on a dual carriageway you must have amber-flashing beacons on the front and back of the scooter. This increases your visibility and reduces the chance of being hit by passing traffic.

How To Make an Informed Decision



When acquiring a mobility scooter, whether it is your first purchase or you are in the market for a new scooter, thoughtful consideration of the following factors will help ensure you find the best match for your requirements.

Where will you use your scooter?

First, consider where you'll be using your scooter most often. Class two scooters are designed mainly for use on pavements and are only allowed on roads where pavements are unavailable. However, Class 3 scooters can be used on the roads provided they are registered with the DVLA.

Will you require the ability to put your scooter into a vehicle?

Some scooters can be dismantled or folded easily to be placed in a vehicle. However, some don't have this capability and therefore it is important to consider this element before making your purchase. It is also important to consider the weight of your scooter and if you can manage lifting your scooter into a vehicle without injury.

What are the roads like in your local area?

Think about your surrounding pavements and roads that you will be most frequently using. If you live in a town or village where there aren't many pavements and therefore you are forced to use roads more to travel, it may be sensible to purchase a class three scooter as they can go faster and are allowed on roads.

If you have to travel on uneven terrain frequently, look for a scooter with a strong motor, robust frame tyres that are designed for use on uneven terrain.



How far will you need to travel?

While you may not know the exact distance for every possible route, it's wise to calculate the distance of routes you'll be traveling frequently. These may include the distance to the local supermarket, the doctor's surgery or a family member's house. Mobility scooters vary in battery sizes and distances they can travel on a full charge. Once you have worked out your most frequent routes, you can look for a scooter that will fit your requirements.

Is your area reasonably flat or are there steep hills?

Mobility scooters can sometimes struggle with particularly steep hills therefore you might want to consider alternative routes where possible. Travelling on very steep hills, on a scooter that is not suitable, can be dangerous and can cause the battery to drain quickly as the motor is required to work harder.

Do you have any equipment that you need to travel with?

It is important to consider if you have any equipment that you need to travel with. For example a walking aid, oxygen cylinder or any other medical devices. Some models offer more storage than others and if you need to travel with these items, it is a good idea to check that they will fit your scooter dimensions.

Before You Hit the Road

Here is a checklist of things you should consider before you venture out on your mobility scooter

- 1 Are you dressed appropriately?** Wear something high-viz, such as a vest, hat, or jacket. Ensure that your clothes aren't loose enough to get caught in anything or obscure your line of sight by flapping up into your eyes or flapping over the mirrors.
- 2 Have you considered your sight?** There are no laws around operating a mobility scooter when you are partially sighted, so it is up to the individual to make a logical decision for their safety and the safety of other road users. A suggested test is to see if you can read a cars registration number from a distance of 12.3 metres (40 feet). Vision problems can make it difficult to spot obstacles, curbs, or hazards in your path. Before riding, make sure you have had a recent eye exam and are using the correct prescription eyeglasses or contacts.
- 3 Check your battery to ensure it is fully charged.** Bear in mind that your battery's life is affected by several factors, including the weight of the load, the speed at which you travel, the number and height of hills, and the state of the road. Icy roads are more taxing on your battery than dry roads. Gravel surfaces are also battery heavy.
- 4 Check your mobile phone to ensure that it is also fully charged.** You never know when you'll need a lifeline; for example, to phone a mechanic or breakdown recovery to rescue you from the side of the road.
- 5 Think about the route you want to take.** The most direct route is not necessarily the shortest or safest when you're on a mobility scooter. Avoid busy roads and junctions. Choose routes with wide pavements so you can get completely out of the way of speeding motorcars and wide lorries.
- 6 Think about when you need to travel.** It's best to avoid peak pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic times, for example, school runs and bin collection days. Consider shopping patterns; for example, shops, high streets, shopping centres and parking areas can be very busy on weekends and school holidays. This isn't very scooter-friendly. If you can, carry out your errands during the week and avoid other busy times. If you can't, ask someone to come with you to help you navigate the crowds.

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On the Road

- When driving any vehicle it is important to follow the Look, Signal, Manoeuvre protocol. This involves checking your mirrors initially to see if your manoeuvre is safe to start. Use your indicator to let everyone know the direction you are heading in and then proceed with your manoeuvre safely.
- It's advisable to use your lights even on bright, sunny days but particularly at night time or dusk. To increase visibility further, you should attach your Safer Mobility reflective stickers to your scooter.
- You must be aware of the pedestrians near you. These include: children, the elderly, joggers, prams, and people with pets. Remember that pedestrians have right of way on pavements, meaning you need to move out of their way or wait your turn on narrow pavements.
- Give way to vehicles when driving on the road. Standard road rules apply, but you may want to apply extra caution. Not every road user behaves as they should and follows The Highway Code correctly. You should be prepared to compensate for reckless driving.
- Remember it's a limit not a target. Just because you can do 4mph on pavements and 8mph on the road, doesn't mean you have to. Slow down when taking corners and approaching high traffic areas, such as schools and supermarket car parks. You might be travelling slowly but you could still go over something in your path, unbalance and tip-over so be alert.
- Avoid overloading your scooter and make sure all parcels and packets are securely stored. Use your basket or a rear lockable box. Don't hang your shopping bags on your handlebars or place them in the space between your feet. Not only will they affect your balance but the awkward placement will affect your reaction time and increase the risk of accidents.



- Don't give lifts to anyone, even children who want to sit on your lap. An unbalanced scooter is a dangerous one.
- Use dropped kerbs where possible, even if it means extending your journey to locate one. You should always look for the dropped kerb on the other side of the road before you start crossing the road to ensure you know exactly where you are heading. Approach the dropped kerb at a right angle to safely dismount your scooter from the pavement.



Extra Tips to Consider

- Fields, beaches, deep mud and deep gravel can present potential hazards for mobility scooters. It is advisable to avoid these where possible.
- Whilst using your scooter on the road, if you have to go round a parked car you must give them the same birth as you would a cyclist.
- If you have a windscreen on your scooter or a canopy that you attach to your scooter, this must be made of safety glass or glazing.

With regard to driving on pavements:

Section 38 of the Highway Code states:

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.

Section 39 of the Highway Code states:

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 pavements 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]

Section 40 of the Highway Code states:

When moving off the pavement onto the road, you should take special care. Before moving off, always look around 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.

With regard to driving on roads:

Section 41 of the Highway Code states:

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).

Section 42 of the Highway Code states:

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. [Law UICHR 1988 reg 9]



Section 43 of the Highway Code states:

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 might 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]

Section 44 of the Highway Code states:

Take extra care at road junctions. When going straight ahead, check to make sure there are not 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.

Section 45 of the Highway Code states:

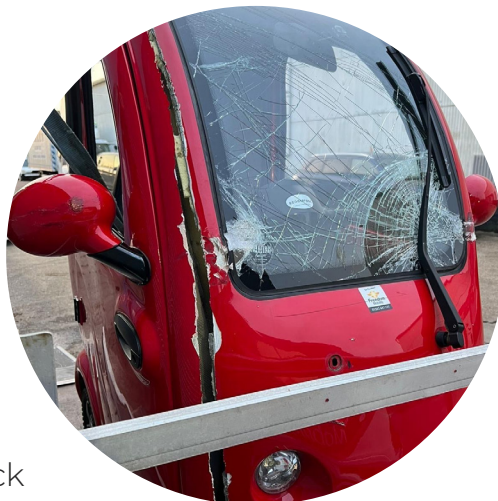
All normal parking restrictions should be observed. Your vehicle should not be left unattended if it causes an obstruction to other pedestrians – especially those in wheelchairs. Parking concessions provided under the Blue Badge scheme (see ‘other information’) will apply to those vehicles displaying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

Section 46 of the Highway Code states:

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). (Laws RTRA sect 17(2) & (3), and RVLR reg 17(1) & 26]

Be a Responsible Driver

Just like driving a car you should never drive while under the influence of intoxicating substances. This includes over the counter (OTC) medications and prescription medications. If your doctor prescribes you a new medication, it is advisable to wait a day or two after taking it to check how it makes you feel before you operate your mobility scooter. Remember even simple allergy medication can make you drowsy and affect your reaction times.



Insurance is not mandatory but it is highly recommended from [The Department of Transport](#). You may be an excellent driver yourself, but other road users can be unpredictable. You have no idea what pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle drivers are going to do.

The unfortunate rise in mobility scooter theft adds another layer of uncertainty and provides more reason to protect yourself against potential financial burdens associated with replacing your scooter. [Surewise](#) provide a wide range of insurance policies for Mobility Scooters, Powered Wheelchairs and Cabin Car with optional extras to tailor your policy to meet your needs such as key cover, puncture care and breakdown recovery.

Registration and Licensing

While you don't need to register Class 1 or Class 2 vehicles, you do need to register Class 3 mobility scooters with the Driver and Licensing Agency (DVLA). Registration is free but you need to renew your tax disc annually, please note this doesn't need to be displayed.

The Gov.UK site ([Mobility scooters and powered wheelchair rules](#)) has details on exactly what is required and where you can find your nearest Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) office.

The DVLA provides information to help you complete the necessary forms but you can always go to the office for person-to-person advice.

How To Practise Driving Your Scooter

We have put together some key manoeuvres to practise to build your confidence and increase your safety. It is best to practise using your scooter on a quiet pavement first, before travelling on busier pavements or roads.

- Start by driving forward then reversing in a straight line, you may be required to do this when out and about. For example, if the pavement is narrow and someone pushing a pram is coming towards you and you need to reverse to let them pass.
- Get used to the speed controls and practise using the throttle. Every scooter is slightly different and requires a different amount of pressure applied to increase and reduce speed. Many scooters have automated brakes that are activated when you release the throttle so it is best to get to know how this works to avoid sudden breaking. You will find most scooters have a speed limiter that you can adjust accordingly to ensure you are sticking to the speed limit.
- Scooters vary in their ability to turn around and change directions, that is why it is important to get to know your turning circle and how to weave in and out of obstacles.
- Practise driving your scooter through a narrow space such as a gate. This will allow you to gauge the size of your scooter and create an understanding of the gaps you can fit through.
- Learning how to go up and down hills at a steady pace is crucial to maintaining your safety and those around you. Too much speed going down a hill can cause you to crash and too little speed going up a hill can make it trickier to get up.
- Going up and down dropped kerbs is another thing you should get to grips with before you set off. As you start to make your most frequent journeys you will learn whereabouts the dropped kerbs are, meaning that you can adjust your route accordingly.
- Once you feel confident that you can safely manoeuvre your mobility scooter you can head off on your first journey.

Important

Please be aware that a mobility scooter can cause considerable damage to the user or to others if not driven correctly and safely. The contents of this document are intended and provided for information purposes only. Surewise has attempted to ensure that the resource is current and accurate but cannot guarantee this. This guide resource is provided on the basis that persons accessing it undertake responsibility for assessing the relevance and accuracy of its content. Surewise do not accept any liability to any person or body for the information (or the use of such information) which is provided in this resource.

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