



# 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.

**NOTE:** Some of the information below 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.

## 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 can be driven on footpaths and roads.
- **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 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.

## Make an informed decision



It's a good idea to talk to an occupational therapist before you buy a mobility scooter. The therapist can assess your needs and advise you on which type of scooter and which features will be best for your mobility needs.

You can also talk to several dealers about the different manufacturers, their features, and their prices. Your safety is at stake, so get as much information as possible before you make your final decision.

Once you have made your choice it's advisable to ask the salesperson to go over all the controls and perhaps even demonstrate some of the most important features. This will stand you in good stead when you're preparing to take your scooter out for the first test drive.

Make sure that you understand how to take care of and maintain your scooter; for example, how to store and charge the battery, and how to check the tyres. Find out about the maintenance schedule, which is how often you should take in your scooter for a professional service.

## 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 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.
- 3 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 towing company to rescue you from the side of the road.
- 4 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.
- 5 Think about when you need to travel.** It's best to avoid peak pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic times, for example, school runs and home time. 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

- Follow the rules of the road and be aware of other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians. Try to be as considerate as possible.
- Use your mirrors, indicators, and lights. It's advisable to use your lights even on bright, sunny days. Motorcyclists do and if possible, you should too. Do everything you can to increase your visibility to others.
- Give way to pedestrians when driving on pavements. Be aware of the pedestrians near you, these include children, the elderly, joggers, prams, and people with pets.
- Give way to vehicles when driving on the road. Standard road rules apply, but you may want to add 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.
- Drive with caution; just because you can hit 4 mph or 8 mph doesn't mean you have to. Slow down when taking corners and approaching high traffic areas, such as schools and supermarket parking lots. Remember: You might be travelling slowly but you could still go over something in your path, unbalance and tip-over so be alert.
- Don't overload your scooter and make sure all parcels and packets are securely stored. Use your basket and a backpack or 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 the thrill of the ride. An unbalanced scooter (such as one with a child swinging its weight around to get the full experience), is a dangerous scooter.



- Adapt your driving to road conditions; for example, drive more slowly on wet and icy roads and increase your braking time.
- When you go up and down kerbs look for the lowest kerbs around; most mobility scooters have a recommended height for kerbs. This is based on wheel size. It's advised to approach kerbs at right angles to keep the smooth and save your tyres. Dropped kerbs are great places to cross roads.

### 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:



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- 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

Never drive while under the influence of intoxicating substances. This includes over the counter (OTC) medications and prescription medications. Simple allergy medication can make you drowsy and affect your reaction times.

Insurance is not mandatory but it is highly recommended (Disabled Motoring UK). You may be an excellent driver, but people in general are unpredictable. You have no idea what pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle drivers are going to do. [Surewise](#) provide a wide range of insurance policies for Mobility Scooter users.

Third party liability should be your minimum cover, but more comprehensive insurance provides cover for theft (of the scooter and personal effects), malicious damage, and recovery and hire costs.



## 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. 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.

## 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.

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.

Mobility Scooter Insurance

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