



Motorized Mobility Vehicle Safety Tips



Motorized mobility scooters or motorized wheelchairs (motorized mobility vehicles) offer those with limited mobility a sense of independence and an efficient means of getting around their community. Although motorized mobility vehicles do not require registration, insurance or a licence to operate in BC there are a number of considerations users of these modes of transportation should keep in mind. Motorized mobility scooters and wheelchairs by law are classified as pedestrians.

Obey Rules for Pedestrians

- Ride only where it is safe, follow the same rules and guidelines as pedestrians. Use sidewalks wherever possible, keep to one side of the sidewalk. If there are no sidewalks or if the sidewalk is not accessible, travel on the far left side of the road facing oncoming traffic.
- Drive at the same speed as other pedestrian traffic. Avoid driving closely behind or obstructing pedestrians. Use caution when travelling close to store fronts to avoid crashing into pedestrians as they leave a building.
- Cross at pedestrian crosswalks. Check for traffic before crossing. If there is no crosswalk available, stop, look both ways, and proceed only when all approaching vehicles have come to a full stop. Make “eye contact” with motorists or pedestrians before crossing their path to confirm their intention to stop.
- Be cautious of traffic as when approaching driveways and laneways. Obey all traffic control signs and devices.
- Driving of motorized mobility scooters and wheelchairs in bicycle lanes is not permitted.

Using Mobility Vehicles on Public Transit

- Before making trips on public transportation such as buses, SkyTrain or SeaBus, users of mobility vehicles should be comfortable with manoeuvring the mobility vehicle in tight spaces. Users should also feel comfortable boarding facing forward or backwards. Users should have the ability to maneuver their mobility vehicle safely and effectively.
- In busy transit hubs, always proceed slowly and cautiously, as there are often people moving in all directions.
- Some community public transit providers offer users of mobility vehicles travel training to allow them to practice getting on the bus with their mobility vehicle or to determine whether their mobility vehicle will fit on a bus. Contact the local transit provider to inquire whether this service is available in the service area.
- When travelling on accessible buses, bus drivers can: kneel the bus or lower the ramp upon request to assist with getting on and off the bus; assist in emergency situations; provide users of mobility aids extra time to reach their seat and when getting on and off the bus. They can further assist in securing mobility vehicles.
- When travelling on a bus using a mobility vehicle: remove flags and store parcels away from the securement attachments of your device; and advise the driver of the desired destination. If travelling with an attendant, identify him/her to the driver.

Learn to Use and Care for Motorized Mobility Vehicles

- Before using a mobility vehicle in public, learn and be comfortable with how to operate it. Practice in a quiet parking lot. Once comfortable operating the mobility vehicle, find a friend who will travel with you on foot or scooter during the first few trips.
- Mobility scooters have a high center of gravity and can tip easily. Curbs, ramps and inclines should be taken “head on”. Drive in the most level path of the incline or curb, do not drive across the incline.
- The operator’s manual may have additional safety and user information. Read the operator’s manual and any documentation supplied before operating the mobility vehicle.
- Become familiar with routes where mobility vehicles can safely drive. Be aware of areas that do not have curb cuts or streets that do not have sidewalks. Allow additional time in the event of unforeseeable circumstances such as construction, resulting in taking an alternate route or backtracking.
- Use caution when travelling on wet or slippery surfaces. The automatic mobility vehicle brakes may not slow or stop the scooter if proper traction is not available.
- Scooter baskets are not designed to carry heavy weights. Place heavy objects on the floor of the scooter between the user’s feet. Do not overload the motorized mobility vehicle with parcels or loose items.
- If the mobility vehicle is not regularly used, batteries should be charged up monthly to keep them active. Keep air inflated tires fully inflated to ease rolling of the mobility scooter, lengthen the time needed between battery charges, maximize mileage and maximize tire life span.

Be Visible

Users of motorized mobility vehicles are at a height disadvantage to the other users of the road and sidewalk, making them less visible to drivers in vehicles. The following can assist in increasing the visibility of motorized mobility vehicle users:

- Brightly coloured clothing
- Fluorescent orange bike flag in the back seat of the motorized mobility vehicle
- Light on back of the motorized mobility vehicle
- Light on front of the motorized mobility vehicle
- Reflective strips on sides, front and back of the motorized mobility vehicle