

ScooterWorks
Mobility Scooters
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Mobility Scooter Driving Tips:

Your driving experience will be greatly impacted by the type of scooter that you buy, so before buying a mobility scooter or electric wheelchair, determine where you plan on using your scooter or wheelchair so you get a scooter that is designed for what you intend to use it.

To stay safe while you are driving, there are a number of safety accessories available, such as lights, horns, turn signals, reversing beepers, warning flags, and rear view mirrors. Consider which safety accessories you want on your scooter before you buy it so you are safe when you get on the road.

Make sure you are fit and able to drive a mobility scooter, and are completely aware of how the scooter operates and how the brakes work. Take a few practice rides close to your home if it is your first time driving your scooter so you become familiar with how it steers and how much room you need to stop.

When you get back home remember to plug in your scooter to recharge the batteries. It is a common problem for people to forget to plug in their mobility scooter and drive into town only to run out of battery power half way there. If you do get stranded, call Scooterworks on 0508 472 6683.

You aren't required to have a driver's license, registration, or warrant of fitness to operate a mobility scooter or electric wheelchair, but you still need to be aware of your responsibilities and liabilities.

You are responsible for any injuries to others resulting from your mobility scooter or electric wheelchair running into them. You may be held liable for those injuries, so make sure you have adequate liability insurance. In many countries your homeowner's insurance would cover this but check with your insurance agent to ensure you have adequate coverage.

Remember that if you drive carefully at low speeds when around pedestrians then you are less likely to have an accident. If you do run into somebody it will likely be pedestrians walking erratically and be their fault for walking into your scooter.

Part-2

A general rule to follow, since there are no formal mobility scooter laws in most countries, is that when you drive your scooter on the sidewalk you must follow

pedestrian rules and when driving on the street you must follow the same rules as automobiles.

Pedestrians always have right-of-way on sidewalks so it is your responsibility to make sure you don't have accidents with pedestrians.

Keep your speed down to 4 mph or less when travelling on sidewalks so you don't accidentally run into people that suddenly walk out of stores or from behind obstructions.

Expect people to walk erratically, suddenly crossing your path out of nowhere or suddenly exiting from doors.

It is illegal for you to ride your mobility scooter or electric wheelchair in a manner that may injure yourself or others.

If you are involved in an accident, you must stop to see if anyone is injured, help them, and report it to police if they are injured.

Adjust your speed to the conditions in front of you.

Always ascend and descend curbs at right angles, where your front wheels go straight into the curb, so you don't go up or down at an uneven angle and tip over your scooter.

Use a slower speed when turning abruptly, so you don't tip over your scooter or accidentally run into people coming around a corner. This is especially important with 3-wheel scooters that can tip over more easily when turning a sharp corner.

Plan your travel if possible so you miss large crowds of people on the sidewalks. i.e. Morning and afternoon rush-hours when people are rushing to get to work are not the best time to take your trip.

What you'll notice is that over time you'll get to know "zones" where there is a lot of pedestrian congestion, whether on the street or in a store. From this you'll know where it's safe to drive at high speed settings and where it's better to set your scooter on low speed settings.

Some parts of the sidewalk away from store entrances may be safer to drive faster than where people are coming in and out of stores.

Maybe you'll need to turn your speed settings to its lowest setting when near a cash register in a store due to the people traffic in that area.

So if you feel a bit overwhelmed the first time you go out driving your scooter amongst congested pedestrian areas, rest assured that it will get easier as you learn the different zones.

When driving in stores or buildings make sure to switch to a low speed setting and be careful not to bang into shelves, walls or bump into people in the aisles. If you have trouble reaching an item off the shelf ask for help.

When outside, keep to one side of the sidewalk so you give pedestrians enough room to pass.

Follow the same rules you normally follow for pedestrians on a sidewalk. If pedestrians normally stay to the right side of the sidewalk, then ride your scooter on the right side. If normally on the left side, then ride on the left side. This varies by country.

Try not to startle pedestrians if you use a warning device like a horn. You can still use your voice to say "excuse me" so they are not as startled. Some people may not move over for you and no need getting angry if they don't -- just be patient and learn to ride with the flow.

Part-3

As mentioned in part-2, remember that when you ride the street you must follow the same rules as automobiles.

This means being aware of automobiles on the street and drive defensively assuming the automobiles will make erratic moves and to stay out of their way. Not all drivers of automobiles are good drivers and not all of them are friendly so beware while riding a scooter. Mobility Scooters & Electric Wheelchairs are much smaller and vulnerable than automobiles and you don't want to risk getting hit by an automobile.

If you plan on spending a lot of time driving on the street, then consider getting a red flag or a flashing light for the back of your scooter so you are readily visible to drivers of automobiles. Also consider getting mirrors so you can see automobiles coming up behind you.

Avoid weaving in and out of parked automobiles on the street so you are readily visible and don't drive right into the path of an automobile.

Depending on the type of scooter you bought, you'll need to take precautions based on the scooters limitations.

If you have a 3-wheel scooter, you'll have to pay closer attention to uneven surfaces since they could cause you to tip over. Also remember to lean back a bit in your seat on a 3-wheel scooter so you don't tip over on an angle if leaning too much forward and to one side. Also lean back a bit when stopping since shifting your weight forward to one side when stopping can tip you over.

Four-wheel scooters are more stable on uneven surfaces and you don't have to pay as close attention to the way you shift your weight when riding on uneven surfaces.

If you have a travel scooter, you'll need to pay attention to obstacles like speed bumps since travel scooters have very low ground clearance and you could bottom out. Use the sidewalk when it is readily accessible, and stay close to the side when riding on the street.

Use your turn signals if your scooter has them, or else use hand signals, especially when driving on the street.

Don't drive against the flow of traffic; this could put you in dangerous situations where it is difficult for automobiles to see you.

Use pedestrian crossings and look both ways to ensure it is safe to cross.

Put your mobility scooter or electric wheelchair on low when riding through hazardous areas like on narrow sidewalks close to busy traffic.

If you drive an electric wheelchair and have limited upper body control, be very careful when heading down inclines since your body could shift forward if you have to stop suddenly, potentially resulting in your hand pressing full throttle forward against your will - going out of control.

It is not advisable to drive your mobility scooter while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The rules of the road apply to you when driving on the street so you could get charged with driving under the influence of alcohol if caught on the street. You could also be a danger to yourself and others if driving under the influence on sidewalks where your poor judgment could cause an accident.

Enjoy your new adventure with your mobility scooter or electric wheelchair and drive safely.

Cheers,

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Scooterworks.