



Motorised Mobility Devices Scooters and Powered Wheelchairs



Choosing and using motorised mobility devices

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Disclaimer

This publication is intended only as a general guide and may contain generalisations. You should obtain professional advice if you have any specific concern.

Whilst it outlines the legal requirements for pedestrians using motorised mobility devices it does not purport to set out the full requirements of the law and should not be relied on as a statement of the law in Tasmania or in any other jurisdiction. For a complete knowledge of the road law, you should consult the appropriate Acts and Regulations.

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Telephone numbers of relevant organisations are provided throughout the text.

See the **Useful contacts** list for other details.

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It is recommended that you read this booklet in full before choosing a mobility device.



Definitions and Terms

The Australian Road Rules identify the commonly used mobility devices in this booklet as motorised wheelchairs and motorised scooters. For ease of reading the terms 'scooter' and 'powered wheelchair' are used as these are common terms. If you call the Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources (DIER) - Transport be clear that you are talking about a motorised scooter or motorised wheelchair. Using the word scooter or wheelchair could be misleading.

Is a scooter or powered wheelchair a good idea for you?

- You are only permitted to use a scooter or powered wheelchair in public places, for example on footpaths, if you have a physical condition that makes it difficult for you to walk. If your condition is not obvious, you may need written evidence, such as a medical certificate.
- Owning a scooter or powered wheelchair may mean that you walk less. For some people, this may not be wise. For other people, a scooter or a powered wheelchair may be the perfect solution for a mobility problem. Talk to your doctor to check whether it is a good idea to be less active.
- Driving a scooter or powered wheelchair requires a considerable amount of skill and practice. If you are no longer able to drive a car for medical reasons you may not be safe using a scooter or a powered wheelchair.
- Think carefully about where you may want to go to on the scooter or powered wheelchair. Are there any steps that would block access? Is there space to turn and to park? How steep is the path/driveway? Are footpaths in good condition? Can you keep off the road? How often would you have to cross a road? Are you able to find safe places at which to cross roads?
- Powered wheelchairs and scooters need regular maintenance. If you are thinking about getting one for an occasional trip, consider other options. Community Transport Services Tasmania, taxi services (which may charge concession fares if you meet certain criteria), or the occasional hire of a scooter or a manual wheelchair (especially if someone can push you) may be better solutions for you.
- Scooters and powered wheelchairs are used on footpaths but you may need to cross roads, or even travel on roads, at times.



Start by talking to your doctor or other health professional. Get more help from a community occupational therapist or physiotherapist via your local community health centre or hospital. They can also tell you about any funding assistance that may be available.

To find out about other options, as alternatives to using a scooter or powered wheelchair, contact ILC Tas **1300 885 886**.

Find out about the availability of Community Transport Services Tasmania in your area at www.ctst.org.au. Regional contacts include Burnie **03 6425 3496**, Launceston **03 6343 0455** and Hobart **03 6228 0287**.

Although this booklet is about both powered wheelchairs and scooters, there are significant differences between the two. Choosing a powered wheelchair is usually a lot more complex because there are many more options and many more ways of making it suitable for a large range of needs. Although the information in this booklet will be helpful it should not be solely relied upon. You need professional help from occupational therapists and physiotherapists who can talk to you about your individual needs. This is especially important if you require a powered wheelchair.



Could you safely drive a scooter or powered wheelchair?

Do this checklist yourself but also ask someone who knows you well to rate you. They may have a different opinion. You should also ask your doctor. You have a legal responsibility to yourself and to other people to not cause danger or get in the way of other vehicles.

All of these skills are very important.  Can you...

- ☐ Use all the controls to turn the power on and off, move forward and backward, go faster and slower, and stop?
- ☐ Get on and off safely (and without help, if no one is with you)?
- ☐ Read and understand the control panel?
- ☐ Keep your balance when travelling on rough ground, on slopes, and when you are turning?
- ☐ Judge the steepness of ground and know whether you have the skill to maintain the control and stability of your mobility device on a moderate slope?
- ☐ Change your body position when going up and down slopes and hills? Can you, for example, sit forward slightly when going uphill?
- ☐ Look to both sides and behind you?
- ☐ Sit for long periods?
- ☐ Judge your speed and the speed of others, such as bicycle riders?
- ☐ Hear sounds of traffic and other noises around you?
- ☐ Notice obstacles and other moving objects, including those in your side vision, and safely avoid them?





- ☐ Judge how close objects are?
- ☐ Know and follow the road rules?
- ☐ Concentrate for long periods.
- ☐ Stay calm in difficult situations and co-operate with others?
- ☐ Steer in all directions, including around tight corners?
- ☐ Know your own limitations and the limitations of your scooter or powered wheelchair?
- ☐ Suddenly change direction or stop, quickly but safely?
- ☐ Notice objects in your side vision whilst you are looking ahead?



If you do have problems with any of these skills, there may be ways of gaining assistance. If, for example, you cannot control the scooter or powered wheelchair smoothly, it might help if the controls were re-programmed.

If you cannot fully turn your head, a well-positioned set of mirrors may help. You need help from an occupational therapist and a supplier to make these sorts of changes.

Discuss the subject with your doctor and ask him/her to refer you to an occupational therapist or physiotherapist who can carry out a much more detailed test with you.

This is especially important if you could not answer 'yes' to every skill listed above.

You may need to trial a scooter or powered wheelchair to you know whether you have these skills. Try one with the help of an occupational therapist. Contact ILC Tas **1300 885 886**.

If you do not score so well on the checklist, an occupational therapist can help you to think of other options for getting about.



Choosing the right powered mobility

Before buying a scooter or powered wheelchair, think about these things.

- Choose a scooter or powered wheelchair that is the best possible match to you (your size and your abilities) and to the places you want to go to.
- If it is too small for your weight or build, it could be unstable. Check the load capacity.
- What do you know about the layout and slopes at places you may want to visit? It is important to get a good compromise between manoeuvrability (the size of the turning circle and how well the mobility device turns) and stability (how likely the device is to tip over, particularly if there are kerb ramps or high gutters).
- Manoeuvrability is especially important indoors and stability is especially important outdoors.
- A scooter that moves around very tight spaces in a shopping mall may not be safe in a hilly suburb.
- There is usually more effort required to get on and off a scooter than a powered wheelchair. To get on and off a scooter, you swivel the seat around or step up and down from the platform.
- Every scooter or powered wheelchair has a limit on how far it can go before the batteries need to be recharged.
- Check that the places you want to go to are well within the battery limit (or be sure there is somewhere to recharge along the way). Remember that charging takes time.
- The stated 'maximum distance travelled' is only a guide because it can be affected by many factors.
- Not all scooters and powered wheelchairs can go safely up and down the same hills and slopes. What sorts of hills and other slopes (driveways, ramps) might you travel over?
- The stability of the scooter or powered wheelchair can be affected by the seat height (the lower the better), the overall width (the wider the scooter the better), the number and size of wheels (a four wheel scooter is more stable than a three wheel scooter if all other factors are the same), and the type of ground you travel on.
- Look for powered wheelchairs and scooters that meet Australian Standard AS 3695:1992. This standard requires tests for basic safety and function and provides useful information for users about stability, performance and dimensions. (This standard is being revised and will be superseded by AS/NZS 3695.2 and AS/NZS 3695.3, relevant to powered wheelchairs and motorised scooters, respectively.)



- If you think you will need to go over uneven, rough, rocky or soft ground, you need to check whether a suitable scooter or powered wheelchair is available.
- Will you be able to get through all the doorways you want to pass through? Bigger scooters may not fit into confined spaces like 'accessible' public toilets, lifts or small corner stores. If you need to use the scooter or powered wheelchair indoors, check that you can get into all rooms you need to enter.
- Consider all the upfront and ongoing costs. Even if you get funding help, you may need to contribute some costs. You may also need to acquire equipment such as ramps to get the scooter or powered wheelchair into the house or a hoist to lift it into a vehicle. These are big expenses. Consider ongoing costs of batteries, maintenance, insurance and the electricity costs of battery charging.
- Could your needs change in the future because of your medical condition? Can you alter the scooter or powered wheelchair to meet those needs? Could you, for example, make the seat more supportive?
- Do you have a sheltered area at home with a power point for charging the scooter or powered wheelchair?
- Will you want to transport the scooter or powered wheelchair? How will you do that?
- Will someone need to help you with tasks such as getting on and off the seat, maintaining your powered wheelchair or scooter, or transporting it in a vehicle?
- You can buy a scooter or powered wheelchair second-hand. Be sure to have it and the battery tested by an expert before agreeing to buy. Find out about the availability of parts and of service agents.

Get advice.

Talk to occupational therapists, physiotherapists and suppliers before making a decision.

You could ask about scooters and powered wheelchairs on the second-hand register at ILC Tas **1300 885 886**



Which is better for you - a scooter...



Scooter

- There is less legroom on a scooter than a powered wheelchair, especially a four wheel model (because of the steering column and the wheel arches). If you have knee problems you may have difficulty placing your feet on the scooter platform.
- Scooters are longer and usually, but not always, wider.
- Scooters have three or four main wheels. Powered wheelchairs have four or six main wheels.
- Scooters are generally rear wheel drive and powered wheelchairs can be front, mid or rear wheel drive.
- Scooters are often, but not always, cheaper.
- Standards for the design of buildings and other spaces do not require architects to allow room for larger model scooters. A powered wheelchair is more likely to fit into places like 'accessible' public toilets.
- Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS 3696-19:2009 indicates that scooters are unacceptable for use as seats in a vehicle. Users should transfer into normal vehicle seats.
- A scooter has handlebars and you steer holding your arms out in front. It is therefore more tiring to use a scooter and you need stronger arms. On a scooter, you usually accelerate and decelerate with fingers or thumb.
- You apply 'brakes' to a scooter by turning the ignition key to switch off the power supply. Some scooters also have a handbrake.

or a powered wheelchair?

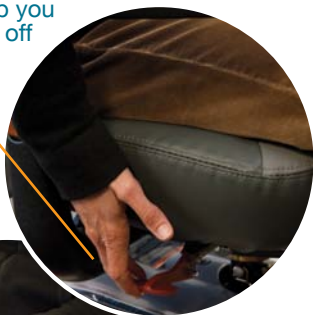


Powered wheelchair

- A powered wheelchair has no handlebars. It is usually operated by a joystick. You control your speed and steer the wheelchair by moving the joystick with one hand while your arms rest on armrests. A joystick can be re-programmed to make it easier for you to control a powered wheelchair. (Alternative types of controller systems are also available.)
- Powered wheelchairs usually have a smaller turning circle which may be better suited to your house, workplace or other indoor places.
- You apply 'brakes' to a powered wheelchair by pressing a button on the control panel to switch off the power supply.
- Powered wheelchairs have different types of footplates. Some have a centre-post footplate which you need to lift up before you sit down. Others have separate footplates which you have to flip up and swing away. The footplates must be lowered or swung back for seated travel, and then lifted or swung away before you stand up. Alternatively, you could transfer on and off the seat sideways or with a hoist.
- Powered wheelchairs are sometimes lighter and easier to dismantle.
- There are more options available with powered wheelchairs (especially electronic controls and better seating). This may be important if your medical condition is changing or getting worse.
- It is recommended that you get out of a powered wheelchair to travel in a vehicle. If you cannot, then the powered wheelchair should meet Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS 3696-19:2009.
- Both you and the powered wheelchair have to be correctly restrained in the vehicle, using approved vehicle restraints. The powered wheelchair itself must be restrained with tie downs and you, as the occupant, must be restrained by a seat belt system which is attached to the vehicle.



lever to swivel seat to help you get on and off scooter



flip up armrest

scooter

lever controller handlebars operated with both hands

basket

headlights

rear view mirror



platform

no tie down points for travelling on the scooter in a vehicle

single post seating on scooters does not meet the Australian Standard for safe vehicle travel

reflectors

head rest for travelling in a vehicle in a powered wheelchair or when backrest is reclined

more options for adaptable and supportive seating in a wheelchair

lap belt

4 tie down points for vehicle travel (check manufacturer's manual to identify points)



foot plate

joystick controller (one handed)

powered wheelchair

Seek assistance from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

There are many different scooters and powered wheelchairs with different features on the market. You should be properly fitted to your motorised mobility device because good seating gives you a stable base from which to drive. At ILC Tas **1300 885 886** you can compare scooters and powered wheelchairs.

Important safety features

You do not have to have all these features but they are strongly recommended, especially for dull days and if you are travelling at night. Remember that you will be in a sitting position and therefore at a lower height than most pedestrians and motorists. You need to stand out!

- Attach a fluorescent orange flag on a pole. Make sure it is clearly visible above your head but no higher than two metres.
- Wear light-coloured clothes (white and yellow are ideal colours).
- Wear a high visibility safety vest.
- Use a horn.
- Use a beeper when going backwards.
- Use luggage carriers instead of carrying items on your lap.
- Using a seat belt in the powered wheelchair or scooter is recommended.
- If you are going to travel at night or in dull weather, use lights and reflectors. (The scooter or wheelchair may not come with these as standard features.)
- Have a headlight and tail light - flashing or steady lights clearly seen from 200 m away. The bottom of each light should be 350 mm above the ground. The headlight (at front) should be white and the tail light (at back) should be red.
- Have clearance lights on both sides. They should be yellow and not flashing (otherwise they could be confused with indicators). These are especially useful when you are crossing a road.
- Use reflectors or reflective tape – attach white on the front, yellow on the sides and red on the back.
- Use mirrors that assist you to have full view to sides and rear.
- If you are going to take the powered wheelchair in a vehicle, there should be at least four tie down points – two at front and two at rear. They should comply with the Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS3696-19:2009
- Depending on where you are going to use your scooter or powered wheelchair, anti-tip wheels may be useful should your device start to tip over. Check with the supplier for availability.



Questions to ask suppliers

- **Can the scooter or powered wheelchair meet your needs and safely do the trips that you think you will want to do?**

Give the supplier information on where you are likely to travel - hills, slopes, uneven ground, gravel driveways, crowded areas and small homes are all important considerations. Hills and slopes vary greatly as to how steep they are so make sure you check the actual gradient that the scooter or powered wheelchair can safely go up and down. You may not understand what the manual says about maximum steepness because of the terms used. Ask the supplier to give you an example or show you a slope of that steepness.

- **Can you trial it before agreeing to buy?**

After you have thought about where you may want to travel, organise a trial. Ideally, take the scooter or powered wheelchair on a typical trip and on some of the most difficult ground you are likely to use. The trial should occur with an occupational therapist and the supplier present to assist you.

- **Can you get any training?**

As well as asking the supplier, you can also seek training from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

- **What is the maximum speed when on level ground?**

This is important in relation to licensing and registration, and where you can travel (refer to those sections).

- **Could the scooter or powered wheelchair be secured safely in a taxi, van or another vehicle?**

Refer to the sections on travelling.

- **Is there a user manual that includes information on basic maintenance?**

- **Can you get a written warranty?**

There may be separate warranties for different components.

- **Does the warranty cover parts and labour?**

- **Are service centres and parts readily available in your city/region?**

- **Who pays for the cost of delivering the scooter or powered wheelchair to the repairer?**

- **Will the supplier collect and return it?**

- **Will you get a replacement while your scooter or powered wheelchair is being fixed?**



- **Does the scooter or powered wheelchair comply with Australian Standards?**

There are Australian Standards related to scooters and powered wheelchairs. They are not mandatory and therefore suppliers can sell products that do not meet these standards. **Because the standards are written to improve safety,**

you should try to buy products that meet these standards. Ask the supplier for a written statement that the scooter or powered wheelchair you are thinking about does comply with AS3695:1992 and, if a powered wheelchair is to be used in transport, with AS/NZS 3696-19:2009.

Help Cut Mobility Scooter Accidents is a booklet available from ILC Tas or direct from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. It contains advice on how to be safe on a scooter. Details of ACCC publications can be obtained from ILC Tas **1300 885 886** or direct from the ACCC Infocentre **1300 302 502**.

Speak and Listen users phone **1300 555 727** and ask for **1300 302 502**

Internet relay users with a hearing or speech impairment can contact ACCC by connecting to the National Relay Service **www.relayservice.com.au**



Do you need a drivers licence and vehicle registration?

- In Tasmania, a vehicle designed and constructed for use by people with disabilities, which is not able to go faster than 10 km/h, and its maximum power output does not exceed 200 watts, does not need to be registered. The operator of such a mobility device does not need a drivers licence. You should check the requirements in other states.
- If your scooter or powered wheelchair is capable of going faster than 10 km/h (even if you have asked the supplier to program it to a slower speed or even if you always drive more slowly), and its power output exceeds 200 watts, you will probably need to have a drivers licence and register the device. Check with the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) – Transport: Registration and Licensing.

Requirements vary, depending on the way your scooter or powered wheelchair is made. You would probably need to obtain either a car or a motorbike drivers licence (if you do not already have one). It will have a condition on it that it is only for driving your scooter or powered wheelchair. You will need written evidence that you are fit to drive the device and that you can drive your powered wheelchair or scooter safely.



- If your scooter or powered wheelchair has modifications, it may need registration regardless of how fast it can go. Check with DIER – Transport: Registration and Licensing.



Where should you travel?

- An operator of a powered wheelchair or scooter that cannot travel faster than 10 km/h is considered to be a 'pedestrian' under the Australian Road Rules (ARR). In this case, under the ARR, the operator must use footpaths unless this is not practicable, for example when crossing the road. If a powered wheelchair or scooter can travel at more than 10 km/h, the operator is considered to be a 'driver'. The operator must be licensed and the device must be registered.
- If your scooter or powered wheelchair can go faster than 10 km/h, you are a 'driver' under the ARR. In Tasmania, under ROAD RULES 2009 s. 288(3), you may travel on footpaths if you have such a device but it does not weigh more than 150 kg (without you on it). However, you must not go faster than 10 km/h when on the footpath.
- If your motorised scooter or powered wheelchair does weigh more than 150 kg (without you on it) you cannot drive on footpaths and should travel on the road verge and/or as close as possible to footpaths.
- Remember that you can only use a scooter or powered wheelchair in public places if you need to do so because of a medical condition.

For more information about road rules in Tasmania contact **Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources – Transport: Registration and Licensing**
1300 851 225



Insurance for your scooter or powered wheelchair

Think about what sort of insurance cover you want for your scooter or powered wheelchair.

- Most scooters and powered wheelchairs that do not exceed 10 km/h do not have to be registered and therefore do not have MAIB insurance.



- It is recommended that you have insurance which includes cover for injury to yourself and to other people, damage to your scooter or powered wheelchair, and damage to your own property and the property of others. Insurance should provide cover when you are home and when you are out. You can seek advice from an insurance broker about the availability of a suitable policy.
- If you have home contents insurance, it may offer some cover for your scooter or powered wheelchair. You cannot assume this, however, and it may be very limited. Sometimes it only applies when the scooter or powered wheelchair is within your home. Other insurers may offer some cover for the scooter or wheelchair away from home if it is a specified item. Check the extent of your cover with your insurance company.
- It is possible, although not common, to find some insurance policies specifically for scooters or powered wheelchairs. These policies include cover for accidental loss, damage and theft.
- In Tasmania, MAIB compulsory third party insurance covers motorised mobility devices which are registered.

Before you head out

- Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or any medication that may affect your driving skills. You need to be feeling well and alert. Operating your scooter or wheelchair under the influence of drugs or alcohol is an offence.
- Know what the footpaths, ground or roads might be like and only go if you are confident that you will manage.
- Plan a quiet, flat route, even if it is a bit longer. Avoid roundabouts.
- Know the steepest gradient your scooter or powered wheelchair will manage and do not drive on anything steeper.
- Check that the batteries are fully charged. Estimate how far you can go before they need recharging.
- Check that tyres are adequately inflated. Under-inflated tyres can be unstable and inefficient.
- Take a mobile phone in case you run into any difficulty or you break down. Store the RACT roadside assistance telephone number in your phone (see page 23).
- Check that the horn works.
- Do not overfill luggage carriers because this could make you unstable or affect the steering.
- Wear a reflective vest, or light coloured clothing - white, then yellow, are the best colours for making you stand out.
- Get to know how long it takes for your scooter or powered wheelchair to stop, especially on wet surfaces.
- Ensure that raincoats, rainhats, canopies or umbrellas do not block your ability to see or hear traffic.
- Protect controls if wet weather is likely. If they do get wet, dry them as soon as possible.
- Make sure your contact details are on the scooter or powered wheelchair in case it is lost or stolen, or your parking has blocked someone else.
- Before you drive off, make sure you have locked in place any removable parts (such as the seat, armrests and footplates).



Driving tips

- Keep your feet on the platform or footplates at all times.
- Keep both hands on the scooter handgrips to give you more control.
- Manufacturers recommend approaching kerbs, ramps and rail tracks at a 90° angle (not diagonally). This lessens the chance of tipping or getting a wheel stuck in a gap.
- Always try to avoid water, potholes, dips, rough surfaces and hills. All these things increase the chances of tipping. If you cannot avoid them, slow down. Going downhill puts more strain on brakes and going uphill uses more battery power.
- Change your body position on hills. Lean forward slightly as you go uphill and be as upright as possible when you go downhill. Go down in a straight line. You are more likely to tip if you zigzag or cut across a hill face.
- Avoid turning when on a slope (including kerb ramps), to reduce the likelihood of tipping.
- Always slow down to turn corners to reduce the chances of tipping, and use the widest turning circle possible.
- Be extra careful around parked cars. Drivers may not see you (especially when they are reversing). Always cross in front of, not behind, a parked car.
- Be careful around unfamiliar temporary ramps. They may not take the weight of you and your scooter or powered wheelchair.
- Try to avoid busy areas and busy times.
- Allow extra time for your trip, as hurrying can cause accidents.
- Slow down in wet weather, especially on slopes. Avoid high kerbs without a ramp or kerb cut.



Road rules and tips for sharing footpaths and roads

In most cases (if your scooter or powered wheelchair has a maximum power output not exceeding 200 watts and you do not travel faster than 10 km/h) scooter and powered wheelchair users are classed as pedestrians. You must know the Australian Road Rules for pedestrians.

- You must not enter areas banning pedestrians.
- You must not move into the path of a driver, or unreasonably obstruct the way of any driver or other pedestrian.
- You must travel on footpaths or nature strips wherever they are available - not on roads.
- Avoid roundabouts but if you have to use them, give way to vehicles.



**NO
PEDESTRIANS
BICYCLES
ANIMALS
BEYOND THIS
POINT**

No scooter or wheelchair
(powered or manual)
should pass this sign



Using footpaths

- You must use a footpath or nature strip if it is safe to do so. On a divided path (half for pedestrians and half for cyclists), you can use either side, but it is advisable to use the pedestrian side.
- Keep to the left of the path if it is safe to do so. Use mirrors frequently and check for the nearness of cars or other pedestrians.
- If you need to change direction, use your mirrors and turn your head to check behind you and to the sides. Using hand signals or indicators can help other people.
- Pedestrians often cannot hear the quieter scooter and powered wheelchair motors. If you are approaching pedestrians, alert them by using your horn or calling out.
- If you are with other scooter or powered wheelchair users, travel in single file, not beside each other.
- Beware of vehicles entering and exiting from roads and driveways.



Crossing the road

- You must cross by the shortest available route and not stay on the road longer than necessary in order to cross safely. Before you cross, make sure you know where the opposite kerb ramp is so that you do not become stuck on the road. If there is no kerb ramp, find a better place to cross.
- Try to make eye contact with oncoming drivers before crossing.
- Try to cross where there are pedestrian lights, traffic lights or school crossings.
- If there is no designated area to cross, choose a straight stretch of road where you can see clearly in all directions.

Crossing train and tram tracks

- Cross at designated pedestrian crossings.
- Cross as near as you can to an angle of 90° to the rails.
- Take extra care, as these crossings can be very dangerous. If possible, cross when others are nearby to assist in an emergency.



Travelling on the road

- Only use the road when there are no safe footpaths or nature strips.
- Do not use the road at all if you do not feel confident or do not trust your judgement.
- Keep as far as possible to the left or right of the roadway, particularly if facing oncoming traffic.
- Do not travel alongside more than one other pedestrian or vehicle travelling on the road in the same direction as you (unless you are overtaking other pedestrians and it is safe to do so).
- Try to make eye contact with oncoming drivers.
- Use your lights, even in the daytime.
- Get back onto a footpath or nature strip as soon as possible.
- Although quieter, country roads are not necessarily safer than metropolitan roads. The edges are often rough or soft and vehicles travel fast, so take extra care.
- Give way to traffic.

Crossing bicycle paths

- If you have to cross over a bicycle path, give way to cyclists before you cross.

Stopping and parking

- Try not to stop on slopes. It can strain the brakes and your scooter or powered wheelchair could roll forwards or backwards.
- Before you get off or on, make sure you have turned off the motor. Otherwise, you could accidentally engage the accelerator and fall.
- Do not park where you may block the way for other pedestrians.
- Do not park where there are moving vehicles. Your scooter or powered wheelchair might be difficult to see.

This is only a summary of some of the road rules. Make sure you are very familiar with all the road rules applicable to pedestrians. If your scooter is larger you may need to know other traffic rules too.

Find ROAD RULES 2009 at www.thelaw.tas.gov.au or contact the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources – Transport: Registration and Licensing **1300 851 225**.

See s. 235 Crossing a level crossing for the application of road rules to railway lines and tram tracks at level crossings.

If travelling interstate, be aware that some rules are different. Check the road rules for that State.

Report any hazards or access problems to your local council.



If you break down

- The Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT) provides a roadside service in case your scooter or powered wheelchair needs emergency repair.
- This service is for both members and non-members of RACT.
- There are restrictions as to what repairs RACT can and cannot do.
- The service only includes roadsides in the metropolitan areas of cities and major regional towns.
- The service does not include assistance at your home.
- RACT staff cannot assist in transferring you out of the powered wheelchair or scooter. You would need to arrange carer assistance.

Contact RACT
13 11 11
for roadside assistance.

Put this number in your mobile phone.

Contact your closest RACT branch for an information sheet so you know what is and is not covered.

Charging batteries when out and about

Although you should have a regular routine for charging your scooter or powered wheelchair at home, you may sometimes need to recharge whilst out and about. Carry what you need for recharging (either a charger box or a power cord).

Launceston City Council has publicly available recharge points marked on its central city map. Some of the other councils are also working towards providing places for recharging batteries.

Contact your local council to find out where you may be able to recharge your scooter or powered wheelchair.

ILC Tas at 46 Canning Street Launceston
has a recharge point.



Maintenance

- It is very important to maintain your scooter or powered wheelchair as you would maintain a car or bicycle. A poorly maintained scooter or powered wheelchair may not be safe.
- Store your scooter or powered wheelchair in a dry place.
- Ensure that you have a spare tube for a punctured tyre and spare globes for lights.



ILC Tas **1300 885 886** may be able to help you to find a repairer who deals with your brand of scooter or powered wheelchair.

Daily tasks

- Recharge the batteries each night when the scooter or powered wheelchair has been in use. You should charge the batteries near an open window and not in a room where anyone is sleeping as this protects people from any fumes. You should also keep the scooter and charger away from sources of ignition such as flames or sparks.

Weekly tasks

- Check the tyre pressures and look for any signs of tyre wear. The recommended pressure is usually printed on the tyres. Your local service station may help you with this.
- Check that the horn, lights, beeper and indicators are working.
- If your scooter or wheelchair has not been in use very much, you should still charge the batteries once a week.
- Most batteries are dry cell and, like car batteries, do not require water. If your batteries are wet cell (acid), you should check the manual for advice.
- Wipe out the battery housing.

Annual tasks

- Organise a service (more often if recommended in the manual or if you are a frequent user). Always ask the supplier what should be done and who should work on your brand of scooter or powered wheelchair.



Travelling by private vehicle

Securing you and your powered wheelchair or scooter

- Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 3696-19:2009 recommends that you get out of your powered wheelchair or scooter and sit in a standard vehicle seat. This is a much safer way to travel. It is especially recommended for scooters because of their design. If you cannot get out of your powered wheelchair to travel, it should at least comply with this Standard and you should use a wheelchair headrest.
- If changes to your powered wheelchair seat have been made to give you more support, you should wear a belt, harness or other device to secure you to the wheelchair. These postural supports should be checked as suitable for transport use by a suitably qualified engineer, or an occupational therapist with appropriate expertise. However they must not provide any restraint in the event of an accident and you must also be secured by the seat belt provided in the vehicle.
- The wheelchair needs to be secured to the vehicle with approved tie down straps and you need to wear the seat belt provided in the vehicle.

Securing you to the vehicle if you have to travel in the powered wheelchair

- Unless your seat belt is specifically marked as suitable for transport use, the seat belt that comes with the wheelchair does not provide adequate restraint. You need a separate belt system attached to the vehicle, or to anchor points, independent of the wheelchair. Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS 3696.19:2009 recommends that you have a lap sash belt. Ensure that the lap section of the belt is low over your pelvis (not across armrests) and is secured behind and below the seat.

Get advice from an occupational therapist.

Restraints should be fitted by a trained technician.

ILC Tas **1300 885 886** may be able to advise you.



vehicle wheelchair lifter

vehicle tie down points

Securing a powered wheelchair or scooter to a vehicle

- The powered wheelchair or scooter should be secured to the vehicle by at least four tie down straps, attached to the designated tie down points on the powered wheelchair or scooter. If there are no attachment points, use a point close to where the backrest and seat frames connect at the rear. For the front, use points around the main frame, as close as possible to the tops of the castors.
- Even a powered wheelchair or scooter with no one in it, should be restrained with tie downs (or be behind a cargo barrier so that it is isolated from passengers).
- Do not tie wheelchair or occupant straps around wheels, armrests or footplates. It is essential that you and your powered wheelchair or scooter travel safely.
- Powered mobility devices are heavy.
- An unoccupied scooter or powered wheelchair may too heavy to be lifted. Use ramps so that it can be pushed into a stationwagon or van.
- Install a hoist to lift an unoccupied scooter or wheelchair into a sedan boot, stationwagon, hatchback or van. Someone may need to dismantle the device beforehand.
- If you need to dismantle a scooter or powered wheelchair, and manually lift the components into a car boot, you need to be physically fit to do this. The weight of individual pieces could be 20 kg or more. Putting the device back together in a public car park can also be difficult.

ILC Tas **1300 885 886** has information about equipment for carrying a scooter or powered wheelchair in a vehicle. Contact them to discuss your individual situation.



Travelling by taxi

- A number of companies have 'wheelchair accessible taxis' (taxis that can carry scooters and powered wheelchairs). Some of these taxis have electric hoists that lift the scooter or powered wheelchair into a rear entrance. Some use ramps instead.
- You should transfer out of the scooter into a vehicle seat. If you have to travel in your powered wheelchair, the taxi driver should tie down the wheelchair at its front and rear, and you should be fitted with your own occupant restraint which is secured to the vehicle.
- Be aware that some of the largest scooters or powered wheelchairs on the market may not fit onto the hoist.
- Members of the Transport Access Scheme in Tasmania, who are wheelchair reliant, are entitled to a 60% fare reduction when travelling in a wheelchair accessible taxi. Applicants who are wheelchair reliant are not required to submit copies of pensioner concession or health care cards when applying for taxi concessions.

Contact taxi companies in your area for further details.

Some people may be eligible for substantial taxi concession fares.

Transport Access Scheme Application forms are available from ILC Tas or Service Tasmania.

Wheelchair accessible taxis need to comply with guidelines in the *'Taxi and Luxury Hire Car Industries Act 2008 – Schedule 1'*. This includes details about mandatory Australian Standards.



Travelling by bus

Metro Tasmania is the main bus service in Tasmania

- A scooter or powered wheelchair cannot travel on all buses. You need the 'accessible' buses – they have very low floors, wider doors and ramps that the driver operates.
- Three-wheel scooters cannot travel on a Metro bus for stability reasons.
- Four-wheel scooters can travel on Metro buses if they do not weigh more than 300 kg (passenger weight included) and are not too big.



- There are two designated spots at the front of the bus for users of scooters, powered wheelchairs, prams and strollers. If these two spots are occupied, you cannot travel on that bus.
- You must be able to drive your scooter or powered wheelchair into a designated space. The scooter or powered wheelchair must have a maximum width of 750 mm and maximum length of 1300 mm. Metro staff are not authorised to assist.
- Park your powered wheelchair or scooter in the designated area facing towards the rear of the bus with safety features, including manual brakes if you have them, applied.
- Enter and leave the bus via the front door only.
- Always ring and confirm that an accessible bus is heading to your stop, before starting your trip.

Contact Metro Tasmania for more information and timetables for accessible bus services **13 22 01** or TTY **03 6233 4241**

Other bus companies may have different policies and requirements. Contact them to enquire.



Travelling by plane

A number of different airline companies operate flights in and out of Tasmania. Their policies regarding travel with scooters and powered wheelchairs vary. Check with each individual company for specific information.

The following information gives examples of the policies and guidelines you may need to comply with if you travel with your scooter or powered wheelchair:

- You cannot take your scooter or powered wheelchair in the cabin of the plane.
- You need to ensure that the company knows you will be travelling with your scooter or powered wheelchair when you make a booking. Do not wait until you check in to advise them.
- You will need to advise the company about the powered wheelchair or scooter dimensions (width, length, height and weight) when taken apart.
- You may have to check in at the departure gate earlier than other people.
- Whether you can travel with your scooter or powered wheelchair on a certain flight may depend on how many other people with motorised mobility devices are already booked on the flight.
- The rules can vary for different sized planes.
- There may be restrictions as to which seats you can use.
- If you want to travel with more than one mobility aid, you may have to pay an excess baggage fee.
- You may not have access to a 'transit wheelchair' once you are onboard.
- You may not be able to get assistance to use the toilet.
- Depending on your needs, a carer may need to travel with you.

Luggage can go astray or get damaged. Think about hiring a scooter or powered wheelchair at your destination, if you can get something suitable. Taking a manual wheelchair with you for back-up is another option.

Contact individual airline companies for specific information before you make any bookings.

References

Accessible Public Transport National Advisory Committee

Safer Travel for Passengers using Mobility Aids on Public Transport. Brochure available from Service Tasmania

Attorney-General's Department, Canberra
- *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002*

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) (2010) *Help cut mobility scooter accidents*

Lake Macquarie City Council (2004) Scooter Survival Guide

Council on The Ageing ACT (COTA) and Able Access (2002) *Scooter Safe – A Scooter Driver's Guide*

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) (2011) *Tasmanian Road Rules Booklet*

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) (2003)
Keeping you SAFE in the rider's seat

Independent Living Centre SA (2009) Disability SA Information Sheet *Scooters: safe use within the community*

National Road Transport Commission (2012)
Australian Road Rules

Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (2000) *Motorised Wheelchairs (Information for Motorised Wheelchair Safety)*

Standards Australia, Australian Standard AS 3695:1992 *Wheelchairs–Product requirements*

Standards Australia, Australian/NZ Standard AS/NZS 3696-19:2009 *Wheeled mobility devices for use as seats in motor vehicles*

Tasmanian Government Legislation – *ROAD RULES 2009*

VicRoads (2010) *A guide for choosing and using motorised mobility devices: mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs*

Useful contacts

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources - Transport

www.transport.tas.gov.au

Tel 1300 851 225

For registration and licensing enquiries

Independent Living Centre Tasmania,
46 Canning Street Launceston

www.ilctas.asn.au

Tel 1300 885 886

Statewide service, including mobile outreach, for advice and information about assistive technology

Metro Tasmania

www.metrotas.com.au

Tel 13 22 01

For information about wheelchair accessible bus services

Motor Accidents Insurance Board (MAIB)

www.maib.tas.gov.au

Tel 1800 006 224

For third party insurance information

National Transport Commission

www.ntc.gov.au

Tel 03 9236 5000

For Australian Road Rules 'model laws'

Occupational therapists or physiotherapists may be available to assist you. Contact your local general hospital or community health centre to make enquiries.

Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania (RACT)

www.ract.tas.au

Tel 13 11 11

For roadside assistance

Standards Australia

www.saiglobal.com.au

Tel 1800 035 822

To purchase copies of Australian Standards

Tasmanian Legislation Online

www.thelaw.tas.gov.au

For road rules in Tasmania



Motorised Mobility Devices Scooters and Powered Wheelchairs



Choosing and using motorised mobility devices