

**Sussex Safer Roads**

**P A R T N E R S H I P**



# Safer for Mobility Scooters

For information on road safety please visit: [www.SussexSaferRoads.gov.uk](http://www.SussexSaferRoads.gov.uk)

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# Introduction

Mobility scooters may seem a very simple and easy to use form of transport.

Many organisations supply them without any advice to the user on the assumption that riding them is fairly straightforward. However, mobility scooters can cause serious damage and injury to the user and to other people.

This guide is aimed at protecting the safety of those who use them, other road users and pedestrians.

If you are using a mobility scooter for the first time, or if it's a while since you have driven on the road, we strongly advise you to go on a training course.

You are responsible for your own and other people's safety.

## Insurance

Although you don't have to be insured by law, you really should have at least third-party cover or public liability insurance. It is also a good idea to be covered for fire, theft, and damage. Some policies also include breakdown recovery.

You can often add scooters to your home contents policy.



# Legal Definitions

There are three types of 'invalid carriage' defined in 'The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988'.

- **Class 1** – manual wheelchairs. You use your arms to move them, or you are pushed.
- **Class 2** – powered wheelchairs and scooters. These are only suit able for riding on pavements or footpaths, and have a top speed of 4 m.p.h./6 km/h.
- **Class 3** – powered wheelchairs and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters. These are suitable for riding on roads, and have a top speed of 8 m.p.h./12 kmh and must not weigh more than 150 kilograms without driver and load. These also have a switch to limit the top speed to 4 m.p.h./6 kmh, the maximum permitted, on pavements or footpaths.

A Class 3 vehicle is not legally defined as a motor vehicle and the user does not have to have a driving licence or take a driving test. However, a Class 3 vehicle can only be used by a disabled person aged 14-or-over, or by an able-bodied person who is demonstrating one before selling it, training a disabled user, or taking a vehicle to or from a place for maintenance or repair.

## Some Tips on Measuring for a Scooter or Chair

- **Seat Depth:** Measure from the base of the spine to the inside of the knee, minus at least two inches, you can allow for more leg over hang if required.
- **Back Height:** Measured from the seat base to the top of the chair back. On powered chairs extra support is needed because of initial acceleration effects.
- **Footrest Support Angle:** This determines how far your toes stick out. A smaller angle means you can turn in a smaller space. Dependant on knee flexibility.
- **Seat Width:** The widest point of the body between knee and hip, with an added inch to allow for movement. Take into consideration clothing such as heavy coats.
- **Front of Seat to the Ground:** Measure your leg from behind your knee to the sole of your foot then take away the thickness of the compressed seat cushion and add a minimum of two inches to allow the footrest to clear.



## Registration

Class 1 and Class 2 invalid carriages do not have to be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), but you must register a Class 3 vehicle with them.

There is a disabled taxation class and you must display the free disabled tax disc you obtain from them. There is no fee and the vehicle does not need registration plates, however you must renew your tax disc every year.

To register and licence a Class 3 vehicle you should fill in form V55/4 (for new vehicles) or V55/5 (for used vehicles) and take or send it to your nearest DVLA local office.

**The local DVLA office for Sussex is at:**

4th Floor, Mocatta House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton BN1 4UE

Guidance on filling in the forms is given in the DVLA's leaflets INF210 and INF211 at [www.direct.gov/motoring](http://www.direct.gov/motoring) or in the V100 information leaflet available from post offices that issue tax discs. Alternatively you can telephone: 0870 243 0444.

# Some Thoughts About Manual Chairs

There are advantages to manual chairs over power chairs and most people probably prefer them, but be honest with yourself when it comes to the choice because manual chairs take strength and energy. Some points to consider:

- manual chairs are lighter
- obviously have unlimited range
- are cheaper with lower maintenance costs
- less bulky and noisy
- are easier to manoeuvre
- travel more easily in terms of storage and transport i.e. can often be broken down into component parts
- These are known as Class 1 Carriages

## Basic advice

Get a scooter appropriate to your needs and always get professional advice before buying one. This could mean getting an assessment and advice from your local occupational therapist or a reputable dealer. Make sure you know what all the switches and levers on your scooter are for and that you can control it properly before you go out on it. Also be careful to keep the scooter properly maintained and have it thoroughly checked at the intervals set out in the manufacturer's handbook.

Keep the battery fully charged and get to know how far your scooter can go before it needs recharging. Remember the distance you can travel will depend on the condition of the battery, the weight you have on the scooter and the kind of route you follow. Cold weather, travelling on rough surfaces and travelling up hills uses more power, reducing the distance you can go.

## Types of Class 2 Scooters


- **Microscooters.** These are small and compact and can fit into a car boot. They can be used indoors but outdoors, only on even surfaces. They have a short range and, because of their small wheelbase, are less stable.
- **Indoor/outdoor scooters;** These can have three or four wheels, for use on even surfaces, they can have a limited kerb climbing facility, have a short or medium range and can be collapsed or dismantled for transporting
- **Outdoor scooters** have three or four wheels and can be used outdoors on uneven ground. They can climb kerbs of 10cms or more, have a medium or long range and can be dismantled for transporting.
- **Buggies** are car-shaped with four wheels, not for use indoors, can travel on rough ground, climb kerbs and have a medium or long range but cannot be dismantled.
- These may be used on pavements and footpaths, but not on the roads

## Types of Class 3 Scooters

These tend to be larger than Class 2 vehicles and can be used on roads where they can travel up to 8 m.p.h. When riding you must obey the Highway Code at all times – this includes eyesight requirements and not driving under the influence of drink or drugs. You cannot take these on motorways, or drive in cycle tracks or bus lanes. Although you can legally take them on dual carriageways if you have a flashing amber light, this is not recommended.

### Class 3 vehicles can be divided into:

- **Scooters** which have three or four wheels, are not for use indoors, can be used on uneven ground, have tiller steering and can climb kerbs and cover long distances.
- **Buggies** which are car-shaped four-wheeled vehicles, can climb kerbs, cover long distances and cannot be dismantled so therefore need ramps or lifts to get them into another vehicle or car trailer. Class 3 vehicles also usually have a speed selector with two settings one for road use and the other for pavements. Lights, indicators, a horn, rear-view mirror and rear reflectors are required by law and also an optional flashing beacon which it is advisable to use when driving on the road to warn other road users, and must be used when driving on a dual carriageway.



Before using a Class 3 Mobility Scooter, it is best to do a training course, particularly if you are not used to driving on roads.

## Always plan your journeys

The most direct or the shortest route will not always be the best to take on a scooter. Steep hills, high kerbs or other obstructions may make it impossible in some places.

You may take a Class 1 wheelchair on some buses and trains but always check that this service is available for both your outward and return journeys before you set off.



## Out and about

- Do not use your scooter if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Check the patient information on any medication your doctor prescribes or which you buy over the counter. If the information says the medication could cause drowsiness, don't use the scooter.
- Wear fluorescent materials or have fluorescent markings on your scooter and put on your lights to help other road users see you.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothes. Make sure any belts or scarves are tucked away so they can't catch in the wheels.
- Under no circumstances carry anyone else with you on the scooter.
- Do not carry or lead a pet as even trained and well-behaved animals can be unpredictable and cause crashes.
- Don't overload your scooter with shopping or other goods as this could make the vehicle unstable and do not have anything hanging from the handlebars as this could affect stability.
- Mobile phones are a distraction, pull over and stop before using one.

## On the move

- Be careful going up and down kerbs. Always approach at right angles and do not go up or down ones that are higher than recommended for the type and size of your wheels (look in the manufacturer's handbook for guidance).
- Wherever possible, cross roads where there is a dropped kerb.
- Take great care on corners. Your scooter could topple over if you go round too fast, especially if the ground is sloping.
- Be particularly careful approaching corners or junctions on loose gravel, on a slippery surface or downhill.
- Allow plenty of time to slow down as there can be a delay in braking on some scooters.
- Always be aware of pedestrians and other road users. Pedestrians cannot always see or hear you approaching them, especially from behind. Always look carefully before you move off or change direction.
- If you are riding a Class 3 vehicle, you must switch over to the 4 mph (6 kmh) setting when you are using it on a pavement or footpath.

- The top speed allowed on pavements or footpaths is 4 mph (6 kph), but even this is too fast where there are pedestrians about.
- Pedestrians always have right of way. If you are riding your scooter on a pavement or footpath, give way to them.
- In a crowded area, such as a shopping precinct or store, be extra vigilant so as not to run into anyone or cause any damage with your scooter.
- To drive on the road you need a vehicle that can travel at up to 8 mph (12 kph). It must also have headlights, rear lights, flashing indicators and a horn.
- It is wise to avoid using busy roads.
- Obey traffic lights and all other road signals and instructions, including stop signs, give-way signs and signs for one-way streets.
- At night, you must have your headlights and rear lights on.
- When you are passing parked cars, look out for doors opening and be aware that because of your height off the ground, car drivers cannot always see you in their rear view mirrors if pulling out of a parked position.

- On the road other vehicles will be moving much faster than you are and may reach you before you expect them to. Be sure that you have plenty of time for your actions and to react.
- When turning right, it may be safer to turn on to the pavement and use a pedestrian crossing to cross the road. If there is no pavement, it may be safer to stop on the left and wait for a safe gap in the traffic.
- Do not park your scooter where it could cause an obstruction making it difficult for others to use the pavement or footpath.

A mobility scooter will give you more independence and can undoubtedly come to play a part in your daily life.

Please check with your doctor to make sure that you are fit to use one and if you have a disability which might restrict your moments there is probably a simple adaptation that can help.



## Some useful addresses

### **British Healthcare Trades Association**

New Loom House Suite 40.6, 101 Back Church Lane, London E1 1LU  
Telephone: 020 7702 2141 Web Site: [www.bhta.net](http://www.bhta.net)

### **DfT Mobility Unit**

Zone 4125, 1st Floor Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street,  
London SW1P 4DR  
Telephone: 020 7944 6100

### **ASSIST UK**

Redbank House, 4 St Chads Street, Manchester M8 8QA  
Telephone: 0870 770 5813 Web Site: [www.assist-uk.org](http://www.assist-uk.org)

### **Motability**

Goodman House, Station Approach, Harlow, Essex CM20 2ET  
Telephone: 0845 456 4566 Web Site: [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

### **National Federation of Shopmobility**

The Hawkins Suite, Enham Place, Enham Alamein, Andover SP11 6JS  
Telephone: 0845 644 2446 Web Site: [www.shopmobilityuk.org.uk](http://www.shopmobilityuk.org.uk)

### **Daily Living Centre**

Montague House, Montague Place, Kempdown, BN2 1JE.

Telephone: 01273 296132/3 Textphone: 01273 725421

Fax: 01273 295747 E-mail: [dlc@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:dlc@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Web Site: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/dailylivingcentre](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/dailylivingcentre)

### **East Sussex Disability Association**

1 Faraday Close, Hampden Park, EASTBOURNE,

East Sussex BN22 9BH

Telephone: 01323 514 515 Textphone: 01323 514 502

Fax: 01323 514 501 E-mail: [info@esda.org.uk](mailto:info@esda.org.uk) or [dlc@esda.org.uk](mailto:dlc@esda.org.uk)

Web Site: [www.esda.org.uk](http://www.esda.org.uk)

### **Brighton Shopmobility**

Grenville Street, Brighton BN1 2RF

E-mail: [bhfederation@bhfederation.org.uk](mailto:bhfederation@bhfederation.org.uk)

Web Site: [www.bhfederation.org.uk](http://www.bhfederation.org.uk)

Telephone: 01273 323 239

Brighton Shopmobility always provide training to customers and have insurance forms in place.

**Disabled Living Foundation,**

380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU

Telephone: 0845 130 9177 Textphone: 020 7432 8009,

E-mail [helpline@dlf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dlf.org.uk)

Opening times: Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm

**Demonstration Centre**

To make an appointment Telephone: 0845 130 9177

Textphone: 020 7432 8009 E-mail [centre@dlf.org.uk](mailto:centre@dlf.org.uk)

Opening times: Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm

Switchboard: 020 7289 6111 Opening times: 9am - 5pm, Mon-Fri

General E-mail: [info@dlf.org.uk](mailto:info@dlf.org.uk)

**Brighton & Hove Disability Advice Centre**

6 Hove Manor, Hove Street BN3 2DF

Opening times: Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm

Telephone: 01273 203 016

**St John Ambulance Loan Service**

Little Place Lane

SEAFORD

## **Independent Living Centre**

Southlands Hospital, Shoreham By Sea, West Sussex BN43  
6TQ

Telephone: 01273 455 622

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

3 More London, Riverside, Tooley Street, London, SE1 2RG  
Telephone 020 3117 0235

E-mail: [info@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:info@equalityhumanrights.com)

## Some useful web links

<http://www.help-my-mobility.co.uk/articles/driving-tips.htm>

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HealthAndSupport/Equipment/DG\\_179971](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HealthAndSupport/Equipment/DG_179971)

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P A R T N E R S H I P

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