

# The Highway Code

## A mobility scooter safety guide



## Mobility scooter safety and The Highway Code

Norfolk Constabulary has produced **Mobility scooter safety and the Highway Code** in partnership with Halfords, to help you stay safe and secure on your mobility scooter.

The aim of this guide is to assist you in improving your confidence to use a mobility scooter in a safe and responsible manner to maintain your independence and freedom. This guide will help to protect the safety of people who use mobility scooters, other road users and pedestrians.

If you use a mobility scooter you must follow The Highway Code whether you ride on pavements, pedestrian areas or the road.

Many of the rules in The Highway Code are legal requirements and if you disobey these rules you are committing a criminal offence.



The information and advice contained in this guide should be read in conjunction with The Highway Code. **Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters (36-46)**, which are called Invalid Carriages in law are included within this guide.

Please be aware that a mobility scooter could cause considerable damage to the user or to others if not driven correctly and safely.

## A GUIDE TO USING YOUR MOBILITY SCOOTER

If you are using a mobility scooter for the first time, or it has been a while since you have driven on a road, we strongly advise you to go on a safety awareness course.

For details of courses taking place near you please seek advice through your local Social Services or Occupational Health Service or contact one of the following:

- Disabled living centre
- Mobility centre
- Neighbourhood policing team
- Local authority road safety unit

Norfolk Constabulary has created a number of useful guides and features online at [www.safescoot.co.uk](http://www.safescoot.co.uk).

**safeScoop** - *Be safe and secure on your mobility scooter* is available to watch online.

The film, presented by Sheila Reid star of the TV series *Benidorm*, provides tips and techniques for staying safe and secure on your scooter and a guide to best practice and etiquette.





## LEGAL DEFINITIONS

Three types of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters (called invalid carriages in law) are defined in **The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988**

### **Class 1 invalid carriage – manual wheelchairs**

Means an invalid carriage which is not mechanically propelled

### **Class 2 invalid carriage – powered wheelchairs and scooters**

Means a mechanically propelled invalid carriage, which is so constructed or adapted as to be incapable of exceeding a speed of 4 mph on the level under its own power.

These are only suitable for riding on footpaths and roads and have a top speed of 4 mph (6 km/h).

The unladen weight of a **Class 1** or **Class 2** invalid carriage must not exceed 250lb (113.4 kg).

## **Class 3 invalid carriage - Powered wheelchairs and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters**

Means a mechanically propelled invalid carriage which is so constructed or adapted as to be capable of exceeding a speed of 4 mph (6 km/h) but incapable of exceeding a speed of 8 mph on the level under its own power.

These are suitable for riding on roads and have a top speed of 8 mph (12 km/h). The unladen weight of a **Class 3** invalid carriage must not exceed 330 lb (150 kg). These also have a switch to limit the top speed to 4 mph (6 km/h) for use on pavements or footpaths.

A **Class 3** vehicle is not legally defined as a motor vehicle and the user does not need to have a driving licence or take a driving test. 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 a vehicle, training a disabled user, or taking a vehicle to or from a place for maintenance or repair.

### **The Highway Code**

#### **36**

There is one class of manual wheelchair (called a 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.

#### **37**

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.

## IMPORTANT BASIC ADVICE

Make sure that you get a scooter that is appropriate for your needs. Get professional advice before buying a mobility scooter. This could mean getting an assessment and advice from your local occupational therapist or a reputable dealer, who may measure you for specific requirements to meet your needs.



safe  
cool

Make sure that 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.

Make sure that the scooter is properly maintained. Have it thoroughly checked (the manufacturer's handbook will tell you how often to do this).

Keep the battery fully charged and get to know how far your scooter can go before it will need recharging. If you are storing the vehicle for long periods without use then make sure the battery is recharged at least once a month.

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 will use more power and reduce the distance you can travel.



## PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

The most direct or the shortest route will not always be the best route to take. Steep hills, high kerbs or other obstructions may make it impossible to tackle certain routes.

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.

Be aware of the factors which may require you to change your route. Rubbish collection days, local markets and school opening and closing times may all have a bearing on the route you may need to travel. Parked vehicles may obstruct narrow roads and footpaths at peak times.

When out and about, be aware:

- **Children** – they may well run in front of you without warning.
- **Elderly people** – they may be unable to move quickly to let you pass. Give way to them.

**Disabled people on foot** – they too may be unable to move out of your way. This includes people with impaired hearing or sight who may not even be aware of your presence.



## SAFETY ADVICE

Do not use your scooter if you have been drinking alcohol. Check the patient information on any medication your doctor prescribes or which you buy over the counter. If the label states the medication could cause drowsiness, do not use your scooter.

It is important to see and be seen. If you are using anything to protect you from the weather, make sure that it does not restrict your vision. Wear a fluorescent jacket or put reflective markings on your scooter. Don't forget to put on your lights to help other road users see you.



Do not carry another person (child or adult) with you on the scooter.

Do not carry or walk a pet while operating your scooter. Even trained and well-behaved animals can be unpredictable and may cause accidents.

Do not wear loose fitting clothes, scarves and belts that can get caught in the scooter wheels. Ensure that any clothing or protective garments do not cover lights and reflectors.

Do not overload your scooter with shopping or other goods or hang anything from the handlebars as this could make it unstable and more difficult to control.

Do carry things in appropriate carriers such as baskets. Do not place shopping where you place your feet, things can easily fall off when cornering.

Ensure that items like shopping bags and handbags are secure and closed for security. Keep them where you can see them.

# ON THE MOVE

Be careful when going up and down kerbs. Always approach at right angles and do not go up or down kerbs 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 extra care when you cannot see clearly ahead, for example when you are approaching a corner, or where there is a wall or hedge restricting your view.

Take great care when going round corners. Your scooter could topple over if you go round too quickly especially if the ground is sloping. Be very careful when you are approaching corners or junctions on loose gravel, on a slippery surface or travelling downhill.

Slow down in plenty of time. There may be a delay in braking on some scooters.

Always be aware of pedestrians and other road users. Pedestrians may not see or hear you approaching them, especially from behind. Look carefully before you move off or change direction.

More information is available online at [www.safescoot.co.uk](http://www.safescoot.co.uk).

The screenshot shows the Norfolk Constabulary website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Safer Neighbourhoods, Safety Advice (highlighted), News & Events, Join Us, About Us, and Contact Us. Below the navigation bar is a menu with various safety topics. The main content area features a large image of a police officer assisting an elderly woman with a mobility scooter. To the right of the image is a text box titled 'Safe Scoot' with a brief description and a 'Read more' link. Below the image are three smaller sections: 'Safe Scoot film', 'Top tips for staying safe', and 'Partnering up with Halford's', each with a date of 29 June 2010.

Call us: 0845 456 4567 In an emergency always dial 999 A-Z Site Map FAQs Help Glossary Accessibility: A A Listen to this page

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Home Safer Neighbourhoods **Safety Advice** News & Events Join Us About Us Contact Us

You are here: [Home Page](#) > [Safety Advice](#) > [Safe Scoot](#)

**Menu**

- Safety Advice
- Report a crime
- Road safety
- Personal safety
- Personal security
- Home security
- Student safety
- Wildlife protection
- Preventing terrorism
- Broads Beat

**Safe Scoot**

A mobility scooter can offer many people a lifeline to the outside world, giving them freedom and independence.

Norfolk Constabulary, in partnership with Halford's, is launching Safe Scoot to help raise awareness about mobility scooter safety.

[Read more](#)

**Safe Scoot film**  
29 June 2010

**Top tips for staying safe**  
29 June 2010

**Partnering up with Halford's**  
29 June 2010

# The Highway Code

## On pavements

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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.

**39**

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 pavement 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]**

**40**

When moving off the pavement onto the road, you should take special care. Before moving off, always look round 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.

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## ON PAVEMENTS

**Class 2** scooters are designed to be driven on the pavements or pedestrian area, and should only be used for crossing roads.

If you are riding a **Class 3** vehicle, you must ensure that you switch to the 4mph (6 km/h) on pavements or in pedestrian areas.

**Pedestrians have right of way!** If you are riding on a pavement or pedestrian area give way. The top speed allowed is 4mph and even this may be too fast where there are pedestrians.

In a crowded area, such as a shopping precinct or shop, it is your responsibility to make sure that you do not run into anyone or cause any damage with your scooter. Please be aware as to what and who is around you.



Norfolk Constabulary's mobility scooter safety awareness course was developed to improve users' skills to operate their scooter in a safe and appropriate manner.

## ON THE ROAD

Remember that you are not driving a car but a very small and slow vehicle, which can make you very vulnerable. It is wise to avoid using busy roads.

Although you may use dual carriageways with a maximum speed of 50mph, it is strongly recommended that you avoid these for the safety of you and others and seek an alternative route. If this is unavoidable you can only travel on these roads providing you display an additional amber-flashing beacon that is visible from the front and rear of your scooter.

**You must not use your scooter on motorways.**

**You are not allowed to use bus lanes or cycle lanes.**

**You must give way to pedestrians on crossings.**

You must obey traffic lights and all other road signals and instructions, including stop signs, give way signs and signs for one-way streets.

Always indicate before pulling out or turning left or right. When you are passing parked vehicles be aware that someone may open a door as you approach, as they may not be aware of your presence.

Remember that other vehicles are almost certainly moving much faster than you are and may reach you before you expect them to. Be sure that you have plenty of time to carry out your actions.

Use your mirrors but be aware they may give a false impression of distance. Vehicles may well approach you quicker than you think.

Always give plenty of notice of your intention to carry out a manoeuvre by indicating well in advance. Remember your scooter is slow and vulnerable.

Use your hazard lights if you cannot move for any reason, or if you are in a difficult or dangerous situation. Do not drive with them on unnecessarily.

Do not park your scooter where it would cause an obstruction and make it difficult for others to use the pavement or footpath, or where it might create an obstacle for those members of the public who are visually impaired.

When on the road, you must follow the same rules as other traffic – The Highway Code.

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### On the road

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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).

#### 42

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]**

#### 43

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 may 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]**

#### 44

Take extra care at road junctions. When going straight ahead, check to make sure there are no 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

- 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.

#### 45

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.

#### 46

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), & RVLR reg 17(1) & 26]

Remember our guide is designed to provide guidance to good practice and to offer you advice to assist you in using your scooter safely.

- **Plan your journey**
- **Drive carefully**
- **Be aware of your surroundings**
- **Enjoy the freedom and independence that scooters can offer.**

## REGISTRATION

**Class 1** and **Class 2** invalid carriages do not have to be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). You must register a **Class 3** vehicle with the DVLA. There is no fee to pay and the vehicle does not need registration plates. You must renew your tax disc each year.

To register and license a **Class 3** vehicle you should fill in a form **V55/4** (for new vehicles) or **V55/5** (for used vehicles) and take or send it to your nearest DVLA local office, not the DVLA headquarters in Swansea.

Guidance on filling in the forms is given in the DVLA's leaflets **INF210** and **INF211**. You can find the address of your local DVLA office:

- At [www.direct.gov/motoring](http://www.direct.gov/motoring);
- In the **V100** information leaflet available from post offices that issue tax discs; or
- By phoning **0870 243 0444**.



## INSURANCE

Although you do not have to be insured by law, we strongly recommend that you have at least third-party cover. It is also a good idea to be covered for fire, theft and damage.



*“Helping people to get the most out of their mobility scooter by knowing how to ride safely and by minimising risk to other road users are key benefits from a new training package designed by Norfolk Constabulary.”*

*The job of the police is to protect people from harm, providing the services that people want. Here in Norfolk we were among the first to recognise that whilst there is plenty of assistance available for drivers and cyclists, very little guidance is available for the increasing numbers of mobility scooter users who depend on their machines to access the outside world.*

**Simon Bailey, Assistant Chief Constable  
Norfolk Constabulary**



**NORFOLK**  
CONSTABULARY  
*Our Priority is You*