

# Scooter Safe



## A Scooter Driver's Guide



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This booklet is a component of The Scooter Safe Training Resource funded by the NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, conducted jointly by the Council on the Ageing ACT (COTA) and Able Access. The objective of the Resource is to improve the safety of scooter users, by providing a tested training programme which can be implemented through community health services and health professionals.

The Resource has been written by Chris Marcar, Occupational Therapist of Able Access with illustrations by Jennifer McElwee.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

RULES OF THE ROAD	1
HOW TO TRAVEL SAFELY	2
SAFE DRIVING TIPS	4
TRANSPORTING SCOOTERS	9
SCOOTER BREAKDOWN	10
MAINTENANCE	11
REFERENCES	12
BIBLIOGRAPHY	12
SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST	14



# RULES OF THE ROAD

## Australian Road Rules

Under the Australian Road Rules, when you are driving a scooter, you are classified as a pedestrian and must follow the same rules as pedestrians. Although you are considered a pedestrian, knowing what to expect of traffic will make your travel safer. It may be useful to Study *The Road Users Handbook* which is available from any Motor Registry.

Where a footpath is provided you should use it.

It is an offence to use your scooter when your blood alcohol level is above .05.

The maximum speed you can travel is 10 km/hr.

You must not obstruct the path of any driver or another pedestrian.



# HOW TO TRAVEL SAFELY

## Plan Your Journey

Plan your journey carefully. You may be able to find a route that avoids busy intersections and allows you to keep to footpaths. Travel along quieter streets if possible, even if it means a longer journey.

Know where there are kerb ramps or driveways that you can use for safe road crossings.

## Where Can You Go?

You can drive your scooter along footpaths, dual use paths, bicycle paths and in most shopping malls.

You cannot use a road, if a “No Pedestrian Sign” is displayed (usually found on a freeway).

## Prepare Yourself

Assess yourself using the Self-Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1) to make sure you can satisfy all the basic requirements for scooter use.

Check that any new medication will not impair your judgement and affect your driving skills.

Always use a hat and sunscreen. Think about getting a shade cover if you travel long distances.

Make sure that covers such as rain covers do not obstruct your vision or hearing whilst using the scooter.

Make yourself as visible as possible by wearing brightly coloured clothing and something reflective at night.

If possible, carry a mobile phone for emergencies.

## HOW TO TRAVEL SAFELY (cont)

### Good Habits

Use the racks and baskets on your scooter to carry things rather than using your lap.



Always keep your feet on the floor-pad whilst in motion.

Lock the seat assembly before moving.

Check that the rear view mirror hasn't been knocked or moved before moving off.

Always turn the key to the OFF position when stopped or when getting on or off your scooter.

Never make sharp turns at high speed. Slow down when coming to a turn.

Never stop on an incline to rest or dismount. The scooter may roll or tip when you restart.

When you are in a crowded area eg in a shopping mall, travel at the speed others are walking.

# HOW TO TRAVEL SAFELY (cont)

## Know Your Scooter

On some soft gravel or sand, turn your scooter 360° to see the turning circle of your scooter. Knowing the space required for turning will assist you when manoeuvring in tight spaces.

Check your scooter manual for the maximum gradient or incline your scooter can climb. Keep within this rating. (As a guide, longer ramps designed for wheelchairs should be 1:14 and are sometimes 1:12, and kerb ramps (pram ramps) should be 1:8)

Check your scooter manual for the weight of the scooter. Avoid temporary structures such as wooden platforms or ramps unless you are certain they can withstand the combined weight of yourself and your scooter. Taxi hoists have a maximum weight they are able to lift.

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS

### Kerb Ramps



Go straight up or down ramps or kerb ramps (pram crossings), not at an angle.

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS (cont)

### On Foot Paths

Beware of vehicles reversing out of driveways.

When driving up behind a fellow pedestrian, call out or toot the horn to let them know you are there. Some scooters travel very quietly and cannot be heard.



### On Bike Paths

You are allowed to use dedicated cycle paths, however, keep to the left and be aware of the high speed of some cyclists. Listen and use your rear vision mirror.

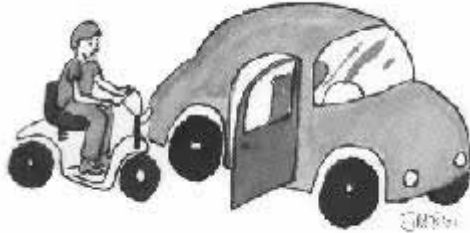
### On the road

When travelling on the road, keep as far to the left or right side of the road as practicable. Travelling on the right edge of the road with traffic coming towards you is safer.

Use caution when riding your scooter on rough edges of roads.

You must not travel alongside more than one other pedestrian on the road unless you are overtaking. (Road Rule)

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS (cont)



When passing parked cars, watch out for doors being opened in your path, or a vehicle moving off without indicating.

Remember that your wheelchair or scooter is not as powerful or conspicuous as other vehicles.

### **Crossing the road**

When crossing the road, you must completely leave the road, including the shoulder of the road (Road Rule). This requires some planning to find driveways or kerb ramps.

Never cross the road without making sure you can get back onto the footpath on the other side of the road.

Try to cross the road at traffic signals, zebra crossings or an intersection with stop or give way signs.

Drivers cannot always see you behind a parked car. Always take extra caution when driving in parking areas and crossing the road. A high safety flag makes you more visible.

Never cross the road where you can't see the oncoming traffic because of a hill or curve in the road.

## SAFE DRIVING TIPS (cont)

### Crossing intersections

You must cross as a pedestrian from footpath to footpath.

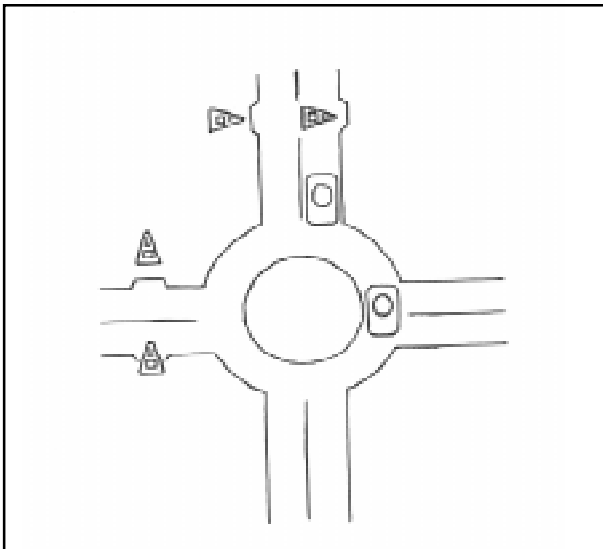
If there are no kerb ramps onto the footpath, cross as other pedestrians would and keep as close to the kerb as possible until you find a kerb ramp or driveway.

### Crossing roundabouts

It is best to avoid roundabouts especially if there are no footpaths or kerb ramps. Advise the Department of Urban Services Hotline if there are inadequate pedestrian facilities at a roundabout

If you must cross a roundabout, cross each road as a pedestrian would.

If there are no kerb ramps, cross the road well away from the roundabout.



## **SAFE DRIVING TIPS (cont)**

### **Using the Scooter Indoors**

In general, you are allowed to go most places a pedestrian can go, however, remember the limitations of the scooter's circulation space.

Avoid congested areas.

Travel slowly, about walking pace, especially in malls and busy areas.

If you are able to walk short distances, it may be easier to leave your scooter outside shops or designated accessible toilets.

### **Parking Your Scooter**

When parking your scooter remember to leave clearance around the scooter for those using wheelchairs, or trying to manoeuvre prams or shopping trolleys. You must not cause an obstruction to other pedestrians.

Remember to switch off and take your key with you.

Remember to park in a sheltered spot if possible.

### **Using Your Scooter at Night**

If you use your scooter at night, lights and reflectors should be installed. The Road Transport Authorities of ACT and NSW recommend:

- 1) A flashing or steady white light(s) that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres from the front,
- 2) A flashing or steady red light(s) that is clearly visible for at least 200 metres from the rear, and
- 3) A red reflector(s) that is clearly visible for at least 50 metres from the rear of the scooter when light is projected onto it by a vehicle's headlight on low beam.

# TRANSPORTING SCOOTERS

Scooters are very heavy and difficult to lift, so transporting scooters needs to be considered especially when selecting the type of scooter. The scooters can be dismantled into several components, however, the battery and motors may still be too heavy for some people to lift.

## *Equipment for lifting*

Equipment is available to assist you to lift the scooter in parts or fully assembled:

Battery operated lifts can be installed in the boot of the car, Trailers are available which include a ramp. The scooter can be driven onto the trailer, then secured with the ramp folding to form a restraint.

By folding down the tiller, some scooters can fit in some cars especially station wagons. A portable ramp into the rear tray of the car can be used to wheel the scooter into the vehicle.

## *Restraints*

It is strongly advised that you transfer off the scooter when travelling in a vehicle. You and the scooter cannot be effectively restrained in the event of an accident.

Restraints that resist a force of 25 times the weight of the scooter, in a forward direction, must be installed to tie down the scooter.

# SCOOTER BREAKDOWN

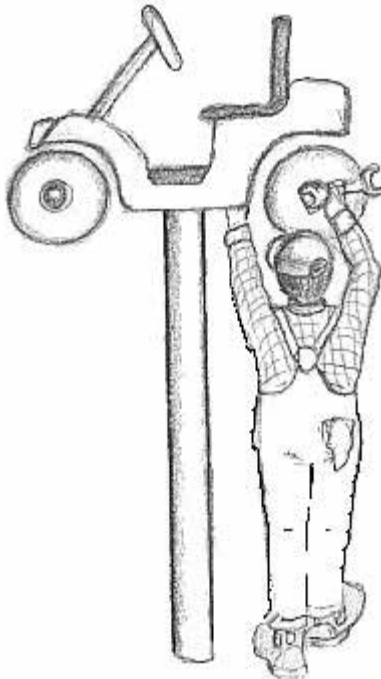
If the scooter breaks down in the home, contact your supplier. Note that if parts of the scooter are still under warranty, you will need approval from the supplier for another agent to repair it. A call out fee may be charged.

## Mobile Phone

Always carry a mobile phone, preferably within easy reach. Have the emergency breakdown phone number registered on your mobile phone for easy calling.

## On the Road Emergency

Contact NRMA Road Service on 131111 for assistance with tyre problems or punctures, however they cannot assist with electronics or flat batteries. This is a free road-side emergency call out service for all scooter users.



# MAINTENANCE

## Importance of routine maintenance

Take particular care when cleaning the scooter. Do not let the scooter controls on the tiller get wet.

Recharge the battery nightly when used. Avoid batteries becoming discharged to below 30% of power.

When recharging place by an open window to avoid any danger of fumes. Do not recharge in the room being used for sleeping.

## Weekly check.

Check tyre pressures regularly. You should refer to your owner's manual for information of recommended tyre pressure. Your local service station may assist you with this. Check for any sign of wear or cracking on the tyre.

Charge your battery at least weekly if your machine is not in regular use.

Check that your horn still works.

Most batteries are dry cell (gel) batteries and are sealed, therefore do not require water and are spill proof. BUT If batteries are wet cell (acid) batteries,

§ Check water level and top up with distilled water if necessary.

§ Clean off white powder build-up on terminals and coat with petroleum jelly

Keep battery housing clean by removing batteries, clean out with hot water and dry thoroughly.

Check hand brake, if fitted, and apply lubricant if necessary.

## **MAINTENANCE (CONT)**

### **Annual Check**

Have your scooter serviced once a year to ensure that it is reliable and in good working order.

### **Repair Agencies**

Contact your supplier.

### **Maintenance Kit**

Suggestions for a maintenance kit include the following:

- Tyre pump, tyre gauge
- Lubricant such as “WD40” or “RP7”
- Screw driver, spanner, pliers
- Cloth for wiping down parts



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# NOTES

## **Self Assessment Checklist**

The following are essential skills required for the safe use of scooters. In the absence of formalised assessments or licensing, it is advisable to check yourself against these skills. If you answer “no” to any questions, check with your Occupational Therapist who may be able to advise you if adaptations or modifications can be made to your scooter to compensate for these skills, or if another mobility option is advised.

### ***Co-Ordination and Strength***

- Can I manipulate the controls eg turn the key, adjust the dials, use the accelerator?
- Can I steer and turn in tight corners?
- Can I turn my head to look to the side or, behind if reversing?

### ***Physical Balance & Endurance***

- Can I keep my balance when travelling over rough or uneven ground?
- Can I adjust my body position when travelling up or down slopes?
- Can I stay seated for extended periods of time?
- Can I stand or walk short distances?

### ***Vision***

- Can I notice and move around obstacles in my field of vision?
- Can I notice moving objects and avoid collisions?
- Can I notice objects in the periphery of my vision eg motor vehicles or pedestrians around me?

### ***Perception***

- Can I judge distances correctly?
- Can I judge the speed of my own scooter and other vehicles and pedestrians?

### ***Thought Process & Memory***

- Can I remember all the safety procedures?
- Can I concentrate for lengthy periods?
- Can I react quickly for stopping or turning?

### ***Feelings & Judgement***

- Can I stay calm in difficult situations?
- Can I be patient with other people?
- Can I make good judgements in protecting my own safety and the safety of others?