GUIDE TO
SCOOTER
SAFETY

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Safety Travel & Etiquette Tips

FOR PEDESTRIANS ON WHEELS

Valuable tips for the beginner and experienced operator of a scooter or powerchair

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The decision to buy an electric scooter or power chair can be one which is filled with emotion. It is not always easy reconciling that one no longer has their full mobility. It takes time and loving patience to accept a body that is changing. The future may seem very uncertain. We overcame many challenges during our lives; it seems unfair to lose our ability to get around independently. However, with an electric scooter or powerchair it is possible to maintain personal independence because it will enable you to go wherever you need to. Grocery shopping is easy, malls are no longer too big, downtown shopping and browsing are fun again. The scooter can take you where you used to walk - your freedom is regained - not lost.

An electric mobility aid allows people to enjoy activities that may have been discontinued years ago because of declining physical abilities. If able bodied people want to participate in any recreational activity either indoor or outdoor, they need to purchase the proper equipment and clothing. As people with mobility issues we need to have the right mobility equipment (scooter/powerchair) to enjoy indoor or outdoor activity with family and friends. A mobility machine will take us places where we used to walk: grocery shopping, banking, eating out and most other activities. Our mobility machine does the walking for us, while conserving our energy!
When I purchased my first scooter ten years ago I thought that because I knew how to drive a car, using a scooter would be easy. In some respects I was correct; it was not too difficult for me to learn how to negotiate my new scooter around, but what I did not realize was that when I took to the streets, I was unfamiliar with pedestrian laws. There is always interaction between pedestrians and motorists; it is advisable to know the local pedestrian laws and to be aware of the habits of drivers in your city. Not all motorists are courteous to pedestrians so we need to be aware that we can be at risk in certain situations. It is our responsibility to be as visible as possible to motorists and make eye contact with drivers whenever possible.

We suggest that you go out with an experienced user if at all possible. By observing how they negotiate curb cuts, intersections and crosswalks you will learn how to safely manoeuvre around your area and more.

This booklet is the result of many years of interacting with motorists and other pedestrians around my city and others. Sometimes we encounter curb cuts which are inadequate or attempt to enter buildings which are not accessible. Using public or private transportation and the myriad of situations which may arise while operating one of these machines are the topics of this booklet.

Michael Creurer
TIP #1 — CROSSWALKS

Make sure motorists know that you intend to cross the street

Use crosswalks whenever possible but never assume that motorists will see you or even stop for you. Scooter operators—like all pedestrians—have the right of way when in a crosswalk, but you must give motorists ample time to stop. Always make a hand signal or make eye contact with on-coming traffic before entering the crosswalk.

TIP #2 — SHARING THE SIDEWALK

Because scooter/power chair users come under pedestrian laws, you are required to use the sidewalk whenever possible. Check your municipal or city regulations governing pedestrians. Drive just to the right of centre of the sidewalk, not too close to the edge. Always be aware of the other pedestrians including cyclists using sidewalks. Cyclists are not supposed to ride on the sidewalk but sometimes do, and they travel much much faster than a mobility machine.
If there are no sidewalks or the sidewalks have no curb cuts you may be forced to ride on the street. If this should happen always use the left hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic so that you can see cars coming and you will be visible to motorists. This is a good time to have your flag up and brightly coloured clothes on.

**Quick Fact**

Cars travel about six times faster than your scooter or power chair – be aware to avoid possible collisions.

**TIP #4 — PASSING WALKING PEDESTRIANS**

Pass with Care, Remember that your Scooter/Powerchair goes about twice as fast as most people walk.

Verbally inform walking pedestrians that you are behind them and wish to pass. They will usually move to the right so that you can pass on the left. Horns tend to be harsh sounding; saying “excuse me” seems to work well.
TIP #5 — WHEN TO SLOW DOWN

Turn down your speed dial when in crowds of people

Slow down when in crowds of people, in grocery stores and when on busy sidewalks. Pedestrians often move about, making unpredictable turns and stops. Stay a suitable distance behind them.

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TIP #6 — CONSTRUCTION SITES

Construction zones are often very noisy, congested and busy. Take a moment to survey the situation before entering the area. If you feel uncomfortable about proceeding consider taking an alternate route. It may take a few minutes longer but your safety is worth the extra time.

Enter construction zones with caution

TIP #7 — ALWAYS BE ALERT

This looks like a nice quiet residential sidewalk but you must still be alert; watch and listen for vehicles exiting from driveways. On the right side of the photo is a tall, thick hedge which can obscure the view of a car preparing to back out of the drive. Be alert to the sound of engines starting up.
TIP #8 — CURB CUTS

Slow down when approaching curb cuts as not all are flush with the pavement. Some have as much as a two inch lip which can cause quite a jolt to your body and machine. Use the centre of the curb cut to avoid getting the tires hung up.

Entering the curb cut straight on at the widest point will be the safest and smoothest.

resume speed

enter slowly

TIP #9 — NOT ALL CURB CUTS ARE THE SAME

A potentially very dangerous curb cut, avoid if possible.

This curb cut is dangerous because it is steep, uneven and it has a very large lip from the street to the sidewalk making it impossible to ascend on an even plane. Fortunately there are very few like this one to contend with. If you find one in your area you can plan to avoid it. Look for a driveway as an alternate route to get onto the sidewalk.
TIP #10 — PARKING LOTS

Be very alert and careful in parking lots, listen for engines starting up.

Listen for engines starting up and watch back up lights which signal that drivers are ready to back up. Always check the driver’s seat of cars to see if there is a driver preparing to leave the parking stall. Craig with his flag on is barely as tall as the vehicle behind him.

Going from a store to the parking lot, a flag will provide maximum visibility for motorists.

DIFFERENT STYLES OF MOBILITY SCOOTERS
TIP #11 — ACCESS: RAMPS & ELECTRIC DOORS

An access ramp outside a government building provides easy access to the door at the top of a set of stairs.

Most banks, public and commercial buildings now have electric door openers.

Push the button—then while the door is opening—back up to position yourself to enter through the open doorway.

You are now ready to go straight in after the door has fully opened.
Elevator Rule: “straight in – straight out”
You have a choice with elevators: you can drive in forward or you can back in. Try both ways to find out which one you are most comfortable with. Again, remember to turn down your speed dial

Quick Fact
People often live longer now, but their aging bodies don’t necessarily allow them to continue doing the things they want to do. Joints become stiff and walking or even being on one’s feet becomes a problem for many elderly people. Mobility scooters are designed to take the stress off the body and enable people to carry out activities, such as shopping, and activities that those who are younger take for granted.
TIP #13 — DRIVING AT NIGHT

- When driving at night it is very important that you be visible to motorists. If you have a headlight on your machine, turn it on. Wear bright and reflective clothing. Use flashing bicycle lights to help motorists see you.

- It is always advisable to know the route you will be using at night so that you do not encounter any inconvenient surprises, such as no curb cuts.

- Make sure that you have your list of emergency phone numbers and your cell phone if you own one.

- Let someone know the route you are taking and when to expect you home.

- Use well lit streets whenever possible. Bus routes are usually well travelled if you need to ask someone for assistance.

Accessible Cabs

Check your yellow pages for the name of the company with accessible vehicles in your city.

Make sure that the driver secures your machine; sometimes they are not as diligent as they should be.
TIP #14 — SHOPPING DOWNTOWN

If you are able to walk into stores, remember to remove your key from the ignition and take any valuables from your basket with you.

Shopping downtown is an adventure… most stores are accessible, but if they are not, merchants will gladly come out to serve you. They want your business.

Always remove the key from your scooter.
TIP #15 — PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In many cities, buses have been fitted with lifts to accommodate users in wheelchairs and scooters. The process is simple. Scooter riders back onto the ramp which hydraulically lifts them up to floor level, then they can back into a designated area. Wheelchair users can go onto the ramp forward because they have a short turning radius on the bus. Be sure the bus driver secures your machine to prevent tipping.

Call your bus company if you want to practice getting on and off a bus before venturing out when there are other people on the bus. Four wheel scooters might not be able to maneuver into the bus, but most three wheel scooters and power chairs will. When you know that your mobility aid can access the bus, practice will help overcome any nervousness about using public transportation.

New Low Floor buses have these advantages:

- A kneeling feature which lowers the entry level to within four inches of the sidewalk for people who have difficulty with steps
- A hydraulic ramp for people who use wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility aids
- Two wheelchair/scooter positions
- Easy reach buttons for people using these positions
- Extra-large windows and enhanced lighting
When you come to an uncontrolled - three way intersection it is advisable to slow down and check for traffic which may be turning or entering the crosswalk from three different directions.

Too many motorists are in a hurry and are not as courteous or careful as they could be so please take a moment to become aware of the traffic before you enter a three-way intersection.

Look over your left shoulder to see if there is a vehicle wanting to turn into your path.

Check to see if there is any traffic wanting to turn left which would have to cross directly in front of you.

Finally, check to see if there are any cars coming down the side street on your right.
Rosemary out with her two dogs, there is room for one in each basket.

Craig seated at an observation deck, enjoying the Seattle skyline.

A summer picnic in the park. These are a few from our post polio group.

Watching a baseball game at Safeco field in Seattle.
Marjorie stays near the wall when going down this incline. This position offers the most stability for the scooter and operator.

She moves over to level ground as she reaches the bottom.

This path offers beautiful views for all to enjoy.

Heading back up the incline, again she stays close to the wall.
Checklist Before Leaving Home

1. Do your batteries have enough charge to get you where you want to go and home again?

2. Are your tires properly inflated? (check once a month)

3. Is your flag on?

4. Do you have proper clothing with you? (rain gear, sweater or jacket)

5. Do you have your emergency telephone numbers and cell phone if you own one? Eg: the phone number of an accessible cab which can accommodate your scooter.

6. Do you have sunscreen and sunglasses?

7. Do you know where accessible washrooms are located on the route you plan to take?
Miscellaneous Safety Tips

• Always make sure that your machine is turned off before getting on or off.

• Always take the key with you if you must leave your machine unattended.

• Shoulder check when stopping and turning on sidewalks; cyclists and joggers are hard to hear approaching from behind. And, unless you have a rear-view mirror, you will not see them.

• Don’t ride on the beach; water can ruin your scooter’s motor.

• Salt used on snow covered streets may also cause damage to your machine.

• Avoid blackberry and rose thorns as they can puncture a tire, causing it to go flat.

• Check for cars at every intersection; watch for cars planning to turn into your path.

• Slow down when approaching curb cuts, many will jolt you and your machine because they are uneven.

• Practice using your machine on all different types of terrain with someone else before venturing out on your own.

• Carry a sign with the work “HELP” printed on it. If you need assistance you can hold it up for people to see.

• Watch for broken glass, nails and any sharp objects on your pathway. Avoid to prevent flat tires.

continued next page
• Your scooter/powerchair has a reset button. Should your motor become overworked it will trip the switch to avoid damage to it. If this happens your machine will have no power. Read your owner’s manual; knowing where this reset button is will allow you to get going again without having to call for help. Knowing this information will save you time and money.

• Never stay on your scooter if it is in free wheel mode, the braking system will be disengaged.

• Check your owner’s manual for information on the proper speed dial setting when travelling up or down hills.

• Have your scooter/power chair serviced as recommended by the manufacturer. This will ensure that your machine will continue to operate at its optimum level.

• Read your operator’s manual thoroughly to learn about all of the features of your machine.

• Marjorie always carries Handi-wipes with her, they are great for cleaning your hands before and after snacks.

• Carry a compact First Aid kit on lengthy day trips.

Look for roadside signs that indicate regulations & upcoming hazards

Miscellaneous Safety Tips Continued
Miscellaneous Etiquette Tips

- Slow down when approaching other pedestrians head on, especially people with mobility challenges. A fast approaching machine might throw them off balance.

- When approaching a visually impaired person, stop and let them pass you, you may wish to verbally let them know where you are. eg: say “I am to your left”.

- Before you back up, make sure that there are no objects or people behind you.

- It is advisable not to drive after taking medication, and of course, never drink and drive.

- The police recommend not getting into arguments with other pedestrians, motorists or cyclists. Avoid conflict by simply continuing on your way. If you feel someone has broken the law, you can phone in a complaint.

mobility service dept

Many of the key working parts of a mobility scooter are hidden beneath the body-shell and require specialist knowledge and tools to access.

Trust Canada Scooters Service Department to maintain your mobility equipment.

2005 COOK ST (COOK & PEMBROKE) • SERVICE@CANADASCOOTERS.NET 250-383-7383
Is it time for a service check up?

If your scooter is more than 2 years old it may be time for a new set of electric motor brushes. Symptoms of worn brushes are a jerky, shuddering, hesitant ride that can result in a breakdown. Replacing worn brushes are an inexpensive way of prolonging the life of your scooter motor. Prices vary depending on make and model, but generally are under $25 plus labour.

You may also consider a Comprehensive Large-Scale Servicing, which includes:

- pulling all wheels and lubricating axle’s
- lubricating steering head and steering mechanics
- check, lubricate, and adjust Transaxle
- 49 pt. service & safety inspection
- replacement of worn keyways
- new set of electric motor brushes
- detailed cleaning and polishing of scooter exterior
- free service loaner while we have your scooter in the shop

Call Canada Scooters for details 250 383-7383
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What are you waiting for?

“I like the convenience... I can go shopping for groceries, out to malls and visit the Public Library in town. After two years, I would not like to be without my scooter!”
-- Eric Watters

“I cannot believe how it has opened up the world for me. Before the scooter, I very rarely went out, but now I am even able to get out and do some volunteer work, get to the mall and to do my shopping...the service from Canada Scooters has been absolutely awesome... get yourself a scooter, and go “scooting”.
-- L. Gadsby

Visit the Canada Scooters showroom — You’ll find a great selection of new & used scooters, walkers, and power chairs. And friendly, expert staff who can answer all your questions.

Every scooter we sell comes with our “service guarantee.” And we always give top dollar for your trade-in.

And if you can’t get to us, we’ll come to you. Just call for a FREE in-home test-drive.

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