

Motorised Mobility Devices
Fact Sheet 1

Is a motorised mobility device right for you?

Road Safety Victoria (Department of Transport) has produced a series of fact sheets to support safe use of motorised scooters and powered wheelchairs in our community. This fact sheet helps you to decide whether you are suited to and capable of using such a device. It includes a checklist, which we suggest you complete and share with your health professional, your family and carer(s).

In this resource, the term 'motorised mobility device' includes both mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs, unless they are mentioned separately.

Are there rules around who may use a motorised mobility device?

Yes - you can only use a motorised mobility device if you have a need to use it. That is, if you have difficulty walking, have a disability or are injured. Under the Road Rules and the Road Safety Act 1986, anyone who does not have such a disability is not permitted to use these devices on a footpath or road. Motorised mobility devices are designed to carry only one person.

Motorised mobility scooter or wheelchair?

Motorised mobility scooters are good for people who can walk short distances. If you are not able to walk, a powered wheelchair is likely to be a better choice for you. Motorised mobility scooters are generally designed for use outdoors and for travel on footpaths. They are generally longer than powered wheelchairs and require more space to turn around a corner or do a "U" turn, so they may be harder to manoeuvre indoors. For more information about choosing the right device, see *Fact sheet 2 – Choosing a motorised mobility device.*



What else do you need to consider?

Just as for driving a car, you need to be physically and mentally capable of using a motorised mobility device safely.

Satisfactory eyesight is important, so too is concentration, reaction time, clear thinking and the ability to learn new tasks. Sitting balance and posture, co-ordination, the ability to operate the hand controls and the consistent ability to get on/off the device are also important for safe use.

Before you purchase a device, it is strongly recommended that you seek advice from your doctor or healthcare professional. They may refer you to an occupational therapist for assessment and for advice about which device best suits your needs.

Users of motorised wheelchairs will most likely require a more detailed assessment than that outlined in this resource (e.g. considering transferring into/out of the device, specialised seating/cushions, customised controls).

If you are not suited to a motorised mobility device, your doctor and occupational therapist can help you to explore other options for maintaining your independence in the community.

How can an occupational therapist help you?

An occupational therapist helps people to maximise their independence so that they can participate in daily life and do the things they want and need to do. This includes managing daily activities by themselves, getting out and about in the community and participating in interests/hobbies and work. When you see an occupational therapist, they will give you strategies for managing any limitations and disabilities you might have.

If you are considering a motorised mobility device, an occupational therapist can:

- Provide advice about whether you are suited to using such a device
- Help you choose the best device to meet your needs
- Help you to learn to use the device safely
- Guide you about funding options
- Talk to your doctor about monitoring your health conditions.

Is a motorised mobility device the right choice for you? Complete the checklist overleaf

Your safety is important. The safety of other people is important too. Complete the checklist overleaf before you buy or hire a motorised mobility device.

If you answer YES to ALL the checklist questions, a mobility scooter is likely to be a suitable option for you. If you are unsure about answers or you have answered NO to some of the questions, you should talk to your doctor. They might refer you to an occupational therapist to help you make the right decision about whether a mobility device is the best choice. The occupational therapist will also help you choose between the many different types and styles of devices. They can also suggest ways to overcome any issues you have identified.

Are you concerned about someone's capacity to use a motorised mobility device?

The checklist may help to start a conversation and encourage the person to follow up with a health professional for advice.

Have you retired from driving?

If you are not fit to drive a car, it might not be safe for you to use a mobility scooter. You should talk with your doctor about whether a scooter is right for you.



Checklist: Is a motorised mobility device the right choice for you?

1 Eligibility to use a motorised mobility device

Do you have difficulty walking?
(These devices can only legally be used by people who have difficulty walking)

Yes No

2 Mobility scooter or powered wheelchair?

Can you stand and walk for short distances?

Yes No

If you answered "No", a powered wheelchair may be a better option and you will require professional advice and assessment to select the most appropriate one. The following questions are most relevant to people looking to use a motorised mobility scooter.

3 Medical advice

It is important to consider whether your health conditions or treatments might affect your safety when using a mobility scooter.

a. Have you discussed the use of a mobility scooter with your doctor?

Yes No

b. Have you seen an occupational therapist about your daily functioning?

Yes No

4 Eyesight

You must have good eyesight to use a mobility scooter safely.

a. Have you had an eye examination in the last 12 months?

Yes No

b. Can you clearly see cars, pedestrians and other hazards (such as potholes, uneven footpath) in the distance and around you?

Yes No

c. Can you turn your head to look over your shoulder?

Yes No

d. Can you turn your head and body so that you can look behind when reversing?

Yes No

5 Physical ability

You need to have the physical ability to get on and off the device and the strength to use the controls including turning the key, adjusting speed dials, using the accelerator and controls, steering the device, and turning corners.

Do you believe you have the physical capacity to operate a mobility scooter?

Yes No Not sure

6 Balance

Being able to maintain sitting balance by adjusting your body position is important when travelling over rough and uneven ground or travelling on inclines and declines.

Do you think you can maintain your sitting balance on a moving mobility scooter and sit for extended periods?

Yes No Not sure

7 Thinking skills

In order to use a mobility scooter, you need to learn and remember new skills and solve problems. You also need to be able to concentrate for extended periods of time, react quickly to unexpected situations and find your way around.

a. Can you judge the distances and speed of approaching vehicles correctly?

Yes No Not sure

b. Can you remember how to get to places and move around your community without getting lost?

Yes No Not sure

c. Can you learn and remember new tasks?

Yes No Not sure

d. Can you concentrate for long periods without getting distracted?

Yes No Not sure

e. Can you usually stay calm in difficult situations?

Yes No Not sure

f. Are you usually patient with other people and traffic?

Yes No Not sure

The provision of this fact sheet to consumers/carers is not sufficient, nor does it constitute or replace, adequate user assessment and training as would be provided by an AHPRA registered health professional.