

# Stay Safe!



***The safe way to use motorised  
scooters and wheelchairs in  
the community.***

# Stay Safe!

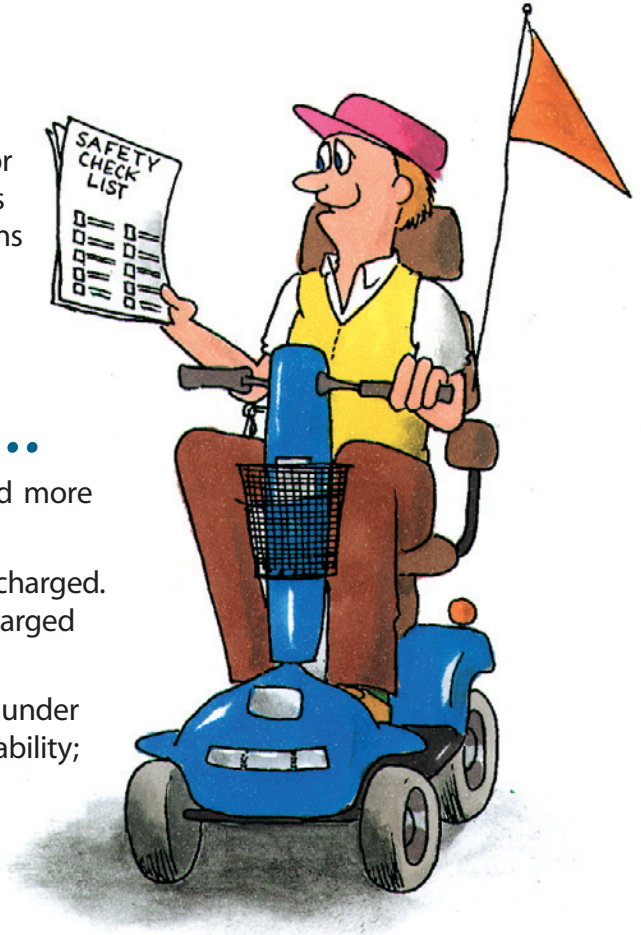
Motorised scooters and wheelchairs are a great way to move around independently if you cannot walk or you have difficulty walking. But it is important to take certain precautions to prevent accidents.

This guide will help you stay safe when out travelling . . .

## *Before heading off...*

You can make your journey safer and more enjoyable by:

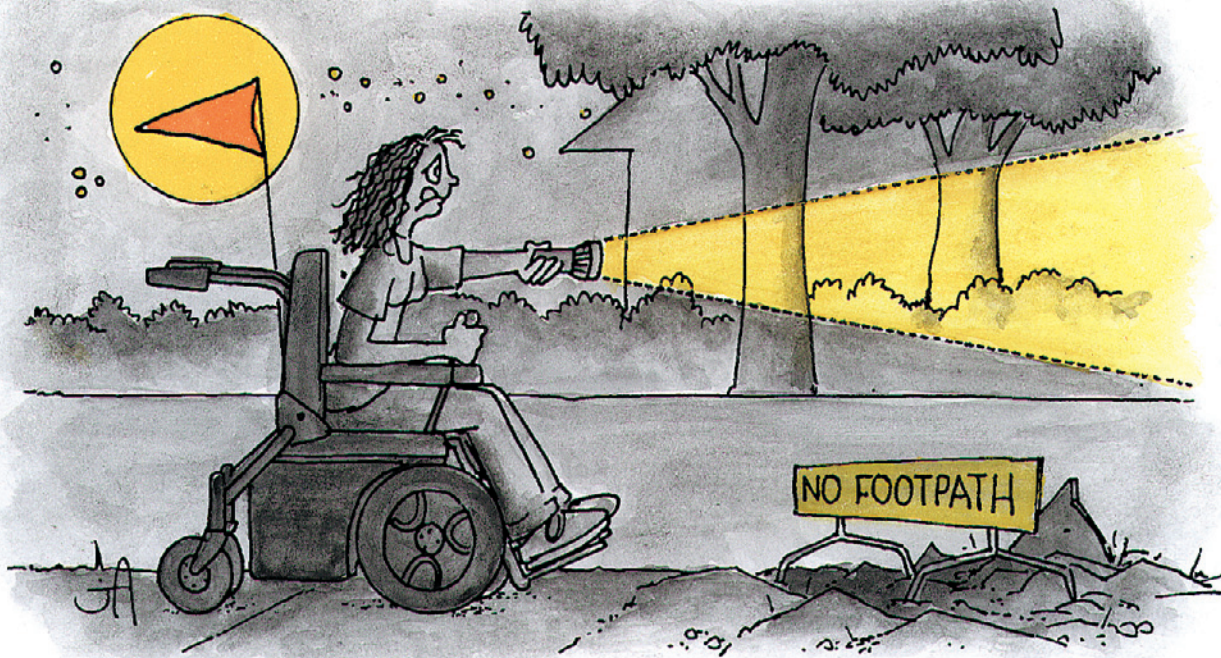
- Making sure batteries are fully charged. Be aware of the time a fully charged battery will last;
- Checking your tyre pressure as under inflated tyres can affect your stability;
- Ensuring that you haven't recently taken any medication or alcohol that may affect your judgement;
- Making sure the seat is at the right level and that the seat assembly is locked before moving;
- Using a hat and sunscreen if it is sunny and you don't have a shade cover;
- Ensuring that any rain cover you may be using doesn't affect your vision. Never allow the controls of your machine to become wet;
- Taking a mobile phone in case of an emergency.



For details about routine maintenance such as recharging the battery and tyre pressure, check your owner's manual. Your manual should also list details about the maximum gradient your machine can climb. Never ride your machine on an incline greater than the manual's rating.

If you don't have rear vision mirrors, think about installing them – this is especially important if you have a limited range of movement in your neck.

# Before heading off...



## BE SEEN!

When you use a scooter or wheelchair, you are sitting lower than a walking pedestrian which means you may not be seen as easily by drivers and pedestrians on foot. You can make yourself more visible by:

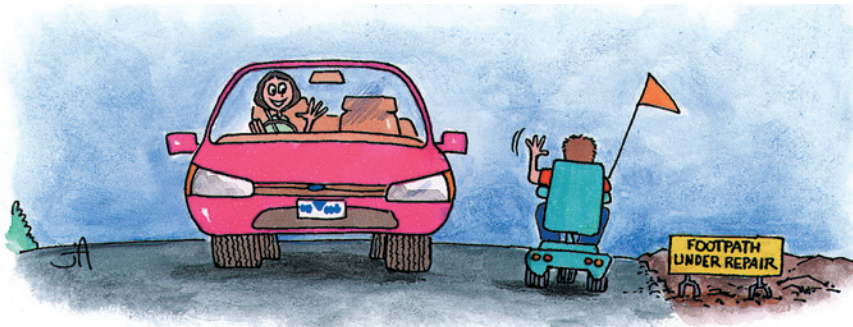
- Wearing bright coloured clothing/a high visibility vest (i.e. orange or yellow);
- Attaching a fluorescent orange visibility flag (at least head height when standing), to your scooter or wheelchair;
- Using lights if you have them. If your scooter or wheelchair doesn't have lights, think about fitting them. Bicycle lights are good and help with daytime visibility too. Lights should be clearly visible to other road users for at least 200 metres;
- Fitting reflectors or special fluorescent or reflective tape to the front, back, sides and wheels. Many of these items are available at local bike shops or your scooter or wheelchair providers;
- Taking extra care in poor light. The risk of accidents increases greatly so avoid travelling at dusk, in bad weather and at night.



# A safe route...

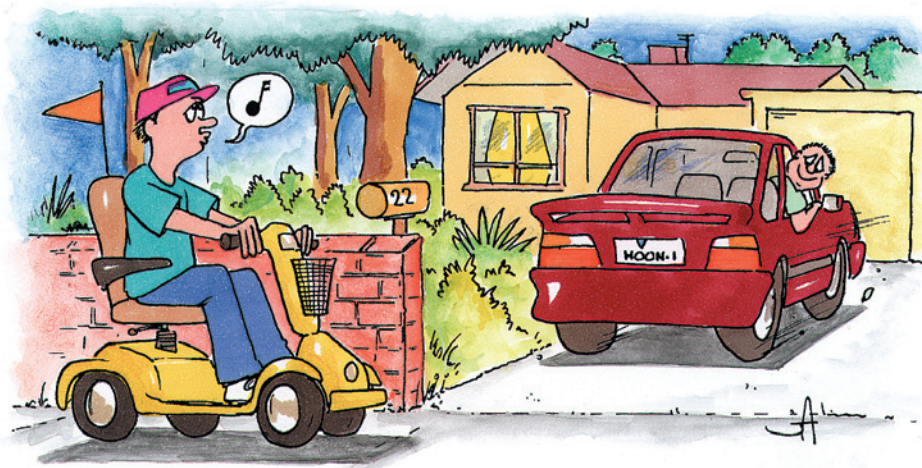
Motorised scooter and electric wheelchair users are classed as pedestrians under current traffic law therefore you must travel on the footpath or an off-road bicycle path whenever possible.

However, there may be times when you will need to travel on the road, for example, where there are no footpaths, at crossing places or where there are hazards such as overhanging branches. Try to find the easiest and safest routes to use and if a particular route is difficult, ask your local council if they can help make it safer.



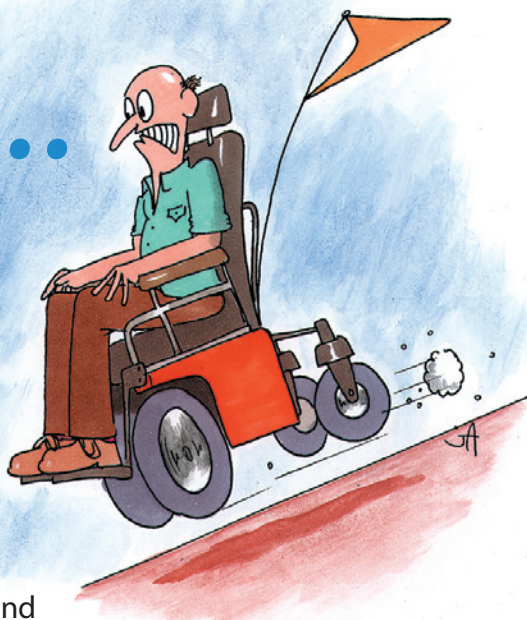
## and some tips for safe travelling:

- You will find travelling is more enjoyable if you avoid busy roads and use quieter streets. As always, before crossing ANY road, always stop at the kerb, look and listen for traffic;
- If you must use the road, keep as close to the right hand side kerb as you can so that you are directly facing the traffic. Return to the footpath as soon as possible;
- Try to establish eye contact with oncoming drivers;
- Watch out for cars going in and out of driveways;



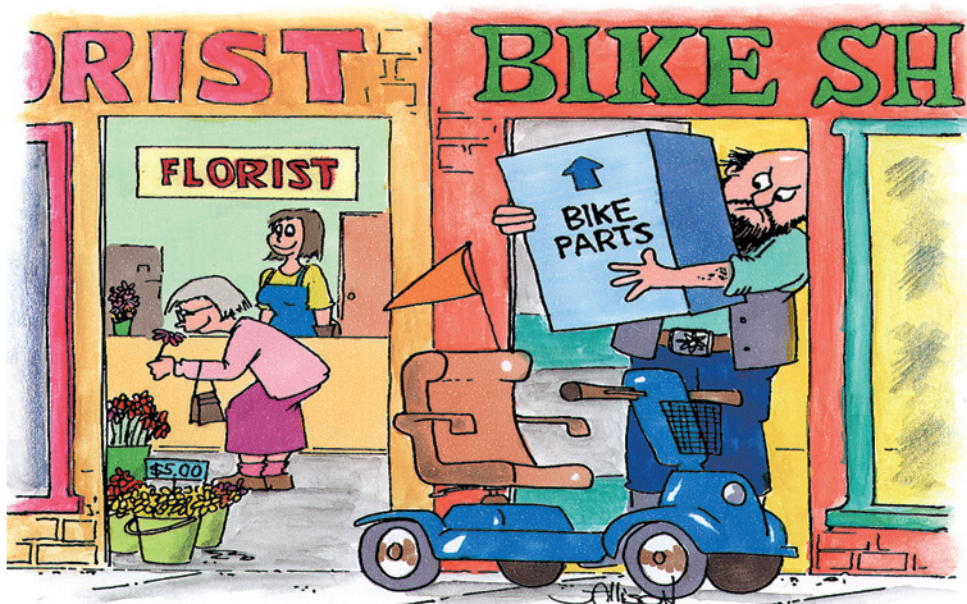
# A safe route...

- Avoid hills. If this isn't possible, slow down and use extreme caution;
- Country roads need special care as vehicles travel at high speeds and road edges can be rough;
- Don't make sharp turns at full throttle;
- Never travel up to the rear of a parked car in case it suddenly reverses;
- Go straight up or down ramps and kerbs and not at an angle. Don't use temporary ramps or platforms as they may not withstand the weight of you and the scooter/wheelchair;
- Only cross a level crossing if there are suitable pedestrian facilities available.



## and some tips for safe stopping:

- Always turn the key to the off position or hit the off button when you are getting on or off your vehicle;
- Don't stop on an incline even to rest;
- Be mindful where you stop or park. Never block a building entrance, gateway or driveway.



## *Sharing the footpath... and avoiding footpath rage*



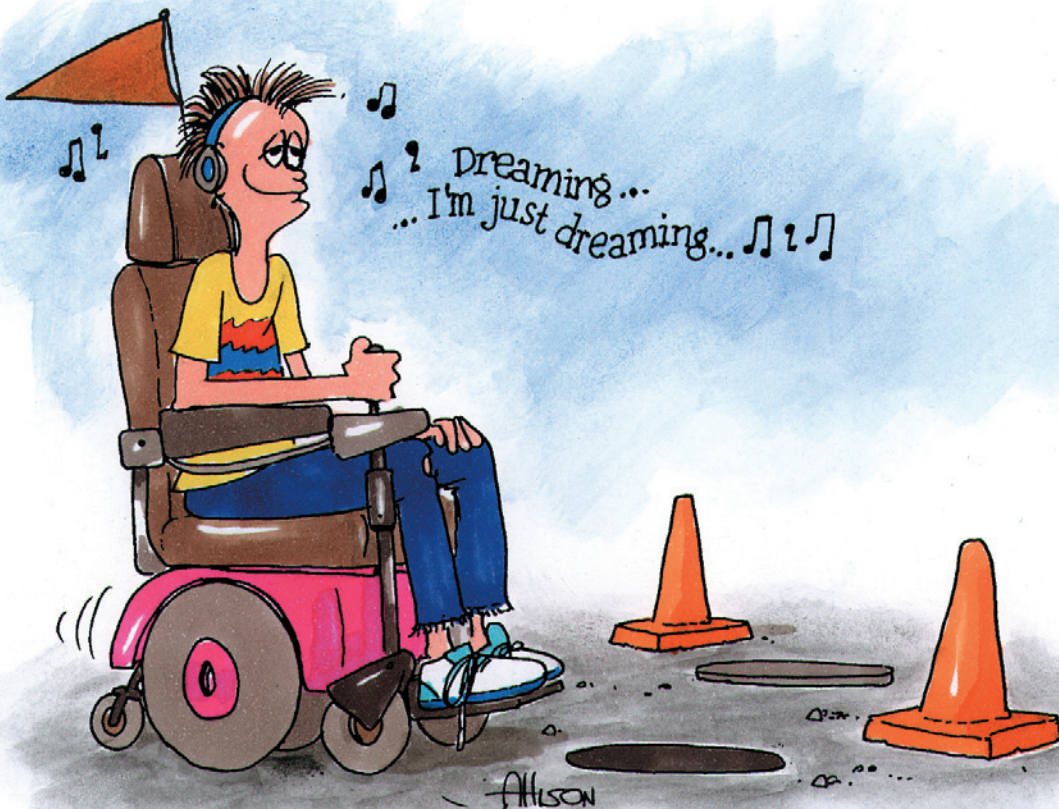
Since motorised scooter and wheelchair users are pedestrians, they are allowed to travel at up to 10 kilometres per hour. That's about six miles per hour in old terms – a brisk walking speed.

Many people are not used to seeing scooters and wheelchairs on the footpath. Because they move so quietly and quickly they can catch other pedestrians unawares, particularly those who may have visual and hearing impairments.

# Sharing the footpath... and avoiding footpath rage

## For safety:

- Whenever possible travel on the left side of the footpath;
- Travel at a speed which will enable you to stop quickly if you need to;
- Warn pedestrians when you are turning by using your indicators or giving a hand signal. If you cannot do this, stop and check before you change direction;
- You could also use a horn or have a beeper fitted;
- Do not suddenly change direction – check first what is going on around and behind you;
- Be careful if using audio headphones – they may make good company but they restrict hearing which may cause an accident.



# Crossing roads... whe

Motorised scooter and wheelchair users are most at risk of an accident when crossing the road.

Remember you are travelling at a very low speed so follow the same steps as you would as a walking pedestrian:

1. When approaching the road, reduce your speed. Once you start to cross, increase speed (often the highest speed is not always appropriate);



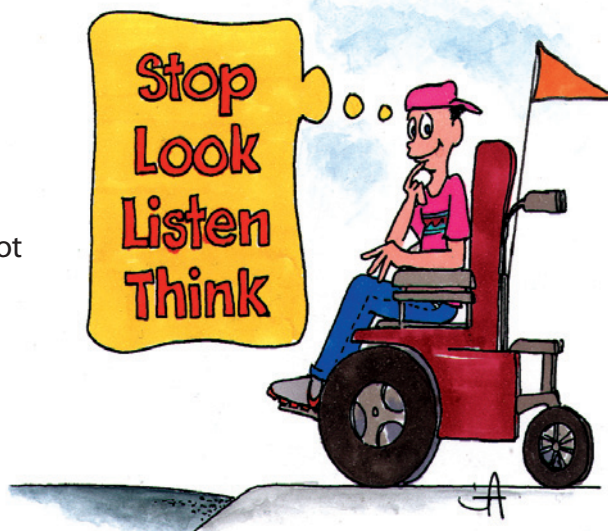
2. Choose a safe place to cross – one which gives you a clear view of approaching traffic. Never cross near curves or hills where you cannot see oncoming vehicles;
3. If possible, go straight across to the opposite kerb rather than further up or down the road;
4. Use a pedestrian crossing if there is one nearby;
5. If you must use a roundabout, cross as if you were walking and give way to vehicles.



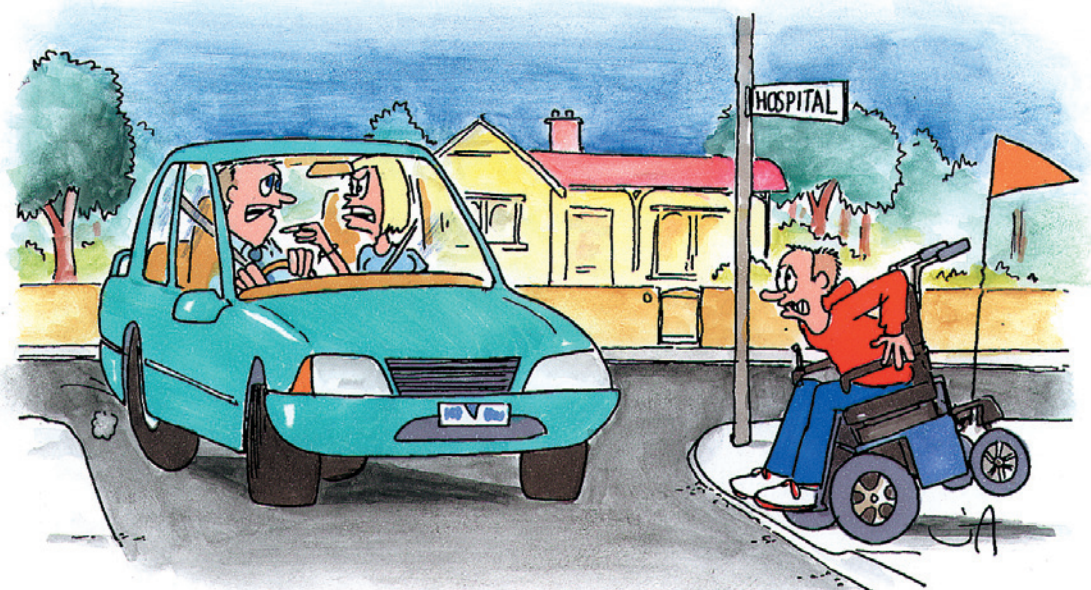
# *n you're most at risk!*

When crossing even a quiet road, always use the 'STOP, LOOK, LISTEN & THINK' approach:

- STOP as close to the edge of the kerb as you can;
- LOOK for traffic in ALL directions;
- LISTEN for traffic you may not be able to see; and
- THINK if you have enough time to cross safely. You will need to carefully judge the speed and distance of approaching vehicles. If you're not sure you can cross safely... WAIT!!!



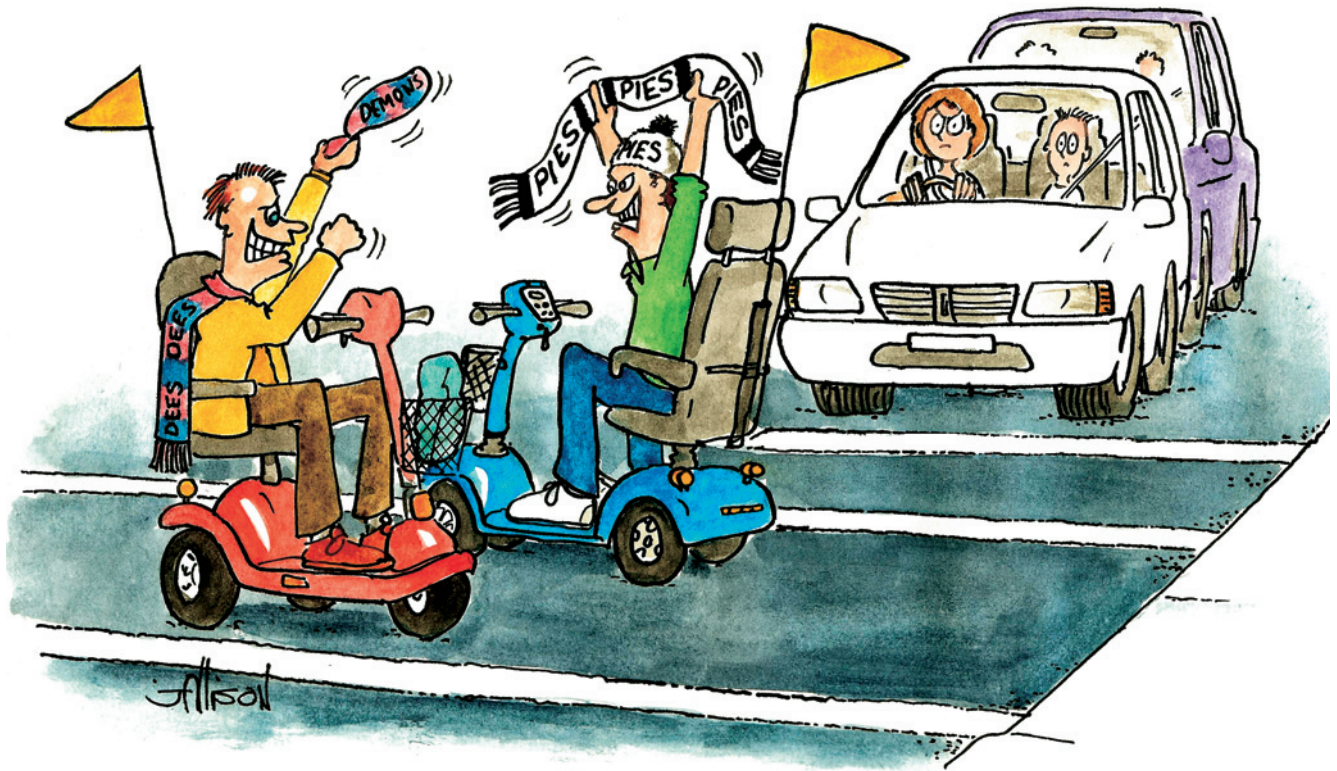
***Don't assume cars will stop for you...***



***particularly at intersections or crossings that are not controlled by traffic lights.***

# Road rules... it pays to know the law...

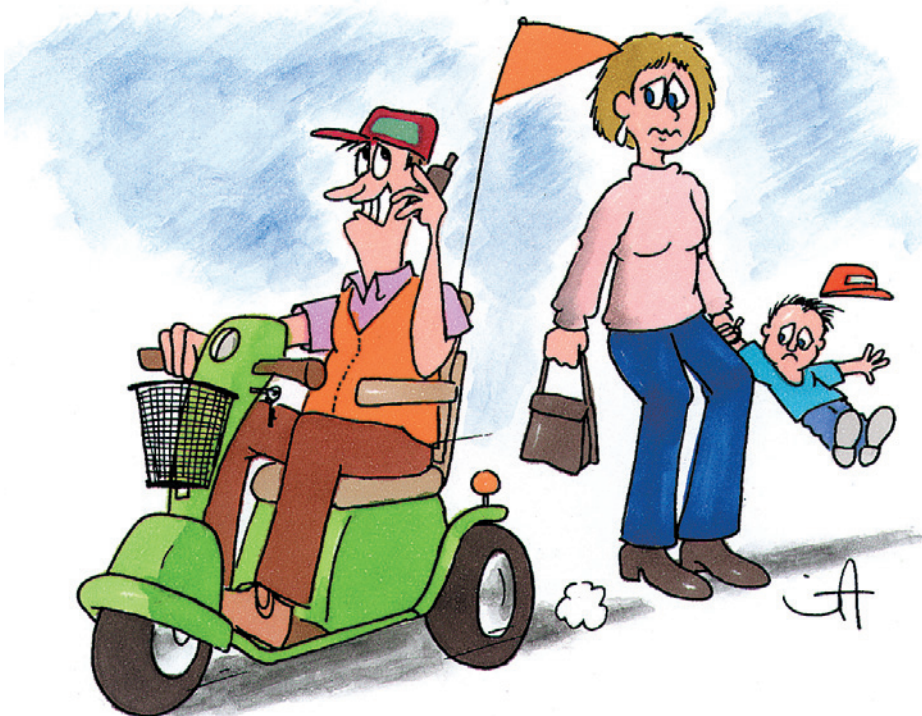
- When crossing the road always use crossings where available;
- Always cross by the shortest and most direct route;
- Do not remain on a pedestrian crossing for longer than is necessary for crossing;



- Do not stop on a footpath or road so as to inconvenience, obstruct, hinder or prevent the free passage of any other pedestrians or vehicles;
- Do not unnecessarily block the path of other footpath users;
- If a footpath is in a usable condition, do not travel on the road;
- If no footpath exists you must travel as close as possible to either side of the road;

# Road rules... it pays to know the law...

- Do not travel two abreast either on a footpath or roadway;
- When a car is turning right, left or doing a U-turn, it must give way to pedestrians;
- At roundabouts pedestrians must give way to vehicles;
- Never move suddenly into the path of a vehicle as this may create a hazard;
- You must regulate your speed to that of other pedestrians to a maximum of 10km per hour. It is most discourteous and dangerous to assume that others will just 'get out of your way'.



## ***Do I need to register?***

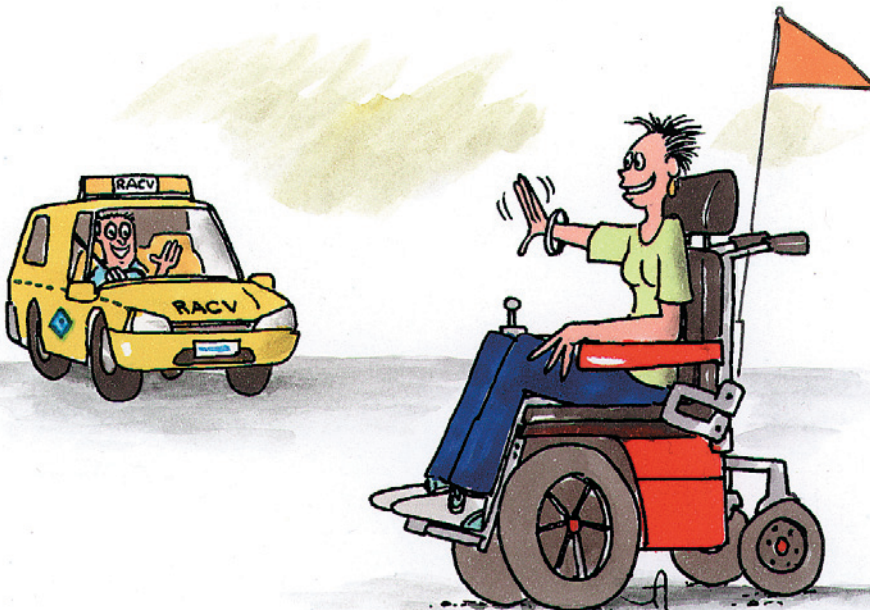
Motorised scooters and wheelchairs cannot be registered in Victoria. However, if because of your physical condition you have a reasonable need to use a motorised scooter or wheelchair, you may use one on a path or on the road if there is no suitable path.



# RACV

## *Emergency Wheelchair*

## BREAKDOWN SERVICE



The aim of the RACV Wheelchair Emergency Breakdown Service is to get you and your scooter or wheelchair mobile as soon as possible following a breakdown.

If your scooter or wheelchair breaks down through a mechanical fault, RACV has a service to help get your wheelchair up and running.

If for some reason the RACV cannot immediately get your machine mobile, they will either arrange alternative transport for you and your wheelchair, or will ensure that you and your wheelchair are moved to a safe location until help arrives.

RACV Emergency Wheelchair Breakdown Service is available throughout Victoria provided reasonable access is available for the RACV vehicle and equipment required.

### **RACV NUMBERS**

Enquiries about membership services, fees and insurance **13 19 55**.

RACV Roadside and Wheelchair Assistance **13 11 11** (24 hours a day).

# Crossing Railway Lines

People who use scooters and wheelchairs need to be aware of the risks of crossing railway tracks.

**Only cross railway lines at marked crossings.**

- **LOOK** for flashing lights and whether gates or barriers are closed... or are closing;
- **LISTEN** for warning bells ringing;
- **THINK** – even if there are no flashing lights or warning sounds, check both directions for trains. If a train has just passed, look and listen again before moving as another train may be approaching.

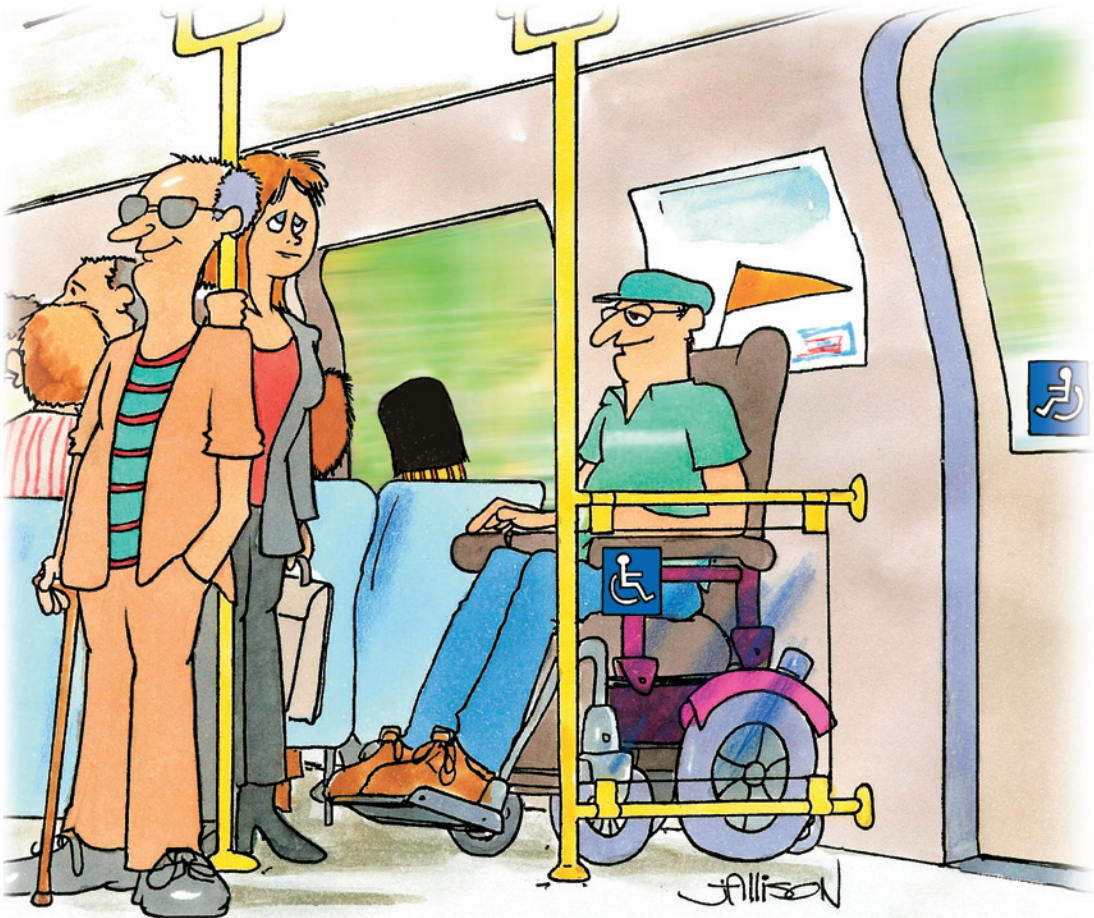


**When you're absolutely sure the tracks are clear:**

- Proceed slowly and in a straight line;
- Avoid uneven, broken surfaces as any jolting may cause you to lose control;
- Never do a u-turn as the wheels may become lodged in the gaps between the rail lines and the bitumen - it is safer to continue to travel ahead even if the bells suddenly start ringing. Don't increase speed as you will have enough time to reach the other side or the emergency gate ahead;
- If your wheels do become entrapped, immediately seek assistance;
- Similar rules apply for crossing tram tracks, i.e., watch for oncoming trams, travel slowly in a straight line and avoid u-turns.



# Travelling on public transport



Thinking of travelling by public transport? It is always a good idea to plan ahead by at least 24 hours and contact the relevant operator to ensure they can cater to your requirements e.g. Metlink (131 638) or V/Line (136 196).

Because of the need to use boarding ramps, the operator may want to know details such as the dimensions and weight of your wheelchair or scooter, etc.

Anchoring points are not available on most trains, trams and buses so it is important your wheelchair or scooter has effective braking that you can use while the transport is in motion.

# Travelling on public transport

## Trains

V/Line and metropolitan trains can accommodate most types of wheelchairs and scooters. The standard dimensions are 800mm x 1300mm – any mobility aids larger than this may cause difficulties using public transport.

If travelling from a rural station, inform the conductor so they will be able to provide a portable ramp and assist you to board and alight. On the metropolitan rail network, you can get assistance from the driver by positioning yourself at specific markers on the platform (contact Metlink or Connex for more details about the markings, timetables and reminder notices). If you need attendant care, you will need to bring a companion.

Always get to the station well before the train is due to arrive.

## Trams

Low-floor trams in Melbourne are accessible for wheelchairs and have two spaces allocated, although you can only access them at level access platform Superstops. Older trams only cater for those using a folding manual wheelchair that can be carried on board.

## Buses and coaches

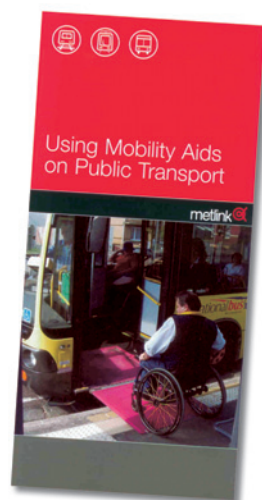
Low-floor buses are gradually being introduced across Victoria, though not all V/Line coaches and private bus companies accommodate wheelchairs and scooters so always enquire about services available.

## Taxis

Wheelchair accessible taxis are available in Melbourne and many regional centres. See the Yellow Pages for contact numbers. You may be eligible for the Multi Purpose Taxi Program. Contact the Victorian Taxi Directorate on 1800 638 802 or 03 9320 4360.

## Metlink

To plan your trip using public transport it is recommended you contact the relevant operator for full details. For more information, contact Metlink and ask for a copy of the 'Using Mobility Aids on Public Transport' brochure ([metlinkmelbourne.com.au/accessible](http://metlinkmelbourne.com.au/accessible)).



# Companion Card



People with a permanent disability who need someone to help them travel on public transport may qualify and register for a Companion Card. It is recognised for travel on public trains, trams and buses in Victoria. You pay for your ticket and the card entitles your companion (carer) to travel for free on trains, trams, buses and coaches.

When travelling on V/Line or any regional service it is advisable to make bookings by phoning 136 196 at least 24 hours in advance so that arrangements can be made. You will also need to inform the operator that you want a Companion Ticket when you make your own booking.

Trains, trams and buses in Victoria allocate a ground space of 1300mm by 800mm for a wheelchair and its owner – so check that your machine meets these dimensions.

For more details about the Companion Card call 1800 650 611 during business hours.

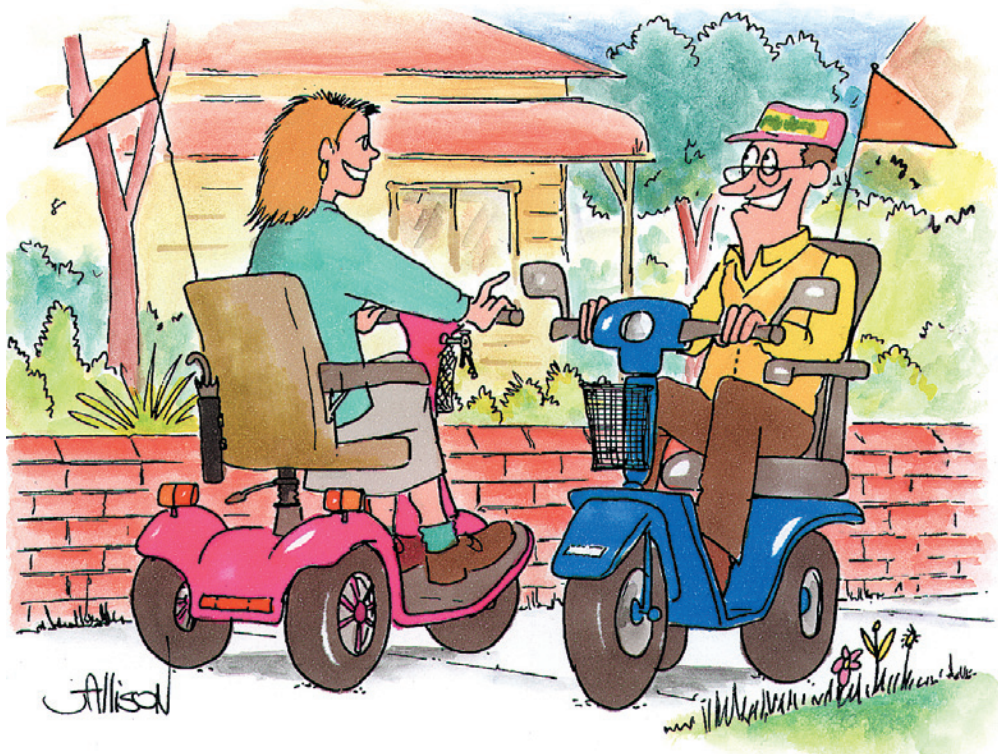


# Stay safe – use our



## SELF-ASSESSMENT

### Checklist



Although you have previously been assessed for your ability to use a motorised wheelchair or scooter by your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist, it is critical that you monitor your ability to ride safely in the community.

The following are essential skills for your continued safe use of your motorised scooter or wheelchair.

If you answer 'no' to ANY of the questions on the next few pages you should contact your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.

They may be able to advise you if adaptations or modifications can be made to your motorised scooter or wheelchair to compensate for any changes in your circumstances.

Sometimes the only safe way to use a motorised scooter or wheelchair is if accompanied by another person.

• *Continued overleaf*





# SELF-ASSESSMENT

## Checklist

### **Co-ordination and strength**

- Can I easily operate the controls, e.g., turn key, adjust dials, use the accelerator?
- Can I steer and turn the scooter, even in tight corners?
- Can I turn my head to look to the side or behind if reversing?

### **Physical balance and endurance**

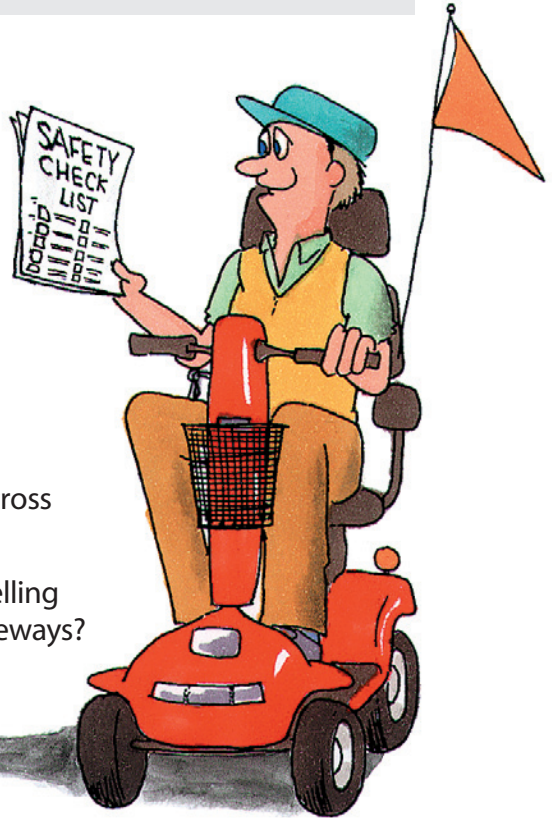
- Can I maintain balance when travelling across uneven or rough terrain?
- Can I adjust my body position when travelling up/down inclines such as ramps and driveways?
- Can I handle different weather conditions if travelling outdoors or long distances?
- Can I be seated for extended periods?

### **Vision**

- Can I notice and move around obstacles in all fields of vision?
- Can I notice moving objects and avoid collisions?
- Can I notice objects in the periphery of my vision? Such as motor vehicles or pedestrians before they are right on top of me?

### **Perception**

- Can I judge distances correctly? For example, how close an obstacle is?
- Can I judge the speed of my own scooter/wheelchair and other vehicles and pedestrians?





# SELF-ASSESSMENT

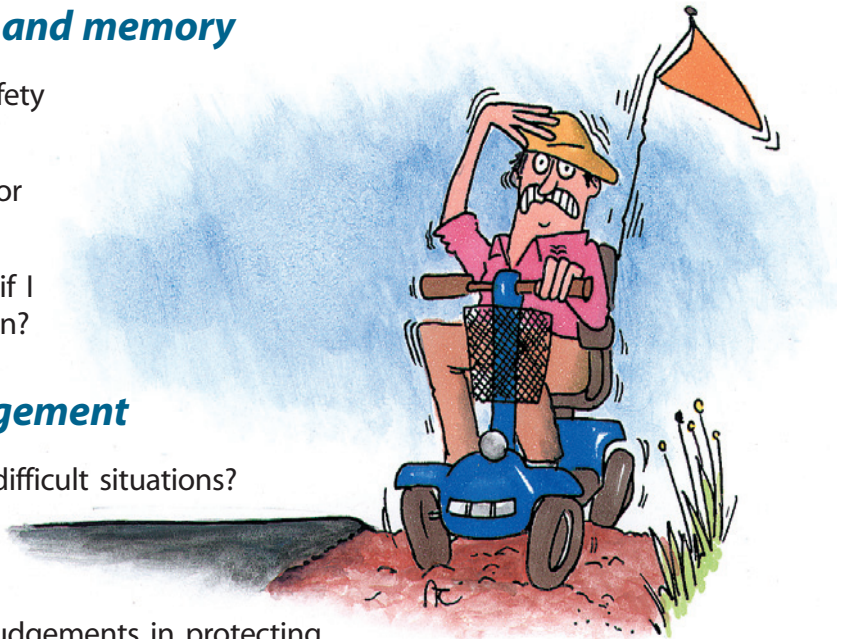
## Checklist

### ***Thought process and memory***

- Can I remember safety procedures?
- Can I concentrate for lengthy periods?
- Can I react quickly if I need to stop or turn?

### ***Feelings and 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?



### ***Medication***

- Am I regularly taking medication that may interfere with using my scooter/wheelchair safely?

### ***Who can I ask to assess my safety and driving abilities?***

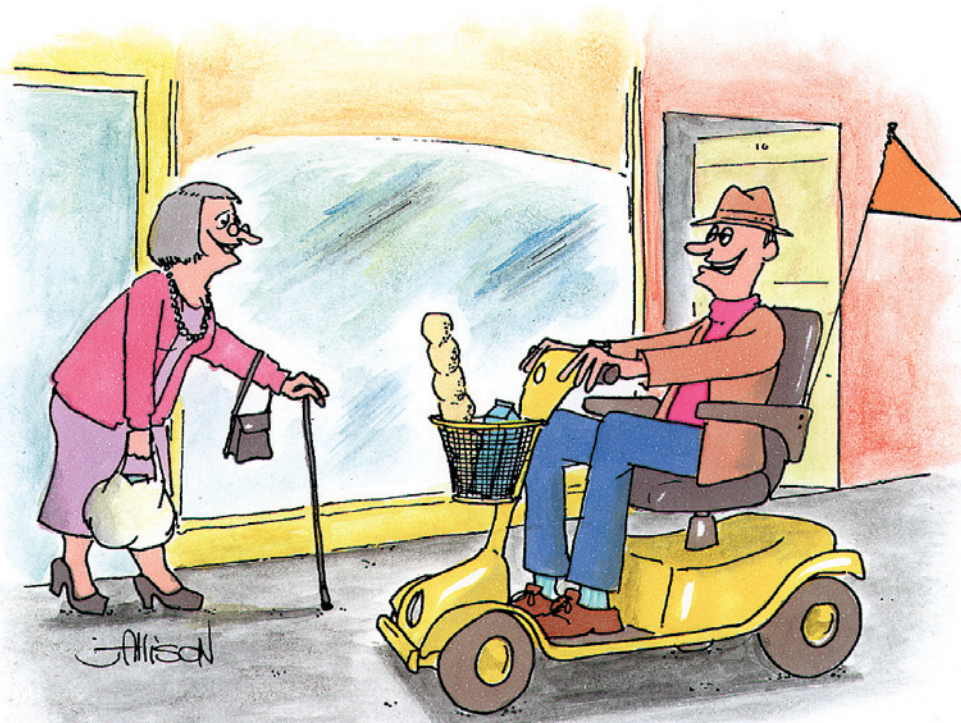
As well as your Occupational Therapist, you can also approach your doctor or community health worker.

Remember, your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist is there to optimise your independence and safety in the community.

**Checklist information courtesy of the Road Traffic Authority, NSW.**



# The safe way to use motorised scooters and wheelchairs in the community



## Remember . . .

1. Monitor your driving skills with our self-assessment checklist (*on pages 17-19*). If you have a concern, contact your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.
2. Use a flag and wear bright clothes to make yourself more visible.
3. Try to use the safest and quietest route.
4. Travel at a speed which will allow you to stop quickly if you need to.
5. Cross roads by the most direct route and before crossing, stop... look... listen... think!
6. On the footpath, regulate your speed to that of other pedestrians.
7. Don't assume cars will stop for you!

ENDORSED BY ROADS SAFE

# Stay Safe!

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For further information, please contact the City of Greater Bendigo on 03 5434 6386.