



A User's Guide to Mobility Scooters

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your user's guide to mobility scooters! If you or a loved one struggle to walk because of age or disability, a mobility scooter could provide you with more independence and mobility and thereby greatly improve quality of life while providing access to work, community and social events.

Mobility scooter use is rapidly increasing across Australia each day as they are easy to use by people of all ages. They can even be an affordable substitute for cars and when combined with accessible public transport, they can get you most of the places you need to go.

While some people may want to put off buying a mobility scooter for fear of looking old or wait until their mobility impairment gets so bad that they can no longer walk, there are real advantages to learning to use one sooner rather than later.

If you have decreased mobility due to age-related conditions or a degenerative disability it's easier to learn to drive a scooter while you still have good functionality. Perfecting your driving skills at this early stage will make it easier to keep using your scooter as your mobility decreases. If you leave it too long you may find it more difficult, or even impossible to learn the new skills required to operate your scooter safely.

Younger people with disability may also find that they need a scooter more as they grow up and start to become increasingly independent. For example, they may be perfectly able to get around at school, but need a scooter on a large university campus, or to help them get to work by themselves.

Mobility scooters are becoming increasingly popular across Australia as they offer a safe and affordable way to regain your independence if you struggle to walk for long distances

The Blue Badge Insurance Mobility Scooter Guide will help you determine if a mobility scooter is right for you, it will show you how to choose the right scooter for your needs, and provide all the information you need to make sure your scooter stays well-maintained and your driving experience is safe.

So whether you're thinking about buying your first scooter, upgrading an existing one, or concerned for the mobility and safety of a loved one, we hope that this booklet can answer all your questions. Happy Scooting!

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

This Guide is separated into three sections to help you choose and use your new set of wheels:

1. Is a Mobility Scooter Right for Me?

Scooters don't suit everyone. This section will help you determine whether they are a safe and useful option for you.

2. Choosing Your Scooter

There are many different types of mobility scooters on the market. It's important that you choose one that suits both your lifestyle and your physical needs.

3. Using Your Scooter

Scooters are therapeutic devices and there are specific regulations on how they should be used. This section has everything you need to know to safely drive and maintain your mobility scooter.

1. IS A
MOBILITY
SCOOTER
RIGHT FOR ME?



CLASSIFICATION

Mobility scooters are designed for people who have limited mobility due to age or disability. They are classified as motorised mobility devices but scooter users are legally viewed as pedestrians and must obey the same rules as other pedestrians. Although you don't need a licence to drive a scooter, it's important to get the right training to ensure you can operate your scooter safely in a variety of situations.

SCOOTER OR WHEELCHAIR?

Your disability or medical condition will influence whether a scooter or wheelchair is the best choice for you. Mobility scooters are good for people who may be able to walk short distances but have a condition which effects their overall strength, like heart conditions or many chronic illnesses.

However, to drive a scooter you must be able to sit upright with little head or torso support and maintain your balance while steering. Generally speaking, mobility scooters aren't suitable for people who need help transferring from beds to chairs. If you or your doctor are worried that you don't have the strength or balance to transfer or sit upright unaided, a powered wheelchair may be a better option for you.

Generally speaking, mobility scooters are cheaper to purchase than powered wheelchairs, but they are also less manoeuvrable and have wider turning circles. They are usually much longer than powered wheelchairs and so take up more room and require more space to turn and manoeuvre in tight spaces. This is important to consider if you're planning to use your scooter indoors.

—
 Scooters are heavy machines, and driving them can be dangerous, so if you have any doubt at all about your ability to safely operate one, you must consult your doctor or specialist before buying a scooter.



MEDICAL ADVICE

If you're purchasing your first scooter, or if your disability or medical condition has recently changed it's a good idea to talk to your doctor or occupational therapist first. They will help you decide whether a scooter is suitable for you and can liaise with your scooter supplier to make sure that you get the very best product for your needs. If you don't have an occupational therapist, ask your doctor to refer you to one.

Below are some of the things your doctor or occupational therapist will assess to ensure you can safely operate a mobility scooter.

Eyesight

To drive a mobility scooter safely users must have sufficient vision to be able see, react to and avoid people and obstacles in their path. Scooter accidents are rare but they can be dangerous for both the user and others. If you have any sort of vision loss, you should talk to your doctor to make sure that you can:

- Easily identify both stationary and moving objects (like people or bicycles)
- Be able to see contrasts in colour and depth (people have been seriously injured by driving down stairwells after mistaking them for shadows on the ground)
- Be able to judge speed and distances, both for yourself and moving objects around you

Mobility Restrictions

Make sure you have the movement and dexterity required to drive a scooter in a variety of situations. Firstly, you must be able to get into and out of your scooter safely. Once in your scooter, you need to be able to sit upright, without external supports, and to maintain and shift your balance, even while your scooter is going over rough terrain. You should also be able to reach and use the hand controls easily and comfortably. In order to avoid obstacles, make sure you can turn your head to look to the side and behind you. It's also important that you, or your carer, can easily get your scooter into and out of its storage place.

Attention Span and Reaction Times

While mobility scooters are very easy to operate, you must stay focused while driving to ensure your safety as well as that of others. Before purchasing a scooter make sure that you can concentrate for long periods and react quickly to take evasive action in case of emergency, such as a child running into your path. It's also important that you can accurately judge speed and distances. Make sure you discuss these issues with your medical adviser, especially if your condition is likely to change over time, or if you are on medication which may affect your awareness.



SCOOTER STORE

2. CHOOSING YOUR SCOOTER



YOU AND YOUR NEEDS

There are lots of types of scooters available on the market and it's important to choose one that meets all your needs. Mobility scooters are therapeutic devices so there's a lot more to consider than just looks and cost. Below are a few important points to think about.

Our Top Tips for Choosing Your Scooter

1. Test drive a few models to make sure you find a scooter you are comfortable using
2. Take a friend or family member with you for a second opinion when looking at scooters
3. Never feel rushed into making a decision

Height

Scooters come in a range of sizes and it's important to choose one that suits your body. Make sure that you can reach the scooter's controls comfortably and that the seat is high enough so that your legs don't obstruct the controls. Three-wheel scooters often offer more leg room than four-wheel models, and are easier to get into and out of if you have trouble bending. In some models the seat, arm rests and steering controls can also be adjusted to suit your height.

Weight

Every scooter has a specific weight it can carry.

Just remember that this refers to how much weight a scooter can safely carry on flat, level ground so even small hills can impact how a scooter's motor functions. For example, a scooter which can carry 112kg on flat land, may only be able to safely carry 80kg up a 10 per cent incline (such as a wheelchair ramp). Carrying weights that are too heavy can damage your scooter's engine, reduce battery life, or even stop you from being able to get to the places you want to go - so make sure you discuss weight limits with your supplier.

Carers

If you'll be relying on a carer to help you assemble, store or maintain your scooter, it's important that they understand how it works. Take them with you when choosing a scooter, and encourage them to ask plenty of questions. Carers are also often in a position to notice changes in your condition before your doctor does, so be sure to listen to their concerns.

The Future

A mobility scooter can last many years, and you want to make sure that you get the most out of your purchase. To do that, it's important to consider your needs both today and in the future. Before purchasing your scooter, think about how your medical condition and lifestyle might change over the next five years. Future changes to consider include:

- Are you likely to gain or lose weight?
- Will you need to start carrying heavy equipment like oxygen bottles?
- Is your mobility, eyesight or cognitive function likely to improve, deteriorate or stay the same?
- Are you planning to move house?
- Are you likely to have lifestyle changes such as starting university, getting a new job or retiring?
- Will you want to take your scooter with you on holiday?



YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Indoor Use

If you're planning to mostly use your scooter indoors, for example in shopping centres, nursing homes or hospitals, then a smaller, more manoeuvrable scooter may be for you. Look for models with tight turning circles and short body lengths, as these will help you to access narrow spaces like corridors, shopping aisles and elevators. Front-wheel drive models are usually smaller and more manoeuvrable than rear-wheel drives, making them perfect for indoor use.

Outdoor Use

Scooters designed for outdoor use are generally larger and heavier than indoor scooters. This enables them to cope with terrain like hills, bumpy surfaces and small puddles. If you're planning to mostly drive your scooter outside, make sure that it has an appropriate battery life for the journeys you're planning to take. It's also a good idea to test drive your scooter in the area/s that you are most likely to use it, to get a good idea of whether it is suitable for your needs.

Terrain

If you're planning to use your scooter outside, you need to choose a model that can cope with the kind of terrain you're likely to encounter. If you regularly drive in hilly areas, or over rough terrain and uneven surfaces you will probably need a larger scooter, with enough power to get over the obstacles in your path. Four-wheeled models usually have larger turning circles than three-

wheeled scooters, but provide much more stability on uneven surfaces, although both types can be tipped if driven incorrectly. Scooters can also be fitted with larger tyres to help increase their grip on rough ground like gravel and rear-wheel drive models generally have better traction than front-wheel drives.



Distance

No one wants to run out of battery power halfway through their trip, so it's important to consider how far you're planning to travel before buying your scooter. Will you just be using your scooter to pop down the shops? Will you drive it to and from work but leave it charging during the work day? Will you use it all day at university and then take it to go out to dinner with your friends? All of these decisions will impact how much battery power you will need. Keeping your battery well-charged and never letting it completely run down will help to increase battery-life. If in doubt, choose a model with slightly more battery power than you think you'll need, that

way your lifestyle won't be limited by how long your battery lasts.

Size and Portability

There are a range of foldable or portable scooters available which can be easily lifted and transported in a car or other vehicle. They're designed to be easily dismantled and some even come with their own carry bag. As portable scooters are usually smaller than other scooters, they may not be suitable for taller people, cannot carry as much weight, and their battery life can be shorter, so be sure to think about these factors before buying your scooter. Larger scooters can safely be transported in wheelchair accessible vehicles, including accessible taxis with a four-point tie down system. Ask your scooter supplier to install anchor points for you if you need to transport a large scooter regularly.

—
Keeping your battery well-charged and never letting it completely run down will help to increase battery-life.

Storage

When you're not driving your scooter, you're going to need somewhere secure to store it. Ideally, your mobility scooter should be kept locked indoors. This will keep it out of the weather and away from prying eyes of potential thieves. If you don't have room indoors, always lock your scooter against a secure anchor point and keep it under cover to avoid the rain. You can buy scooter covers to protect it from the elements.

Remember

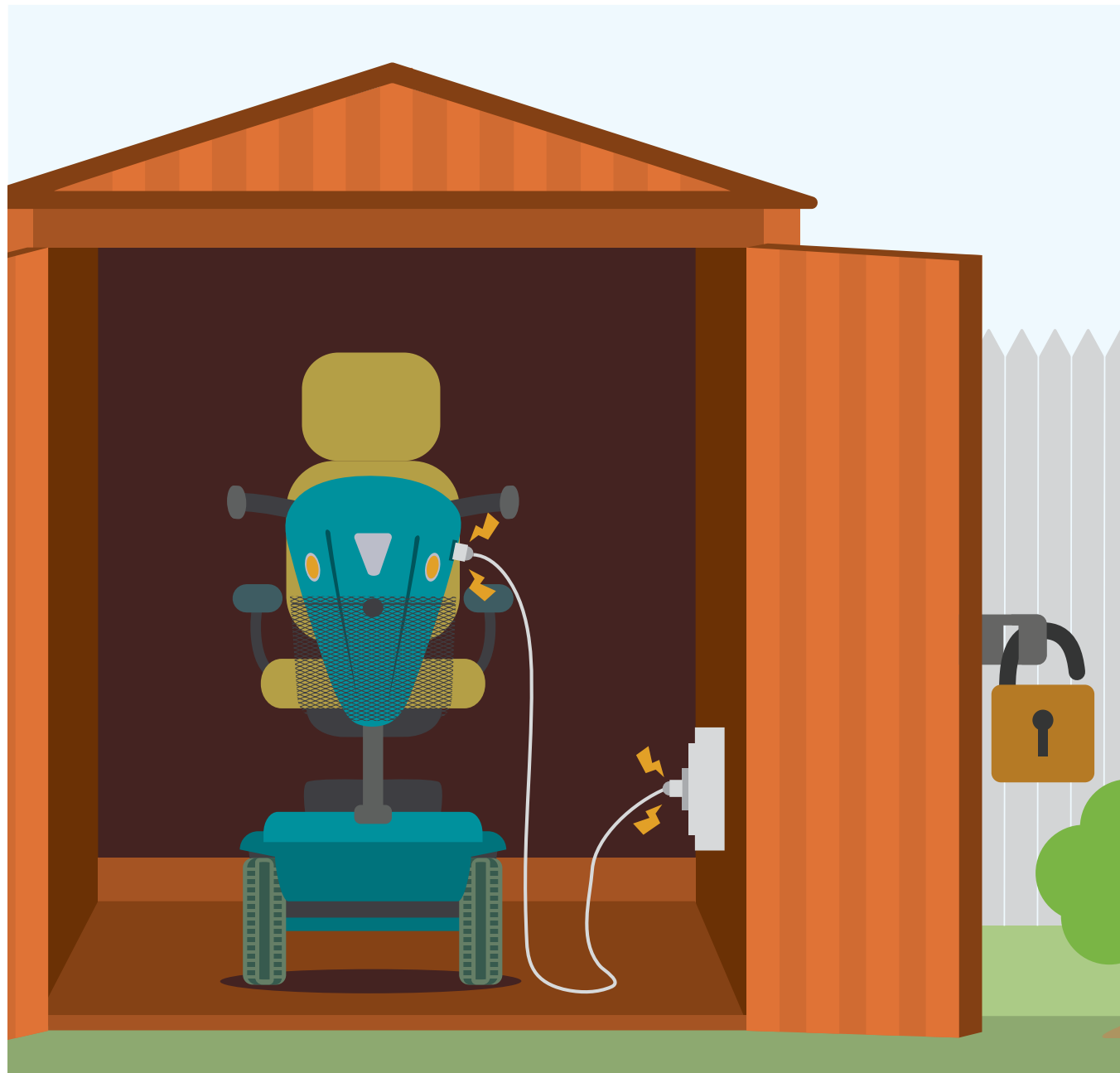
Even if you live in an urban environment, you still need to consider the terrain around you. Curbs and speed humps can be hazardous, so make sure that your scooter has enough ground clearance to get you where you need to go.

Be sure to take into account any hills, including ramps and underpasses, in your area and choose a scooter with enough power to compensate.

Think about where you will store your scooter. Scooters are valuable and mobility scooter theft is on the rise, so make sure you have a secure and accessible space large enough to park and charge your scooter.

If you opt for a portable scooter, make sure you/your carer can carry and assemble it easily.

If you're a regular scooter user and you love to travel, you may wish to purchase both a full-sized scooter for everyday use, and a portable one for trips away. That way you'll have the right mobility aid for every occasion.



WHERE TO BUY YOUR SCOOTER

Do a quick online search and you'll find lots of places to buy mobility scooters. These range from specialist scooter suppliers with a wide range and deep knowledge of the industry, to pharmacists who might have one or two models, and individuals selling their second-hand scooter. You'll want to choose a reputable supplier to help you choose the best product for you. Below are some of the things to look out for when choosing a reliable scooter supplier.



Test Driving

The supplier should let you test drive several scooters before deciding on the right one for you. In many cases they'll bring various models to you so you can try them out in the area/s that you'll use your scooter most.



Consulting

Reputable suppliers are happy to consult with your doctor or occupational therapist and even have them present when you test drive or choose your scooter.



Training

Once you've chosen your scooter, the supplier should provide you comprehensive training on how to use it, store and maintain it. This should all be included at no extra charge.



After Sales Service

Good suppliers provide after sales service to ensure you are happy with your purchase and maintain your scooter in top condition. This will include a warranty and servicing to help keep you moving.



Warranty

Reputable suppliers provide a warranty on their products, even if they are second hand. Ask for a warranty of at least six months and make sure that it covers parts, repairs and labour. If you're buying your scooter from interstate or overseas, make sure that your warranty includes the cost of shipping your scooter back for repairs as this can sometimes cost more than the repairs themselves.



Compliance

There are compliance regulations for mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs in Australia. These include being speed limited to 10 km per hour and safety requirements for brakes, batteries and chargers. These regulations are designed to keep you and the people around you safe when you use your scooter. It may be illegal to use your scooter in Australia if it isn't compliant. Check with your dealer to ensure your equipment is fully compliant with Australian law.



Do Your Research

There are many makes and models of mobility scooters available in today's market. Make sure that the brand you use offers a manufacturer's warranty and that spare parts are easily available. If your scooter breaks down, you don't want to have to wait months for spare parts, or find out that your manufacturer has closed down and parts are no longer available. Choosing better-known brands will help to ensure that you have the support you need if something goes wrong.

Make Sure you Get the Training You Need

Every scooter is slightly different, and whether you're buying your first one, or upgrading to a newer model, it's vital to know how to use your scooter safely. Training should include:

1. Turning and managing inclines safely
2. Emergency stopping
3. Safe charging and storage
4. Basic maintenance
5. Scooter assembly (if you have a portable model)

If you'll be relying on a carer or family member to help move, store or maintain your scooter, it's important to bring them with you to the training. Make sure you and your carer ask plenty of questions.

BUYING A SECOND-HAND SCOOTER

There are a wide range of second-hand mobility scooters available on the market, providing a cost-effective alternative to new models. Vendors range from mainstream mobility equipment dealers who sell refurbished models, to individuals selling a scooter they no longer need. Here some important things to consider when buying a second-hand scooter to make sure you're getting value for money:

History

Try and find out as much as you can about the history of your scooter. Has it been serviced regularly? Has it been involved in accidents and if so, what was the extent of the damage? How often was it driven? Take the time to ask these questions to ensure you are satisfied with the condition of the scooter before buying it.

Parts

Not all parts on a scooter wear evenly. Batteries, tyres and chargers need to be regularly replaced. Ask about the age of these items and whether they have been recently replaced or refurbished. Buying new batteries, tyres and a charger will quickly mount up to hundreds of dollars, making your second-hand scooter less of a bargain.

Documents

Second-hand scooters often don't come with original documents such as the warranty and owner's manual. These can contain important information so take the time to look up the make and model online as you will often find the manual is available to download for free. It is also recommended that you select a model where manufacturer has an office in Australia so you can buy spare parts when your scooter needs repairs.

Test Drive

Take the time to test drive the scooter. Consult your doctor or occupational therapist to make sure you choose a suitable model, just as you would if you were buying a new one. Take the time to consider your options and don't let anyone rush you into a decision.

Research

While online, check what year your model of scooter was made. It can sometimes be hard to get parts for older models. Contact your local scooter repairer and ask if they have access to parts for the specific make and model and whether they have experience repairing them.

Warranty

Try and get a warranty. Of course, this will not be possible if you are buying from a private seller, but many mobility equipment suppliers will provide a warranty for refurbished scooters. Make sure your warranty includes both parts and labour and is for at least six months.

BUYING SCOOTERS FROM OVERSEAS

There are also lots of scooters available online from overseas. While these can seem like good value, there are often hidden costs involved. Here are some of the things that you need to look out for when purchasing equipment from overseas:

- The first and most important thing to do is to check that the scooter is compliant with Australian Standards. This includes being speed limited to 10km per hour, and safety requirements for brakes, batteries and chargers. If your scooter doesn't conform to ANZ Standards it may be illegal to use it in Australia, and it may even be a fire hazard.
- Mobility scooters being sent from overseas will often arrive dismantled. This means that you'll have to assemble it when it arrives. Reassembling a scooter can be particularly challenging for someone with a mobility impairment, or who doesn't have the necessary technical expertise.
- Check the electrical outlets and wattage that your scooter uses. Some countries use outlets and wattages that differ from those in Australia, meaning that you won't be able to charge your scooter safely. It may be possible to convert scooters and/or chargers for use in Australia, but the cost of this conversion should be factored into the cost of your scooter.



- It is advisable to ask your local scooter supplier/repairer if they are familiar with the make and model of an overseas sourced scooter before buying one to see if they can access spare parts should you need it down the track. Otherwise you may face long delays getting repairs, or even have to pay to have your scooter shipped overseas for maintenance.
- Shipping a scooter from overseas can be both expensive and time consuming. Take the cost of shipping into account and check how long it is likely to take to arrive. A scooter sent by cargo ship could be in transit for months.
- Some overseas sellers offer warranties but they can be difficult to action if you buy a product in another country. Find out whether your scooter manufacturer has offices in Australia, and whether they cover repairs made here.

—
There can be a lot of hidden costs associated with buying a second-hand scooter. Make sure you do your research first to avoid unpleasant surprises.

3. USING YOUR SCOOTER



PRACTICE

The majority of mobility scooter accidents happen within the first few months of buying one. This is why it's important that you continue to take your time to get to know your new scooter for several weeks after buying it. Try travelling on flat ground and in quiet areas before tackling rough terrain or busy crowds. If you, your family or your doctor feels you need a bit of extra help, an occupational therapist can provide extra training, either when you buy a new scooter or if your functionality changes over time.

ROAD RULES

Each state and territory has its own rules and regulations regarding mobility scooters, however there are some basic rules which apply right across the country. These include:

- 1 Mobility scooters should only be used by people who have difficulty walking.
- 2 Scooters should be speed limited to 10 km per hour on level ground.
- 3 People using scooters are classified as pedestrians and must follow the same road rules as other pedestrians.
- 4 Scooters must not be driven on the road if there is a footpath or nature strip available.
- 5 It's illegal to drive a scooter when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 6 Scooters do not require registration unless you live in Queensland.

—
Scooter users
are classified as
pedestrians and
must follow the
same road rules as
other pedestrians



Click on your state or territory
to familiarise yourself about the
regulations you need to be aware of

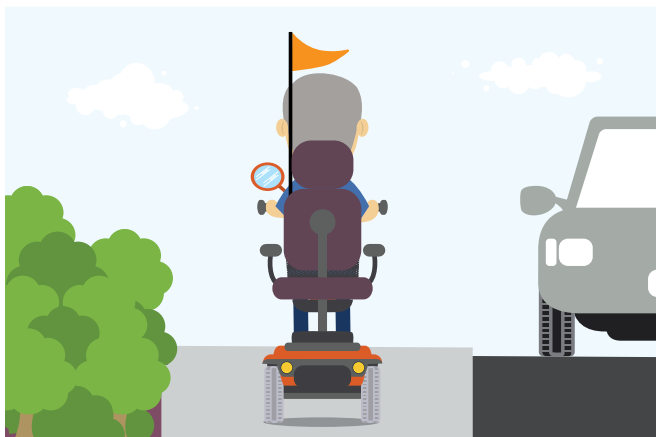


SAFETY

Once you've purchased your scooter, it's important to make sure you operate it safely and responsibly. Scooter accidents are rare, but when they happen they can cause serious injury and even death, to the scooter user or the people around them. Fortunately, there are lots of things you can do to make using your scooter a safe and enjoyable way to get mobile. Below are a few tips to remember.

Stay Visible

It is highly recommended to install a safety flag or lights on your scooter. This is especially important if you regularly need to cross roads, move between parked cars or travel at night.



Take Care Crossing Driveways

Remember that on your scooter, you're at a height disadvantage compared to other pedestrians and drivers may not see you easily. Safety equipment like lights and flags help, but it's still important to pay close attention to what's going on around you.



Stick to Footpaths

Don't drive on the road unless there is no other option. Be sure to watch for vehicles entering or exiting driveways and for people coming out of shopfronts.

Keep All Your Wheels on the Ground

Whether you are using a three or four-wheel model, scooters can be tipped over if used incorrectly, potentially causing serious injury or even death. To prevent this from happening keep all of your wheels on the ground at all times. To do this, always



approach hills, bumps and curbs head on, not at an angle. It's also important to make turns slowly and never turn with your steering on full lock, especially in three wheeled models.

Don't Carry Too Many Parcels

Loading yourself down with too many heavy items not only puts added stress on your scooter motor, it can also unbalance your scooter, potentially making it tip over. If you plan to regularly carry your shopping, bags or other equipment take this weight into consideration when you choose your scooter and ask your supplier to install baskets, bags or racks so you can store your items safely.



Don't Speed Through Crowds

In Australia scooters are speed-limited to 10 km per hour, but sometimes people walk much slower than that. To avoid accidents, be sure to match your speed to the people around you, especially when indoors or in crowded areas.



Service Your Scooter Regularly

This will keep your scooter in top condition and decrease the chance that it will break down unexpectedly or become unsafe.

Know What to do in Case of Breakdown

Have a plan for what to do if your scooter suddenly breaks down. Join a roadside assistance program and keep their phone number in your mobile phone. Carry spare tube for your tyres (if appropriate) and always keep your batteries well charged.

Know Your Own Limits

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when staying safe on your scooter is to always know the limits of your skills and your scooter. If you have trouble with your vision, don't use your scooter at night or in the rain. Don't use it if you're tired or if your medication has made you drowsy and never drive when affected by drugs or alcohol. Don't try to cross terrains or carry loads that your scooter isn't designed to handle and try not to let your batteries run all the way down. A little bit of common sense can go a long way in keeping you and those around you safe.

MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance will make sure that your scooter stays in top condition. In most cases, your scooter supplier will provide this service. You should service your scooter once a year, or once every six months if you use your scooter every day. It's also worthwhile getting your scooter serviced before taking it on holidays or long trips. Servicing should include:

- 1 Checking, and if necessary repairing or replacing batteries and battery chargers.
- 2 Making sure brakes and steering are safe and well-maintained.
- 3 Monitoring and, if necessary, replacing tyres.
- 4 Checking and maintaining wheel bearings, screws, bolts, fuses and any moving parts.
- 5 Monitoring any concerns you have or changes that you've noticed.
- 6 Looking out for and repairing any damage or wear and tear. A regular service will help to spot any issues before they become major problems.

REPAIRS

No matter how well you maintain your scooter, there will be times when it needs to be repaired due to wear and tear or accidents. All repairs should be conducted by a qualified technician who has experience working with mobility scooters and access to spare parts from your scooter manufacturer. This will ensure your safety and make sure that repairs are suitable and long lasting. Many scooter suppliers service and repair the scooters that they sell.

Remember

There are lots of little things that you can do to keep your scooter running smoothly between services

Read your manual. This sounds obvious, but your scooter's instruction manual will contain lots of tips on caring for your scooter.

Keep your scooter clean and dry. Store it under cover and wipe it down regularly with a cloth to avoid dust from getting into moving parts.

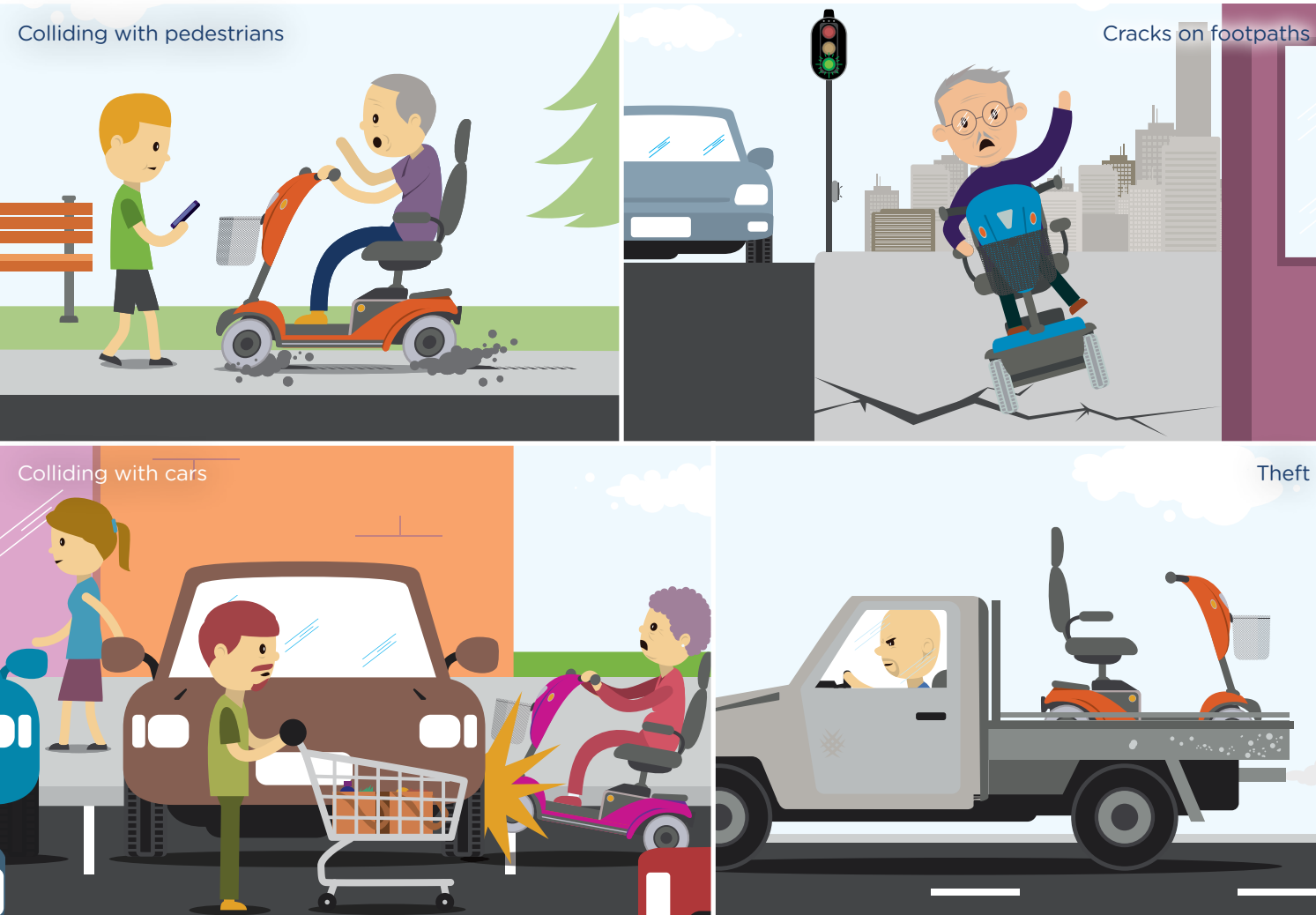
Keep your battery well charged and never let it run down completely. Remember that your battery strength can fade if your scooter is left unused for a long period of time, especially in cold weather, so be sure to recharge it regularly or purchase a smart charger which will regularly top up your batteries if left plugged in.

Monitor your tyres. Check for tread wear and keep pneumatic tyres well-inflated.

If you notice any problems or changes, tell your scooter repairer straight away.

Accidents Happen

Mobility scooters provide a great way to get out and about if you struggle to walk long distances. While your scooter might be safe, the environment around you may not be. Everyday obstacles can create dangerous situations and accidents happen. Protect yourself against the costs associated with mobility scooter accidents with affordable cover through Blue Badge Insurance.



Comprehensive Cover

As specialists in mobility equipment insurance, we understand how important your mobility is to you. This is why our Comprehensive Mobility Scooter Insurance policy provides tailored benefits to help keep you moving if you have an accident. Some of the benefits offered include:

- ✓ Repair or replacement of a damaged mobility scooter
- ✓ Loss or damage by fire, theft, vandalism or flood[^]
- ✓ Third Party Injury and Property Cover - protects you if you hit and injure somebody or their property while riding your mobility scooter[‡]
- ✓ New for old replacement (for mobility scooters up to 2 years old)
- ✓ Cover for any legal user you authorise, not just yourself
- ✓ Costs incurred to get you and your mobility scooter home following an accident
- ✓ Personal items that get lost, stolen or damaged while using your mobility scooter
- ✓ Overseas cover for accidental damage, third party injury and property for 21 days, when you are travelling (excludes third party injury cover in USA and Canada)

Call 1300 304 802 or visit www.BlueBadgeInsurance.com.au to find out more

[^] An exclusion applies to loss or damage caused by actions of the sea, tidal waves, high water or erosion. - Third party injury cover does not apply to accidents in Queensland if the mobility scooter is required to be registered as CTP insurance is included with the registration (see www.tmr.qld.gov.au for more information). For full details of the conditions, terms, limits and exclusions and to decide whether this cover is suitable for you please read the relevant Product Disclosure Statement. Blue Badge Insurance Australia Pty Ltd ABN 18 620 594 765 is an Authorised Representative (AR 1257617) of the Insurer The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd ABN 78 090 584 473, who holds a current Australian Financial Services Licence No. 241436.



TRAVELLING WITH YOUR SCOOTER

With a little bit of preparation, you can also take your scooter when you travel, giving you extra mobility wherever you want to go. The most important thing to remember when travelling with a scooter is to always think ahead and check the accessibility before you set out. This is especially important when travelling with an airline or cruise ships as they all have their own policies.

If you're planning a longer trip, plan for emergencies before you go. Check whether your roadside assistance plan covers the area you're travelling to. If not, find the nearest mobility scooter shop to your accommodation and contact them to see if they have technicians who can help you if you have a breakdown. Carry spare batteries and inner tubes (if appropriate) with you. It's also a great idea to insure your scooter before you travel, and if you have a pre-existing policy, make sure it covers you while you are overseas.

It's also important to consider the type of scooter you use while travelling. While there are access options available for full-size scooters, regular travellers should consider purchasing a foldable or portable scooter as these are a great option for people on the move.

Remember

Plan ahead – make sure the areas you are going to are accessible. This includes transport providers, hotels, restaurants and activities.

Make sure your scooter is suited to the area you are going.

Find your nearest scooter supplier and keep their details handy in case of emergency.

Carry spare batteries, tires and tubes in case you need them.

Get the right insurance cover to ensure you and your scooter are protected during your travels.

TRANSPORT

Sometimes you'll need to transport your scooter in another vehicle to get where you want to go. Whether you want to travel in a car, train or aeroplane, there are a number of things you need to consider before setting out. If you plan to regularly travel with your scooter, you might want to consider buying a portable model for easy transport.



Cars

Whether you're planning a road trip, or just heading down the shops, there may be times that you want to take your scooter with you in the car. If you have a portable scooter this is no problem, just disassemble your scooter and pack it into the backseat or boot.

If you have a full-sized scooter, there are a number of options available to you:

- 1. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle** - If you have a wheelchair accessible vehicle, you can safely travel with your scooter in the back of the car if your scooter is fitted with a four-point tie down system.
- 2. Tow bar mounted carriers** - These come in a variety of designs depending on the size and weight of your scooter. The scooter is usually carried on a tray behind the car, with an extendable ramp. Tow bar mounted carriers don't have their own wheels so the entire weight of the scooter and carrier rests on the tow bar. The combined weight of your scooter and carrier shouldn't exceed the vehicle manufacturer's rated allowable down force. Scooter carriers are large and add

a significant unsupported weight to the rear of the vehicle, which can affect road handling, and increase space required for parking.

3. Trailers – Some trailers can be used to carry mobility scooters. They carry the weight of the trailer and scooter on the tow bar, but also have their own wheels to more evenly distribute the load. The combined weight of the trailer and scooter shouldn't exceed the manufacturer's vertical load rating. Trailers should include a fold-up ramp, allowing for easy loading and unloading and you and/or your carer should ensure that you are familiar with the procedure. Trailers increase the parking space required by a vehicle, and drivers should make sure that they're comfortable reversing and parking with the trailer attached.



Taxis

Taxi regulations differ in each state and territory, however there are some basic rules which apply nation-wide. Portable scooters can be safely carried in all sorts of taxis, as long as they are folded and can fit in the boot or back seat. Full-sized scooters can only be carried in a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi if they are fitted with four anchor points, allowing it to be safely used with the taxi's four-point tie down system. The taxi driver is responsible for safely securing the scooter. Passengers are not allowed to sit on the scooter while the taxi is in motion, and must instead sit in a car seat with their seat belt buckled.

In many areas, taxi drivers are allowed to charge a fee for securing a scooter or lifting a portable scooter into the car. This fee takes into account the extra time and effort that it takes to provide this service.

Most states and territories have a subsidy scheme available for people with limited mobility to help them cover the cost of taxi fares.

Click on your state or territory for information about your local subsidy scheme



Remember

If you plan to use public transport regularly, choose one that fits within Australia's public transport standards. Accessible public transport is designed to accommodate scooters and wheelchairs that can fit within a 1300mm and 800mm space, with a maximum width of 750mm. The total weight of you, your scooter and your belongings shouldn't exceed 300kg. If your scooter fits within these parameters, you should be able to safely use accessible public transport in Australia.

Taxi drivers are allowed to charge a fee for securing a scooter or lifting a portable scooter into the car



Planes

Most airlines have their own policies for carrying mobility aids like scooters or powered wheelchairs, so it's important that you speak to them directly when booking your ticket. When you contact the airline, they will want to know certain details about your scooter to make sure it can be carried safely so make sure you know the make and model of your scooter, the type of battery it uses (lithium, gel or led) and the battery's size (voltage and amp hours) before you call. Also take note of the size and weight of your scooter when folded. Some batteries must be removed and carried as hand luggage. If this is the case for your scooter, make sure you have an appropriate box or carry-case for it. Some airlines may also require a verification of compliance certificate for your battery, these are available from your manufacturer or supplier.

Most airlines will carry scooters and wheelchairs for free and not include it in your baggage allowance. Scooters can sometimes be damaged in the baggage hold, so it's a good idea to take photos of its condition before you fly. If you do notice damage

to your scooter on arrival, report it at the baggage claim area before you leave the airport. It's a good idea to insure your scooter before you travel, and make sure you take your insurance policy with you in case you need to use it during your trip.



Public transport

The accessibility of public transport in Australia varies widely, not just from state to state, but between different modes of transport (buses, trains, trams and ferries) and sometimes even between different stops on a single route. Australia does have minimum standards for public transport, but these were introduced in 2002 and have a 30-year timetable for full implementation.

This means that it's vital to do your homework before setting out on you trip. Look up the website of your public transport provider and make sure you check the specific services and stops that you wish to use. If you're still unsure, it's best to phone the public transport provider directly to discuss your needs. For some services, especially long-distance trains, you'll need to book an accessible space in advance.

If it's your first time using your scooter on public transport, it's a good idea to have a practise run first. Make a trip in an off-peak time, when you're not in a rush, just to familiarise yourself with using your scooter in this environment. Many public transport providers also run regular information days, when people with disabilities can explore vehicles at their leisure and ask questions of drivers and other staff.



SECURITY

Sadly, mobility scooters can be an easy target for theft. The most common places for scooters to be stolen are at the owner's home or at shopping centres. Scooter theft has been steadily rising for the past five years, yet many people still leave their scooters unlocked, especially when out shopping. Some incorrectly assume that if they take their key with them their scooter will be secure, however, it can take just 20 seconds for a thief to put a scooter in neutral and take off with it. Your scooter is valuable and important for your mobility, so take the time to securely lock it when not in use, just as you would with a bicycle or other expensive item. If your scooter is stolen, insurance companies may not cover you if you haven't taken reasonable measures to protect it from theft.

Fortunately, it's easy to keep your scooter safe:

- Invest in a quality anti-theft device such as a chain, u-lock, padlock or immobiliser and always lock your scooter when not in use, even if you'll only be leaving it for a short time.
- At home, store your scooter in a secure area or lock it against an anchor point. Store it somewhere where it can't be seen from the road, or conceal it with a cover.

- Don't leave your key in your scooter, and if possible, lock its steering when not in use.
- Don't leave valuables or other possessions in your scooter. These make the scooter look more tempting to thieves.

- Photograph your scooter and take note of the serial number, to help with identification if it is stolen.
- Insure your scooter so that you can get back on the road quickly if it is stolen or vandalised.

—
Scooter theft has
been steadily rising
over the past five
years



INTRODUCING THE LOOP LOCK

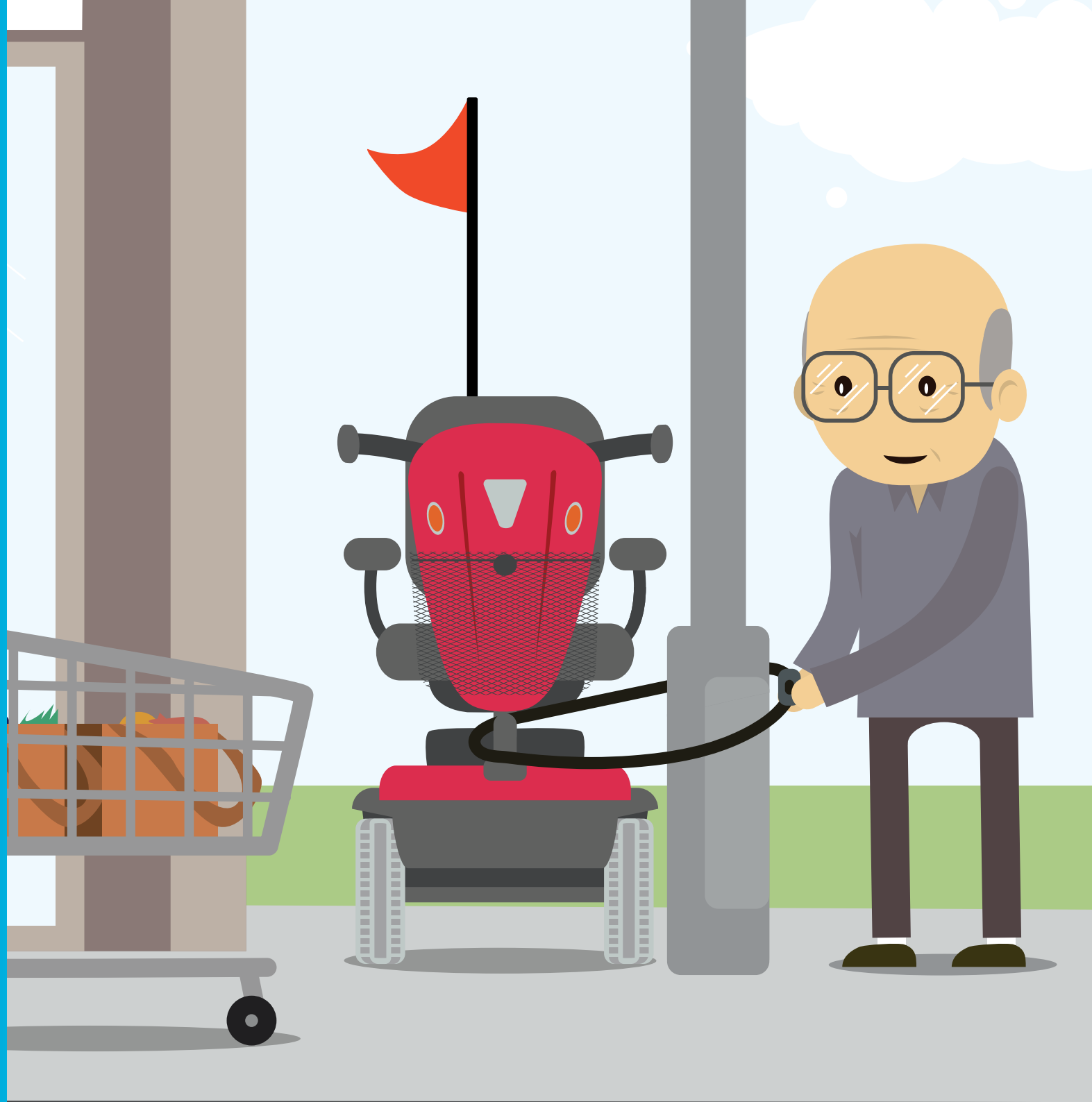
As mobility scooters increase in popularity and become more widely used, unfortunately so has the number of reported thefts. Thieves are realising the value of mobility devices and beginning to target scooters that are left unattended around people's homes, shopping centres and other public places like common areas in apartment buildings, retirement communities and social clubs.

There's a common misconception that simply locking a scooter using the key is enough, but in most cases this doesn't deter theft because most scooters can be put in neutral and pushed away - only to be found trashed and abandoned, or never seen again.

Having your scooter stolen can be devastating. Replacing your equipment can be expensive and if you rely on your device to do your daily activities it makes sense to take steps to protect your scooter.

To help protect you from theft, Blue Badge Insurance has created the Loop Lock. Made from strong yet lightweight materials, the Loop Lock is a quality anti-theft device that features a double sided key to make it very easy to use.

[ORDER YOUR LOOP LOCK HERE](#)



—
If something happens to your scooter, it can be expensive to repair. A quality insurance policy is the best way to make sure that you can get back on your wheels as quickly as possible.



INSURANCE

Mobility scooters provide vital assistance to people who have difficulty walking, allowing them to easily access school, work and the community.

A quality insurance policy should cover three aspects: scooter damage, third party liability and theft. Scooter damage can happen at unexpectedly at any time even by the most experienced drivers.

Third party liability insurance covers damage that your scooter might cause to other people or property, in an accident these costs can quickly mount up. Even minor accidents can result in large third-party costs and you might find yourself facing a hefty bill if you don't have appropriate insurance.

The theft of mobility scooters is also on the rise and even if you take all the right precautions, sometimes you can still find yourself a target of unscrupulous people. A quality insurance policy will allow you to quickly and easily replace a stolen scooter, and any possessions that were in it when it was stolen.

Thankfully, you can protect yourself against the costs associated with mobility scooter accidents with Blue Badge Insurance. As specialists in mobility equipment insurance, we understand how important your mobility is to you. This is why our Comprehensive Mobility Scooter Insurance policy provides tailored benefits to help keep you moving if you have an accident.

Some of the benefits offered include:

- 1** Repair or replacement of a damaged mobility scooter.
- 2** Loss or damage by fire, theft, flood or vandalism to your equipment .
- 3** Third party injury cover to protect you if you hit and injure somebody while using your scooter .
- 4** Third party property cover to protect you if you hit and damage somebody's property (e.g. car) while using your scooter.
- 5** Costs incurred to get you and/or your mobility scooter home following an accident.
- 6** Personal items that get lost, stolen or damaged while using your equipment.
- 7** Cover any legal user you authorise to use your device, not just yourself.

[See our full list of benefits here](#)

It pays to insure your mobility scooter. It will protect you against unexpected costs and will help get you back on your scooter as quickly as possible if you have an accident.

Call 1300 304 802 to insure your scooter with Blue Badge Insurance.

Mobility Scooter Accidents

Here are a few examples of the accidents our customers have experienced, and how much they saved because they insured with Blue Badge.

EXAMPLE #1

Scenario: Customer lost control of their scooter and hit a tree

Damage: Written off due to impact of collision

Claim payment: Blue Badge paid \$1,600* to help replace the scooter

EXAMPLE #2

Scenario: Customer hit automatic glass doors at club

Damage: \$900* worth of damage to doors

Claim payment: Blue Badge paid \$900* to cover

EXAMPLE #3

Scenario: Customer hit fruit display at local shops and boxes hit and damaged two parked cars

Damage: \$2,000* of damage to parked cars

Claim payment: Blue Badge paid \$2,000 to cover

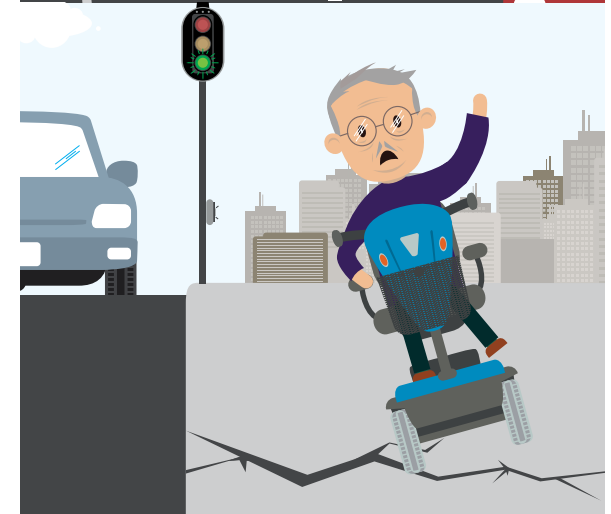
EXAMPLE #4

Scenario: Customer's scooter stolen from locked shed at home

Damage: Total loss

Claim payment: Blue Badge replaced the scooter valued at \$5,500*

* Please note, an excess may apply on an insurance claims.



ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

Roadside assistance is designed to help you if your scooter has a sudden breakdown or mechanical problem while you are out and about. No matter how well you maintain your scooter, there will be times when it breaks down. Roadside Assistance packages are designed to get you moving in just such an emergency.

Roadside Assistance mechanics come to you and can do basic repairs to get you moving. They don't usually carry batteries or new tyres, but can replace them if you have spares on hand.

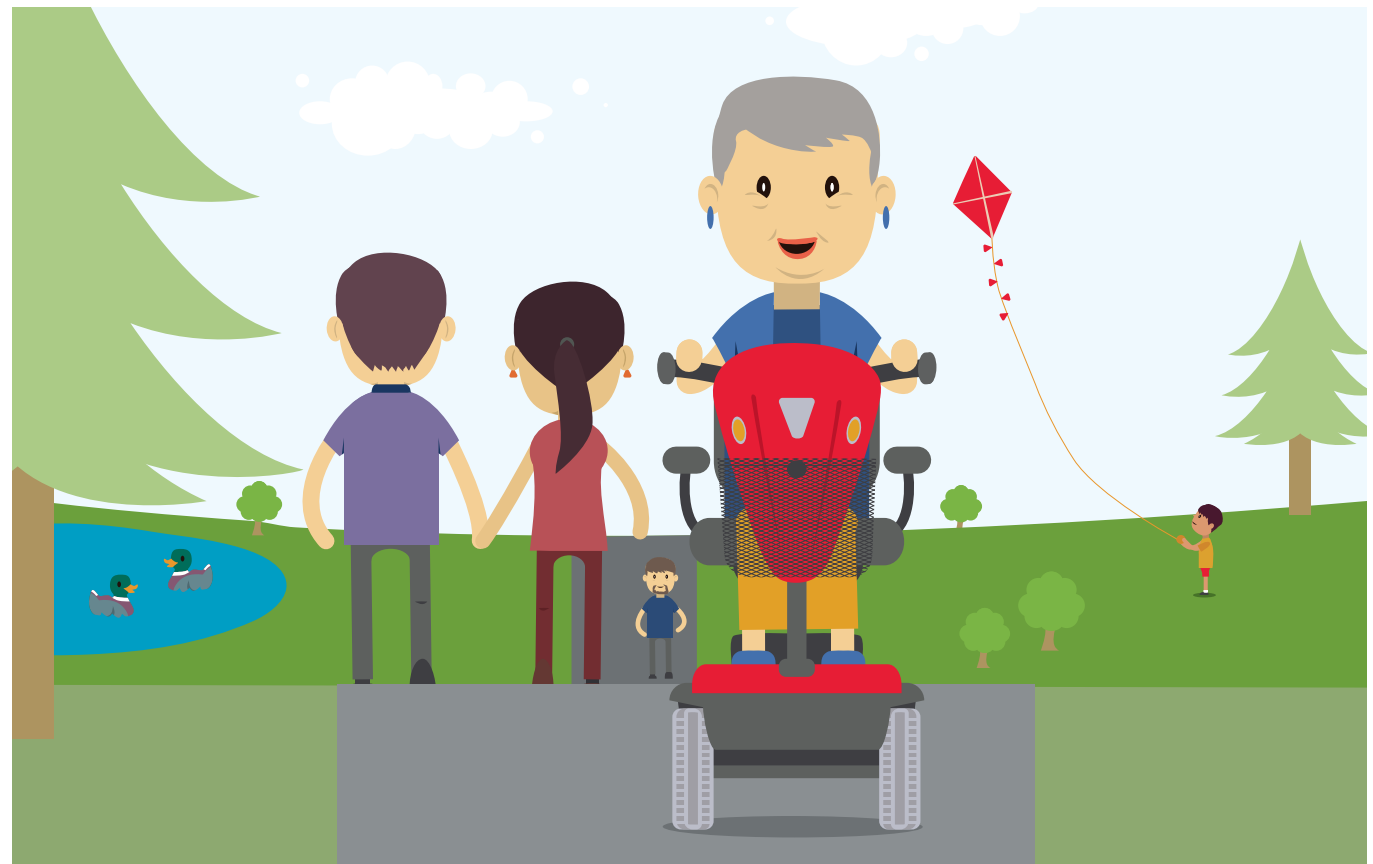
We recommend that you always carry spare inner tubes and puncture kits with you for swift repairs. If the mechanic is unable to repair your scooter on the spot, they may be able to organise safe transport of your scooter and call you a taxi, a friend or carer to pick you up. It's important to note that Roadside Assistance mechanics aren't allowed to help you to transfer from your scooter, however they can help you to contact a friend or carer to do this for you.

Roadside Assistance for wheelchairs and mobility scooters isn't currently available in all states and territories. In New South Wales, roadside assistance is provided free for all mobility equipment users through the NRMA.

You don't need to be a member of the NRMA to use this service, but tyre repairs may incur a fee. In South Australia the RAA provides repairs for mobility scooters to anyone who holds any kind of RAA Roadside Assistance package. In Victoria and Western Australia you can purchase Roadside

Assistance packages designed specifically for mobility scooters through the RACV or the RAC. If you have a Roadside Assistance package for your car with another company, it's worth contacting them to ask if they offer services for mobility scooters.

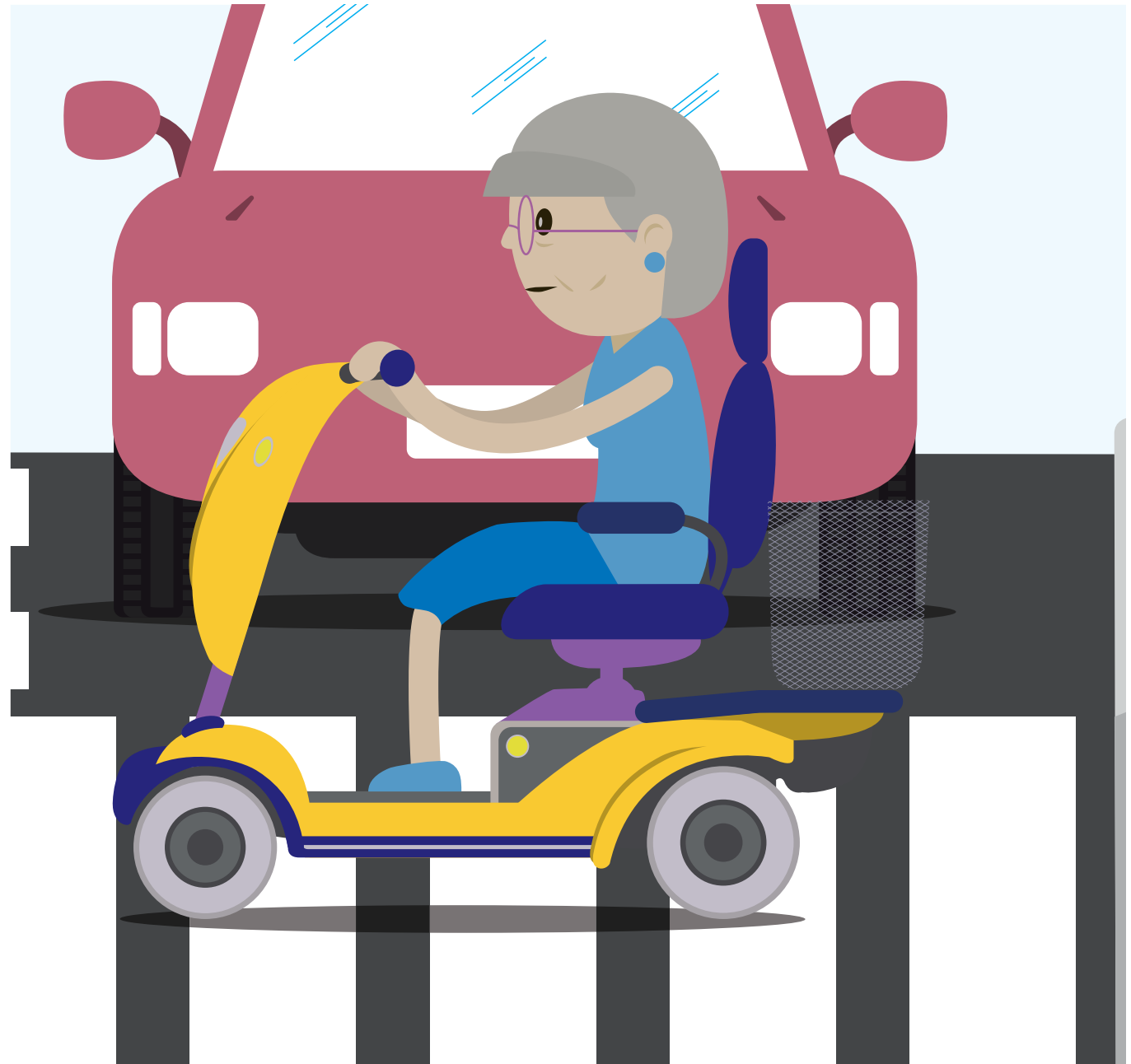
— Remember, Roadside assistance is different to insurance. Insurance policies protect you against accidents and third party liability, whereas roadside assistance will help if you find yourself with a punctured tyre, flat battery or similar problem when you're using your scooter.



BEING CAREFUL, PATIENT AND CONSIDERATE

It's important to always remember to be careful and considerate of others when using your scooter. Although scooter users are classified as pedestrians, scooters are heavy pieces of machinery which means that they have the potential to cause serious injury in case of an accident. It's your responsibility to adapt to the conditions around you to ensure your own safety and the safety of the people around you.

Of course, it would be wonderful if pedestrians, drivers and other road users were more aware of scooter users, but in reality, this isn't always the case. They may not know how long it takes your scooter to stop, or they might not see you easily because you are at a lower height than most pedestrians. This means that you should always stay alert when on your scooter, be aware of what's going on around you and watch out for pedestrians distracted by mobile phones, kids playing and people on bikes or skateboards who may not always see a scooter coming. Fortunately, patience and a little bit of common sense can keep you and any bystanders safe. Here are a few tips to help you share the footpath:



<p>Make sure you have the capacity to drive your scooter safely. Discuss this with your doctor or occupational therapist before you buy one, and have regular check-ups as your condition changes.</p>	<p>Make sure you know how to safely use your scooter. Most scooter dealers provide training and it's a good idea to practise driving somewhere quiet before tackling busy crowds.</p>	<p>Understand the road rules applying to scooters in your state or territory.</p>	<p>Pay attention. You wouldn't send text messages while driving your car, don't do it while driving your scooter. Stay alert to everything that's going on around you.</p>
<p>Be careful when crossing driveways. A lot of accidents happen when people back their cars out of driveways. Because scooter users are lower to the ground than other pedestrians, they can often be hidden by fences, hedges or other obstacles.</p>	<p>Don't travel faster than the pedestrians around you. Weaving through busy crowds can cause an accident. Be patient and go with the flow of traffic.</p>	<p>Always cross the road at pedestrian crossings, even if it means you have to travel a little further. Your safety is worth it!</p>	<p>Drive to the conditions. Slow down if it's dark or wet and slippery. Be aware of hidden driveways or shop doorways where vehicles or pedestrians may suddenly appear.</p>
<p>Always travel on the footpath if there is one available. If there isn't and you are forced to travel on the road you must follow the same rules as other pedestrians. This means that you should face oncoming cars so that they can see you better.</p>	<p>Be careful around automatic or sliding doors. These are designed to open at a pace suitable for walking speed. If you're travelling too quickly you could hit the doors before they are fully open. Crashing into automatic doors is a common accident and if you harm the doors or building you could be liable for significant damages.</p>	<p>Remember that people are unpredictable. Children sometimes run in random directions, shoppers suddenly appear out of doorways. Travelling slowly will make sure you have time to react to what's going on around you.</p>	<p>Scooters are a fantastic way to improve your mobility, and following these few simple tips will ensure that you and the people around you are kept safe and sound. We hope you've found our guide to mobility scooters useful and that your new scooter provides you with many years of happy travelling.</p>

