



ScooterSmart

**...getting the most from your
personal mobility device**

Are you scooter fit?

*Consider your vision, hearing and reactions.
To manage a scooter safely, they must all be up to the job.*

Answer the questions in this section before you buy or rent a scooter. If you aren't sure, ask a family member or a friend. You can also ask your doctor, or get a referral to an occupational therapist.

Every six months or so, re-check these skills to be sure that you can continue to ride your scooter safely.

Mobility: Feet vs. Wheels

Can I stand and walk for the distances I need to go?

Walking is mild, healthy exercise. Do I really need a scooter? Does the convenience of the scooter outweigh the health benefits of walking or taking transit?

Co-ordination and Endurance

Can I operate the controls? Can I turn the key; adjust the dials; use the accelerator and brake?

Can I steer the scooter, and turn around tight corners?

Can I turn my head to look to the side?

Can I turn my head to look behind when reversing?



Can I keep my balance when travelling over rough and uneven ground?

Can I adjust my body position when travelling up and down slopes like ramps and hills?

Can I stay sitting down for extended periods of time?

Vision, Hearing and Perception

Can I notice and avoid obstacles and moving objects?

Can I notice things to the sides while I am looking ahead—things like cars and pedestrians around me?

Can I judge distances accurately?

Can I hear sounds around me that may signal trouble or danger?

Can I properly judge the speed of my scooter and of other vehicles and pedestrians?



Thought Process and Memory

Can I remember how to operate all the controls?

Can I remember the road rules?

Can I concentrate for lengthy periods while riding?

Can I react quickly to stop or turn in an emergency?



Feelings and Judgement

Can I stay calm in difficult situations?

Can I be patient with other people and traffic?

Can I make good judgements to keep myself and others safe?

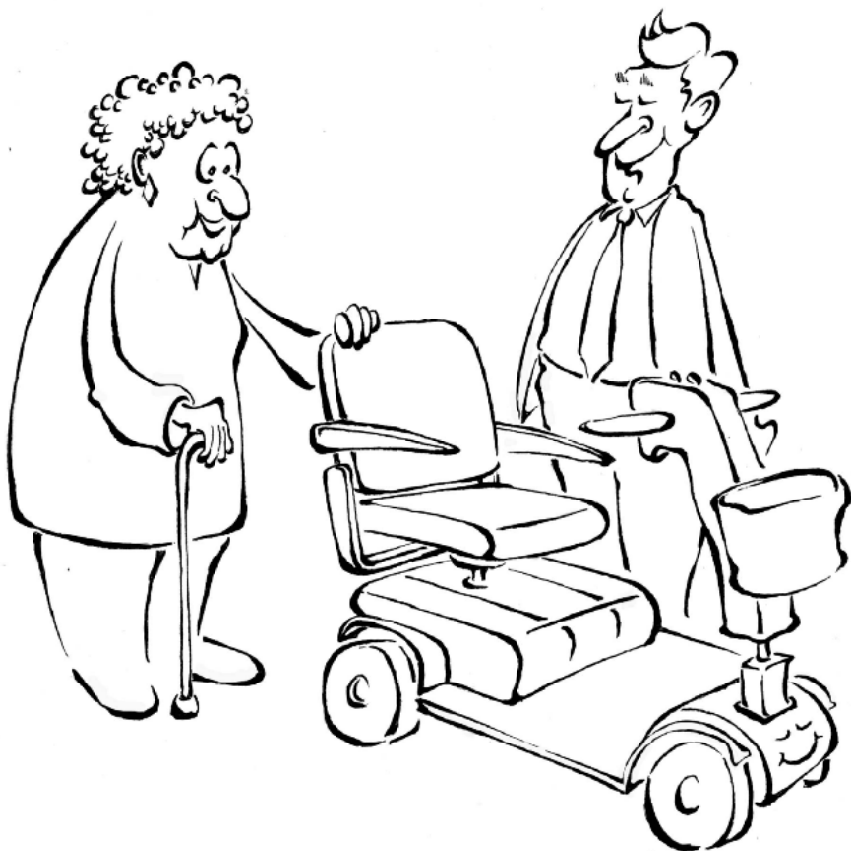
Medication

Is my regular medication, my new prescription or use of alcohol likely to affect my judgement?

What's the best scooter for YOUR needs?

Don't rush your decision. Before you buy, be sure that the purchase is a good investment. Get independent and expert advice. Talk with your family and friends.

Find out what scooter features you'll need so as to ride safely and legally. Ideally, you should ask your doctor for a referral to an occupational therapist to assess your abilities and needs.



It's important to deal with an experienced, reputable scooter dealer.

A good dealer will lend you a scooter on trial for several days, and will offer training, advice, after-sales service and repairs.

It may be possible to set up the scooter and program the controls to suit your particular needs and preferences.

Buying Second Hand?

Before you buy a second-hand scooter, find a qualified local service agent to make sure that it's in good working order.

Be sure that spare parts are readily available for this brand of scooter.

Have the battery tested, because they can be expensive to replace.

INSURANCE

You are not legally required to insure your scooter as a vehicle. If you want to insure it for damage or theft, call your home insurance provider to get it listed with your home contents.

CONSIDER BEFORE YOU BUY...

Does this scooter suit you and your needs for mobility?

Does it suit your weight and build?
(The rider's size and weight can affect stability, especially when turning.)

Is it easy for you to operate and control?

Will it be easy to get through elevator doors and the hallways and doorways where you go frequently?

Can it turn easily in tight corners?
How long does it take to stop?

How does it cope with the different surfaces you plan to travel on?

What is the top speed on level ground?

What sort of hill can it climb?

Can it climb over curbs and gutters?

How far can it travel before the battery needs re-charging?

Is it comfortable? Consider the seating, backrest, etc.

Where will it be stored?

Is there an electrical outlet in the storage area for charging your scooter?

Will it fit on public transit buses and HandyDART?

Most buses will not accept scooters longer than 45 inches or wider than 28 inches (including all attachments).

If you're planning to use HandyDART or wheelchair-accessible taxis, your scooter will also require a seatbelt.

Can it be carried easily by car, van, or wheelchair-accessible taxis?

Does it need to be disassembled to be transported in the trunk of a car?

What is the TOTAL cost?

Is a battery charger included in the price?

How much does routine service cost?

How often does it need to be serviced?

How long does the warranty last?

Does it cover parts and labour?

Does the manual give clear instructions for recharging the batteries, changing light bulbs, and other basic maintenance that you should do at home?

Can you get service and spare parts locally?

Know your scooter

Be sure you know how to operate your scooter properly before venturing out.

Get acquainted with all of your scooter's features. Read the manual and any other safety information that may be supplied with it. Practise and develop confidence before going into public areas.



When you first purchase your scooter, find a quiet parking lot and practise there. Once you feel comfortable that you can safely operate your scooter, ask a friend to travel with you on foot or scooter for your first few trips.

Plan before you leave

Prepare for the unexpected. Plan ahead for what you would do if your scooter ever broke down en route.

Know your area. Become familiar with the easiest routes in your neighbourhood. Know the locations of curbs that do not have curb cuts and streets that don't have sidewalks, and plan to avoid these routes if possible.

Allow yourself plenty of time, as you may need to take an alternative route if unforeseeable circumstances arise, such as construction. You may need to cross the street, take another route, or even back-track.

Check your scooter's battery and tires before you start out. Under-inflated tires may cause problems with stability.

Carry a mobile phone, if you can, and any phone numbers you may need. This

makes it easy to contact someone if you have a problem. You may want to tape your emergency phone numbers onto the scooter.

Take a cane if you need one to walk some distance from your scooter.

Dress for the weather and any likely changes. Do you need a hat and sunscreen? Do you need a rain coat?

If it's wet outside, make sure that the scooter's controls are protected from the weather.

In an emergency, ask a passerby to phone for help. Most people are happy to oblige.

Keep your valuables safe

Protect yourself from theft. Take your keys with you when you park.

Store your purse, wallet and purchases safely.

Keep your valuables out of reach of casual "snatch" thefts.

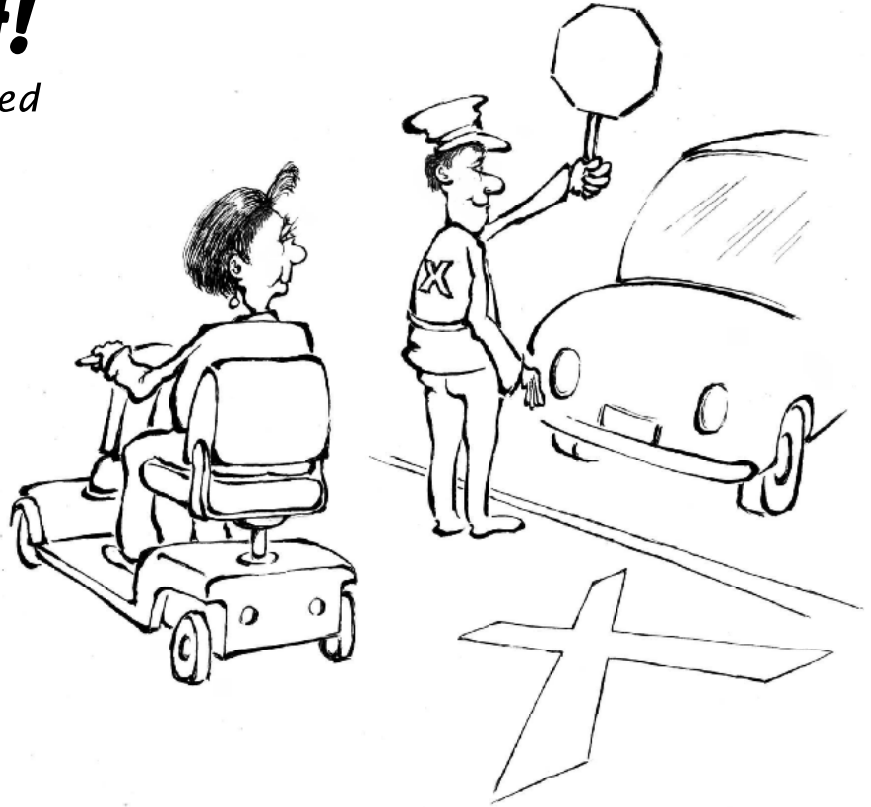


Be Scooter Smart!

On a scooter you are considered to be a pedestrian.

Motorized mobility devices (scooters and motorized wheelchairs) are designed to be used on sidewalks.

The safety rules that apply to scooter users are the same rules that apply to pedestrians.



- Slow down: drive at the same speed as the other pedestrian traffic.
- Wherever possible, use the sidewalk rather than the bike lanes. If there are no sidewalks, or if the sidewalks don't have scooter-accessible curb cuts, travel on the left side of the road, facing the traffic.
- Cross only at intersections and crosswalks. Stop, look both ways, and cross only when all approaching traffic has come to a full stop.
- Make eye contact with motorists and other pedestrians before crossing their path. Be sure that they see you.
- Obey all traffic control signs and devices.

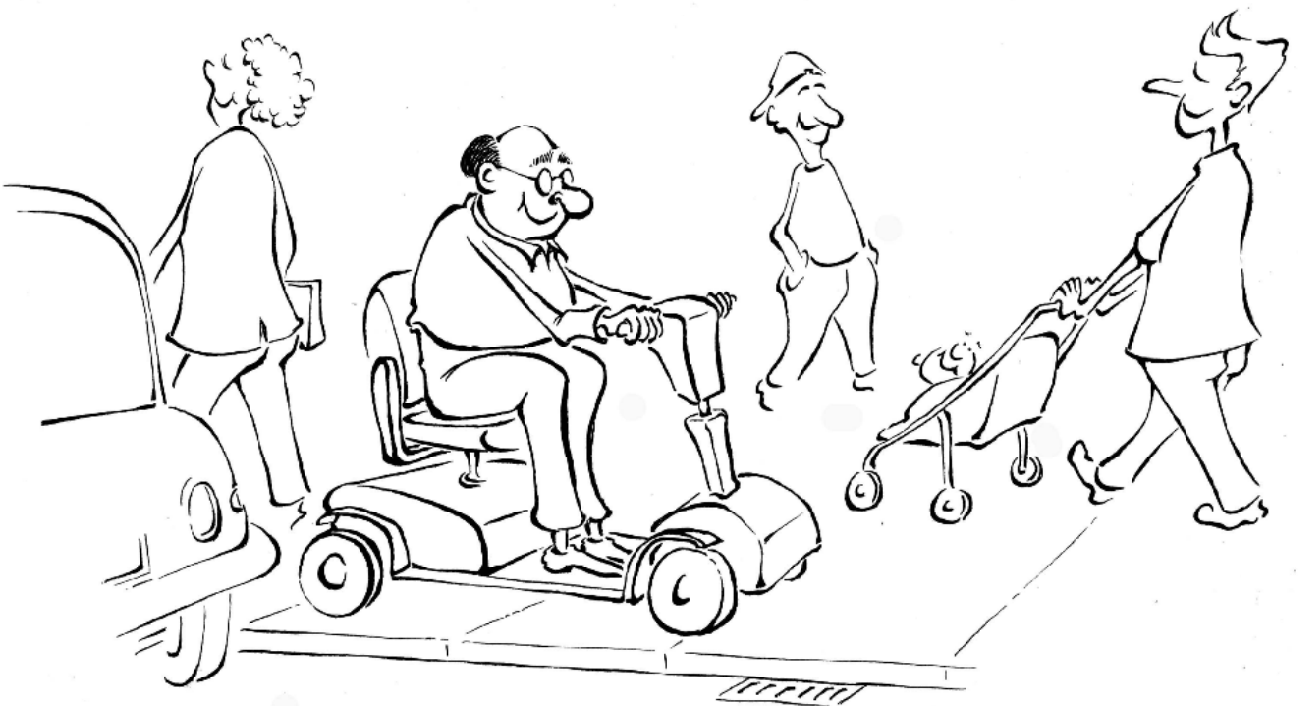
Common sense and courtesy haven't gone out of style.

Be considerate of others sharing your route.

Keep to the right on sidewalks, and leave room for others to get around you. If you meet a friend on the way, pull over to the side to let other pedestrians past.

Travel in single file with other scooter riders, not alongside.

Slow down when approaching other pedestrians. Avoid travelling too closely behind pedestrians and cyclists.



Try to park your scooter to make room for other people, including cyclists, people using strollers, and other scooter riders.

Ask other people to let you pass—avoid honking your horn.

Be careful when traveling close to store fronts. If you are passing too close to a doorway, someone could walk into you as they are leaving.

Getting around safely

Curb Cut safety Approach curb cuts, driveways and ramps “head-on”, not at an angle. If you drive sideways on a curb cut, you could tip over. Always drive on the most level area of the curb cut, even if it means travelling outside the crosswalk lines.

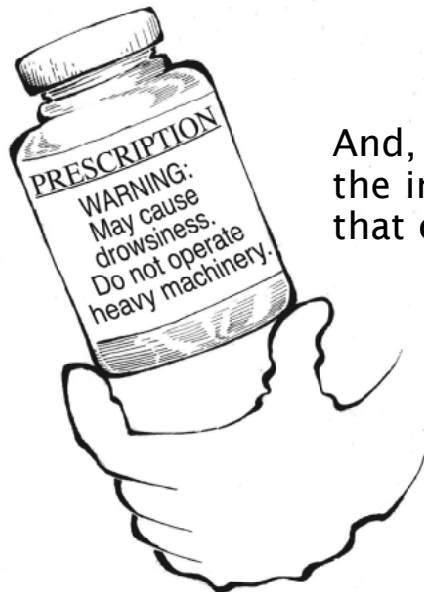
Don't ride your scooter in a downpour

Although you may be comfortable with riding your scooter in light rain, think twice about going out when the weather is really wet. Rainwater can get into the electronic controls on the tiller, or splash up into the electrical components under the scooter, causing a short circuit and leaving you stranded in bad weather.

Climbing hills uses more battery power. Going down hills puts more strain on your brakes. If you must travel up or down a hill, do so slowly.

Turns can be troublesome. Make turns slowly. The faster you take a turn, the more danger there is of tipping over. If you can, avoid turning when going up- or down-hill, as your scooter will be less stable on slopes.

Be careful around parked cars. Never approach too close to the back of a parked car. Drivers may not be able to see you, especially when they are reversing. If you must cross the road near a parked car, cross in front of it.



And, of course, don't use a scooter under the influence of alcohol or any medication that could affect your judgement.

Check your mirrors frequently. Be aware of the location of cars and pedestrians behind you, so that you can take action quickly if you need to.

Keep Control

Make sure that nothing you are carrying gets in the way of your controls, your view or your lights — at front, back or sides.

If you are carrying bags or parcels, be careful about the extra weight and the effect it may have on your scooter's balance.

Be very careful that your clothes, hat, umbrella or rain canopy don't make it hard for you to watch and listen for traffic.

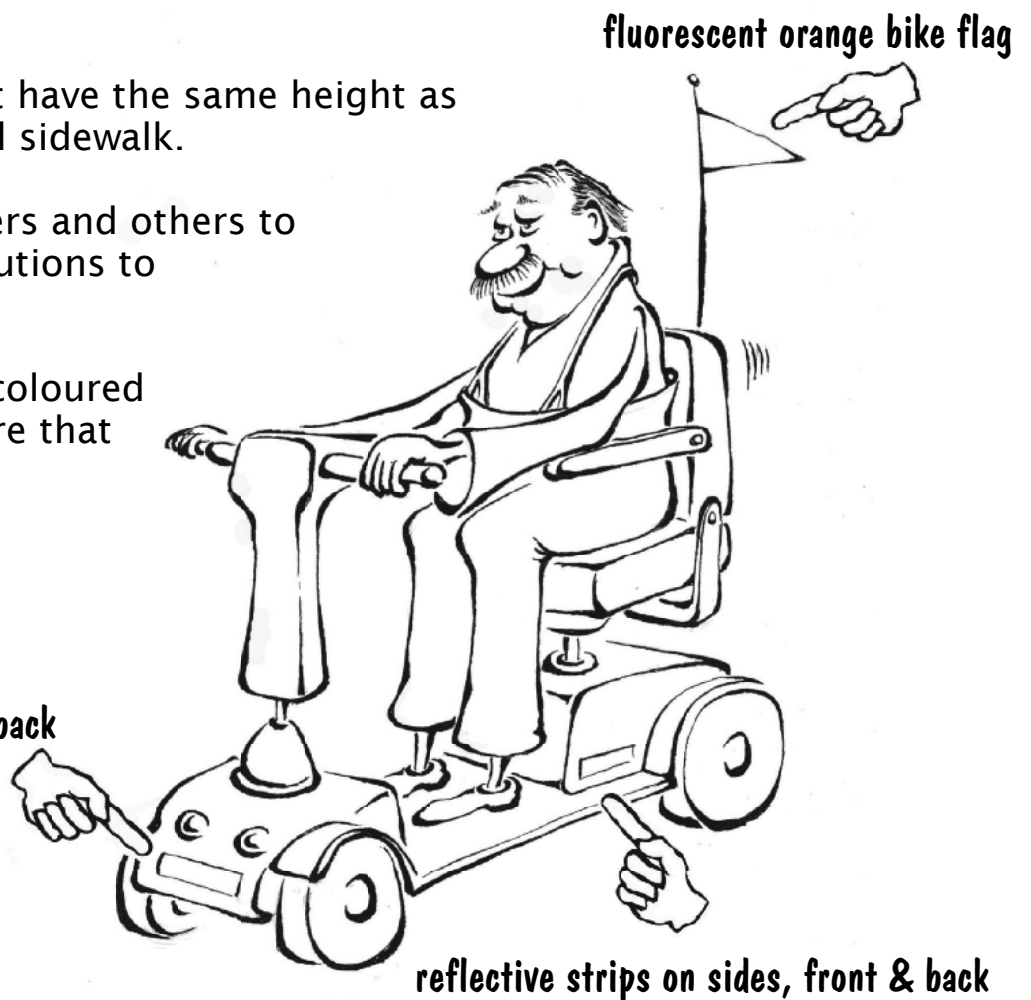
BE VISIBLE

On a scooter you don't have the same height as others on the road and sidewalk.

It can be hard for drivers and others to see you, so take precautions to make yourself visible.

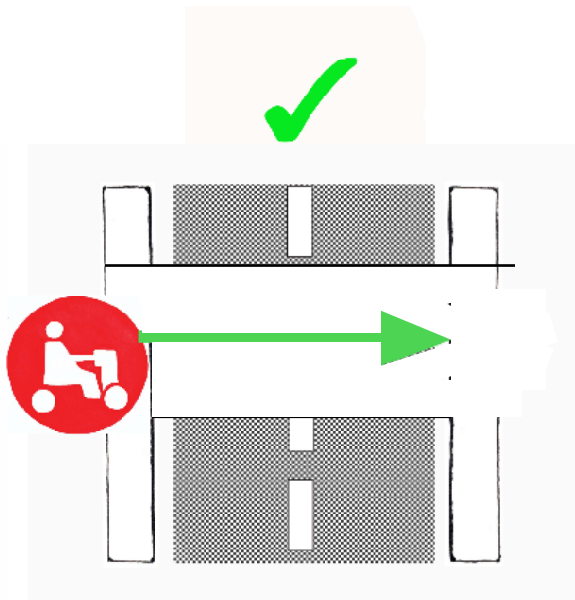
Wear light or brightly coloured clothing, and make sure that your scooter has these visibility aids:

lights on front and back

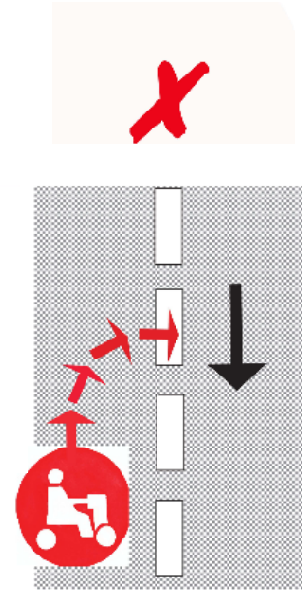


Crossing the Street

Most serious accidents involving scooters occur when crossing the street. Play it safe. Remember and follow the basic safety rules for pedestrians.

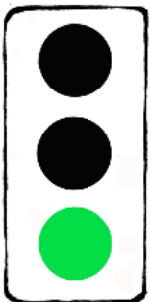


Cross the street at the corner, by the shortest direct route.



Don't "jay-walk" by crossing at other parts of the street, or by crossing diagonally.

Wait for the light



At traffic lights without pedestrian signals, leave the curb only when the light is green.



You must obey the pedestrian signals at crossings that have them. Leave the curb only when you see the "Walk" sign.

Look to the other side before crossing road.

Check that you can get off the road on the other side before starting to cross. There may be a ramp or curb-cut on your side of the road, but is there a ramp on the other side? If not, you could get stuck on the road.

Cross railway level crossings with care.

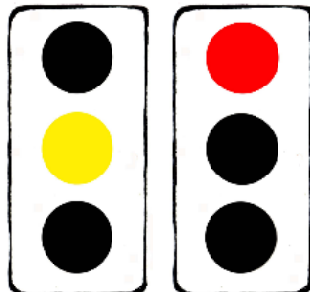
Cross railway tracks only where safe, and cross at right angles to the rails.

Use marked crossings at traffic roundabouts. If there are no curb ramps, cross the road well away from the roundabout. If you must cross a roundabout, go straight across each road, the way you would as a pedestrian. Do not drive in the roundabout.

Wait until there is no traffic on or approaching the roundabout before leaving the curb.

Don't leave the curb

...if the signal is yellow or red,



...or if the “Don’t Walk” sign comes on.



BUT—If you are already on the road and the light then turns amber or the “Don’t Walk” sign flashes, you may continue and cross to the nearest safe place.

Using public transportation



You may be able to practise boarding and leaving an “off-duty” transit bus. Call your local transit office for an appointment.

If you plan to ride transit buses, remember that your scooter (including all attachments) **MUST** fit into a space no more than 28 inches wide by 48 inches long.

Large buses can carry only two customers in wheelchairs or scooters. If the two secure scooter areas are already taken, the driver will not be able to pick up an additional scooter customer. Consider this possibility when planning your trip. Can you wait for the next bus? Do you have another way to get where you want to go?

When calling HandyDART for a pick-up, be sure to mention that you’re planning to use a scooter. The driver will appreciate the advance notice.

Using your scooter indoors

In general, you are allowed to go most places where a pedestrian can go. But remember that your scooter won't fit some areas. When going into a store, check first: are the aisles clear and wide enough?

If you can walk short distances, it may be easier to leave your scooter outside stores or washrooms. Many stores allow you to leave the scooter with the service desk if necessary.

Travel slowly, at about walking pace, especially in malls and busy areas. Let others get past you. Avoid places congested with pedestrian traffic.

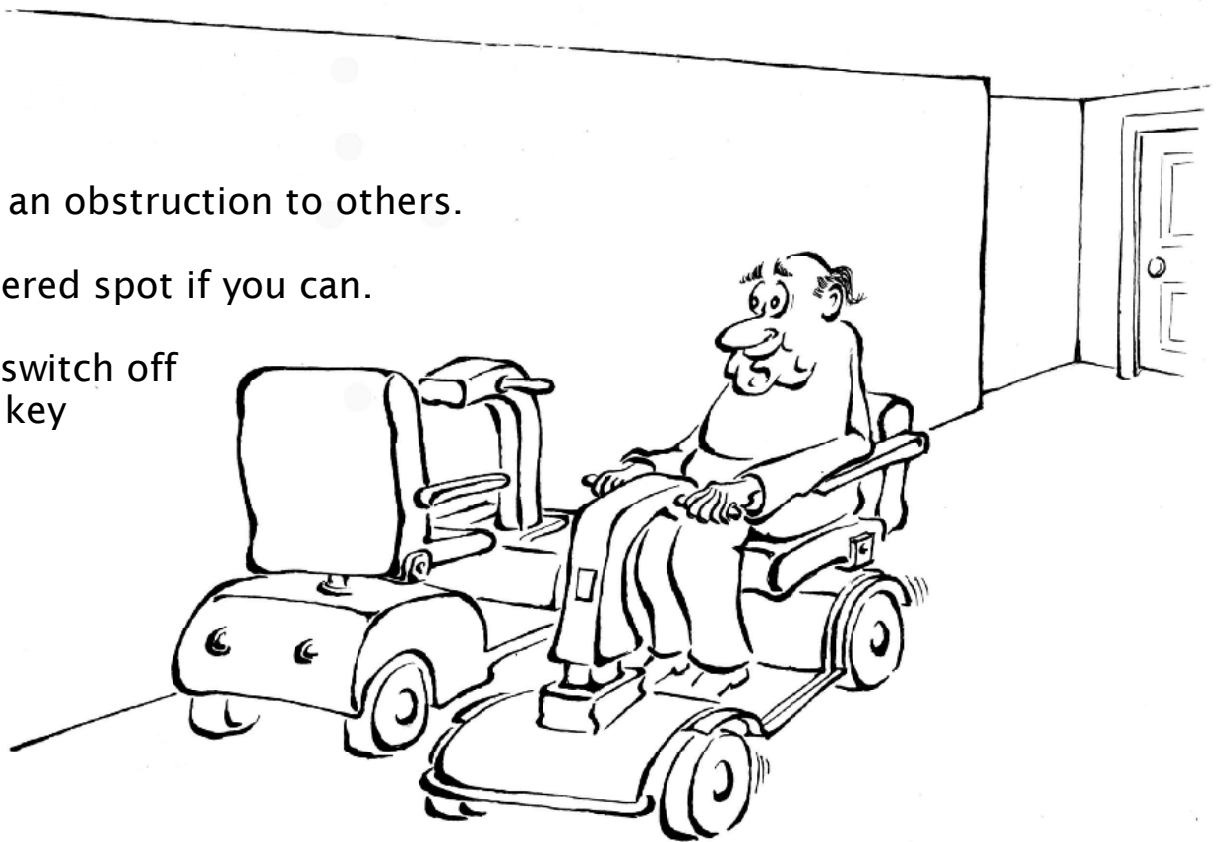
Some buildings have scooter-accessible washroom stalls. Plan your route to take advantage of them.

Parking

Avoid causing an obstruction to others.

Park in a sheltered spot if you can.

Remember to switch off and take your key with you.



When parking in hallways, leave your scooter in a designated area, or park close to the wall so that people can get past easily.

Check that you are “scooter fit”. Assess your vision, hearing, memory and reactions.

Carefully consider the best scooter for your needs. Look, ask and test before you buy.

Follow the safety rules for pedestrians.

Be courteous to others sharing your route.

Be especially careful when crossing the street.

Know all the features of your scooter, and be able to operate them.

Maintain your scooter properly. Check the tire inflation and battery charge, and get regular service from a qualified outlet.

Plan your trip, and take what you need to make it safe and comfortable.

Keep valuables safely stowed, or leave them at home.



**Get the most
from your
scooter!**

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This publication is based on information from various written sources and experts in the field. Care has been taken to ensure that it is as accurate as possible. However, the University College of the Fraser Valley's Centre for Education and Research on Aging takes no responsibility for its accuracy. The intent is to provide general information only, not legal or professional advice.

This publication reflects the laws in British Columbia, Canada, as of March 2008. Because laws change from time to time, please refer to the applicable legislation for a current statement of the law.