

Road Safety Factsheet

November 2017

Scooters

Lightweight, foldable Scooters (often called micro, kick or push scooters) are propelled by the user pushing forward with one leg on the ground and the other on the scooter. They have become very popular among both children and adults, and are increasingly used for leisure, play and commuting. Sales of new scooters are rising and this is expected to increase as Christmas approaches. Unfortunately, as the use of scooters increases so does the number of people being injured while using them.

Accidents and injuries

Unfortunately, there are no official UK statistics for accidents involving non-motorised scooters.

However, in America (where the current scooter 'craze' began), in 2016, riding toys were associated with more emergency department treated injuries than any other category of toy. For children aged 15 or younger, non-motorised scooters were associated with 23% of toy-related injuries. An estimated 48,000 were treated at emergency departments for injuries associated with nonmotorised scooters, of whom 83% were children aged under 15¹.

In New Zealand, figures supplied by the Accident Compensation Corporation show the number of child [scooter-related injury claims increased](#) from 697 in 2008 to 6,474 in 2012. Of these, 80% were caused by loss of balance or control and 10% by collisions. The most common injuries were cuts and soft tissue damage. Some 2% resulted in concussion².

The scooters

There are many different models available in the UK, some of which have been suspended from sale after failing safety checks. One model was recalled after a child lost the tip of a finger in the folding mechanism. Buyers, particularly if they have children, should check whether the folding mechanism can trap their fingers. Any concerns should be raised with trading standards officers.

Scooters are subject to the [Toys \(Safety\) Regulations 2011](#) and must satisfy the "Essential Safety Requirements" and be **CE** Marked. Ideally, they should comply with the Regulations by meeting the requirements of the [Toys Safety Standard EN 71](#).

Under Product Liability (Part I Consumer Protection Act 1987) any person injured by a defect in the scooter can sue the producer/importer for damages.

Road Safety information: Scooters

Where to use scooters

Scooters should not be used where they will cause danger, fear or inconvenience to other people, or danger to the scooter user. Riders should be particularly careful on hills as scooters can pick up speed quickly. And scooter users should avoid using them in the dark as they do not have lights or reflectors and are difficult to see.

The road

Scooters should **NOT** be used on the road. Motorists will not be expecting to see them among traffic, and because they are so small (especially when ridden by children) they are difficult to see.

Their small wheels can easily become stuck in drain covers or pot holes bringing the rider to an abrupt halt, and quite likely throwing them to the ground, in front of vehicles.

It is also dangerous to cross roads on a scooter. The temptation is to scoot off the kerb at speed in a bid to beat the traffic. A slight misjudgement could be fatal. It is also dangerous to try to “bunny hop” up the kerb on the other side. If the hop fails, the rider may fall off or be left in the road with vehicles bearing down on them.

The pavement

Most scooter users seem to ride on the pavement. However, the legal position about riding scooters on pavements seems to be unclear. It has been suggested that they are covered by the same legislation that makes it an offence to ride a bicycle on the footpath. But it seems more likely that police will decide whether or not to take action according to local circumstances.

Scooters should not be used on narrow or crowded pavements, or where they will cause inconvenience, fear or danger to pedestrians, especially elderly or disabled ones. The small wheels of scooters have caused accidents on the pavement, where a slightly raised paving block, and even wet cement, have thrown riders to the ground.

Crowded areas

To avoid collisions with innocent people, scooter riders need to keep away from areas where they are likely to come into conflict with pedestrians. A shopper walking out of a store will not expect to be confronted by someone speeding past on a scooter. A collision, particularly with an elderly person, could have serious consequences. Scooters should certainly not be used inside indoor shopping centres.

Road Safety information: Scooters

Protective clothing

The USA Consumer Product Safety Commission predict that protective clothing could prevent more than 60% of scooter injuries. If buying scooters for children, parents should consider also purchasing a helmet (a cycle helmet is probably best), knee and elbow pads and wrist protectors.

Adult scooter users should also consider wearing protective gear, particularly if doing stunts. Scooters can reach high speeds, especially on slopes, and serious injuries can easily be sustained.

Wearing bright or fluorescent clothing during the day, and reflective materials in the dark, will help other people see scooter users more easily.

accidents don't have to happen

Road Safety information: Scooters

References

¹ Consumer Product Safety Commission (2017) 'Toy-related Deaths and Injuries Calendar Year 2016'
URL: https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Toy_Report_2016.pdf?6ZwpKyiwEdVzWXhH0m0doo5cJALIZFW
Date Accessed: 21/11/2017.

² BBC News (2015) 'How children's scooters transformed the school run'
URL: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30776062> Date Accessed: 21/11/2017.