

QuickSmarts

PMDs – Get the facts



Personal Mobility Devices include e-scooters, e-skateboards, solowheels and similar devices.

PMDs are a fantastic way to get around. However, there are some rules that must be followed to keep you and others around you safe.

The facts

10 people in Queensland have lost their lives riding personal mobility devices in the past 4 years (late 2018 to late 2022).

952 people presented to Emergency Departments for serious injuries related to PMDs in 3 Brisbane hospitals alone, over a period of 2.5 years¹.

Fractures, dislocations, and head injuries were among the top 5 types of injuries. This is a stark reminder that PMDs are not toys, and serious injury can occur.

Laws and tips for PMD riders

Following the rules below will help minimise the chance of a crash and the risk of serious injury. You could also be fined for not following these rules.

Children and under 16s

- PMDs must not be used by children 11 years and under. They are designed for riders at least 16 years of age, or 12-15 years, with adult supervision.

Safety equipment

- Always wear a helmet, with the straps fastened properly. Approved helmets include bicycle and motorcycle helmets.
- You may be fined for not wearing a helmet, same as the rules for bicycles.
- Your PMD must have a flashing or steady white light on the front, and a red light and reflector at the rear when travelling at night or in hazardous conditions.
- PMDs with handlebars must have a working bell as warning device.
- Your PMD must have a working brake. Test it before each ride to make sure it is safe.

Where to ride

- PMDs can ride on:
 - Footpaths, shared paths, dedicated bike paths or the bicycle side of a separated footpath.
 - Dedicated bike paths, like the Veloway 1 in Brisbane's South, can be used by PMDs. The maximum speed for PMDs on bike paths is 25km/h.
 - On-road bike lanes where the speed limit applying to the road is 50km/h or less. Remember the maximum speed you can ride is still 25km/h.
 - Any bike lane which is physically separated from the road, regardless of the speed limit applying to the road. Physical separation can include concrete kerbing, bollards or median strips. For example, the CityLink cycleway in the Brisbane CBD.
 - Local streets where the speed limit is 50km/h or less and there is no dividing centre line or median strip.
- Always keep a safe distance from other path and road users, such as bicycle riders and pedestrians and be courteous when passing.
- Alert other path users to your presence and ensure there is no oncoming traffic.
- Slow down, if required and pass at a safe speed, allowing plenty of space.
- Take particular care around families with children or pets, and the elderly or people with a disability.

Speeding

- PMDs must ride no faster than 12 km/h on footpaths and shared paths unless signed otherwise.
- The speed limit on dedicated bike paths or permitted roads is 25km/h. It is never safe or legal to ride faster than 25km/h. Police can and will enforce speeding and you could receive a fine of more than \$500.
- Be aware that while hire e-scooters are speed limited, some private e-scooters are not.
- A safe speed for the circumstances may be far less than the speed limits. Ride safely and to the circumstances.

Using mobile phones

- Leave your phone alone when riding, for your safety and the safety of other road users. Fines of more than \$1,000 apply.
- It is illegal to hold your mobile phone in your hand or have it resting on any part of your body while riding a PMD. This includes tucking a phone into your clothing. These rules apply even when stopped at traffic lights. The phone does not need to be turned on or in use for it to be an offence.
- A phone mounted in a cradle on the handlebars of a PMD can be used for things like hands free calls and navigation or as a speedometer while you are riding. You must always maintain proper control of your device and not be distracted.

Intoxication

- Don't drink and ride. It is illegal to ride whilst intoxicated (drugs or alcohol), and extremely dangerous. Take the risk and you could get a date with a magistrate.
- Alcohol is present in almost one-third of people who are seriously injured while riding e-scooters².

Doubling

- Ride solo – passengers are not allowed on PMDs as they are built for one person only at a time. It's against the law to carry another person, no matter how small, including children. Fines apply.
- A PMD can tow a trailer with passengers provided the trailer is designed for this purpose. Riders must not tow a trailer carrying passengers unless they are at least 16 years old and any passenger must be less than 10 years old and wearing a bicycle helmet.

Risky behaviour – not giving way

- Always give way to pedestrians and share the path. PMD riders are required to obey general road rules in the same way as other drivers/riders, for example traffic lights and signs, give way rules and rules for making turns.
- Indicate when changing direction – either by using hand signals or indicators if fitted.
- Ducking and weaving close to other path users is not safe for you or the other path users. Use a bell to alert other path users of your presence, and slow down if space is limited.

Riding two abreast & towing

- Just like bicycle riders, you may ride alongside one other person travelling on a road in the same direction (commonly referred to as two abreast). This also applies on paths. However, you must not cause a traffic hazard by moving into the path of another driver or unreasonably obstructing the path of any other road user. Ensure you ride with courtesy, give way to pedestrians and stay to the left.
- You must not:
 - be towed by another vehicle
 - hold on to the back of another vehicle
 - ride within 2m of the rear of a moving motor vehicle continuously for more than 200m.

How to park

- Park in designated e-mobility parking areas, where available.
- If there isn't a designated parking area, always park on the kerbside, ensuring your PMD is upright and stable.
- Don't block paths:
 - in CBD areas, ensure sufficient space for a wheelchair to pass along the path
 - in suburban areas, park device on grass nature strip and not paved footpath.
- Keep clear of:
 - crossings and kerb ramps
 - access points and emergency exits
 - tactile ground surface indicators
 - loading zones, taxi zones and bus stops
 - fire hydrants and mailboxes.
- It is important to do the right thing. Poor parking creates problems for other path users, particularly people with a disability.

For more detailed information, visit:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/transport/safety/rules/wheeled-devices/personal-mobility-devices>

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Injury information provided by the Jamieson Trauma Institute.

- ¹ Preliminary emergency department injury data for period November 2018 – June 2021, commencing when hire e-scooters became available, for three Brisbane hospitals only.
- ² Mitchell et al 2019, over a 2-month period found that alcohol was involved in almost one-third of electric Personal Mobility Device (ePMD) related emergency department presentations, particularly after hours.