

# POWER-OPERATED VEHICLE (SCOOTER)

## ***Purpose***

Power-operated vehicles, or scooters, are designed to provide mobility for individuals that need assistance. They are manufactured with state-of-the-art electronics and battery technologies. Always read and abide by all manufacturers' operating instructions. If you have not seen a physician or therapist regarding your scooter, we recommend that you do so.

## ***Types***

Scooters are available in three- or four-wheeled models. The choice of which model to use should be evaluated before you make a purchase. The three-wheel model provides more maneuverability. The four-wheel model usually supports more weight and provides more stability but also sacrifices some of its maneuverability. Your medical equipment provider can order special scooters that can accommodate extra weight capacities and seating options. Please notify them if they can assist you in your special needs.

Many scooters can be easily disassembled into different sections to aid in transportation. These scooters will commonly separate into a front and rear section and the seat. These scooter sections are bulky and heavy; it is recommended that two or more people pick up and move these sections. Always double-check when reassembling the scooter to make sure all connections are secure.

Many scooters also have the ability to operate in a free-wheel or neutral mode. Scooters with this feature have a lever that engages and disengages the motor.

Batteries to power your scooter are contained under the shroud or in protective battery boxes and are connected to the motors with specialized cables. All batteries contain sulfuric acid in some form and must be properly handled and maintained. With the exception of routine maintenance, your medical scooter provider recommends that you not install, remove, or work on the batteries. Proper training is required to ensure the safe use of scooter batteries.

All scooters have a maximum weight limit that they can safely support. It is important to understand the limits and capacities of your scooter:

Weight of user (stated by user) is \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.  
Weight of scooter with batteries is \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.  
Combined weight of scooter (with batteries) and user is \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.  
Maximum weight capacity of scooter is \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.  
Each battery weighs \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.  
Maximum incline is \_\_\_\_\_ degrees.  
Maximum speed is \_\_\_\_\_ mph.

## Use

Each scooter drives and operates differently and each user is responsible for understanding the operation of the model provided. Always read and understand the manufacturer's Owner's Manual before operating the scooter. Scooter users often develop skills to deal with daily living activities that may differ from those described in this document. When first learning to drive, drive at a slow speed until you are familiar with how the scooter operates.

Every day before operating your scooter, perform the following inspections:

- Check tires for proper inflation and tread depth.
- Check electrical connections to ensure they are tight and not corroded.
- Check assembly to make sure all connections are secured properly.
- Check the brakes.
- Check battery charge.

The throttle lever controls the forward and reverse direction and speed of the scooter. The speed of the scooter is controlled by the degree to which the throttle is activated; the more you push or pull, the faster the scooter travels. When you fully release the throttle, the brakes will be applied.

In order to make sure your scooter remains stable, do not lean forward or sideways out of the scooter any further than the length of the armrests. Always turn the scooter off before transferring in or out of the scooter. Users and care providers should also take every effort to reduce the distance between the scooter and transferred surface. Always slow down when making turns.

Ensure that all driving surfaces, including any ramps and lifts can support the combined weight of the scooter and the user. Driving your scooter up and down inclines should always be performed slowly and with caution. Always make sure the scooter's speed adjustment is set to the lowest speed when going up or down inclines. Your scooter's ability to go up inclines is affected by your weight, the scooter's speed, the angle of approach to the incline, and your scooter's setup. Make sure you understand your scooter's limitations and manufacturer's recommendations for negotiating inclines. Do not drive your scooter up or down wet, slippery, or oily surfaces. To determine your particular safety limits, practice driving on various sloping surfaces in the presence of a qualified healthcare professional.

When shifting weight or changing sitting position in the scooter, always make sure your movements are in the same direction as the movement of the chair. Shifting your weight in the opposite direction may cause the scooter to tip over.

For charging and battery instructions, please see the Battery and Charger Patient Instruction Sheet.

The keys that are used for many scooters are very similar, and in most cases, are not unique. Make sure you understand this limitation because it may make your scooter easy to steal. Always make sure your scooter is within your sight and not left unattended in an area that is not secure. Do not leave the key inserted during periods of non-use.

## Safety

The safe use of a scooter requires it to be used as instructed, which includes the following safety precautions:

- Check tire pressure regularly.
- Store items only in designated areas.
- Do not operate the scooter on roads, streets, or highways.
- Do not use your scooter unless it has proper tire pressure.
- Do not drive up or down slopes greater than the maximum incline set by the manufacturer.
- Drive slowly when going up or down inclines.
- Do not drive over curbs or obstacles.
- Use only parts, accessories, or adapters authorized by the scooter manufacturer.
- Use extreme care if using your scooter with or in close proximity to oxygen.
- Turn the power switch OFF and making sure the scooter is not in neutral before getting in or out.
- Do not sit in or operate the scooter when it is recharging.
- Do not use an extension cord when connecting the battery charger.
- Do not under any circumstances, cut or remove the round grounding plug from the battery charger cord plug.
- Never add, remove, or disable any feature, part, or function of your scooter.
- Never carry passengers on your scooter.
- Never sit in your scooter while it is being transported in a vehicle.
- Never operate your scooter while under the influence of alcohol.

Scooters may be affected by electromagnetic interference from household appliances, which may keep the scooter from working properly and create unsafe conditions. Scooters should not be operated near radio/TV station transmitters, amateur radio transmitters, two-way radios, and wireless phones.

In order to ensure care provider and operator safety, make sure you follow these safety guidelines:

- Use nightlights to increase vision around areas of use.
- Wipe up any water or slippery floor spills.
- Remove tripping hazards (loose floorboards, uneven floors, throw rugs, extension cords, clutter, etc.)
- Install grab bars, use bath mats with suction cups, and use an elevated toilet seat to prevent falls.
- Do not use the scooter when taking any medications that may cause dizziness, drowsiness, and/or unsteadiness.

For additional home safety measures, see the Fall Prevention at Home patient instruction sheet.

## **Maintenance**

Scooters are very delicate vehicles and utilize state-of-the-art electronics and components. Scooters, like automobiles, must never be abused. Proper maintenance of your scooter will allow for many years of enjoyable and safe use.

Do not overinflate the tires. It is not recommended to inflate tires with a high-pressure system like those found at gas stations; these systems can rapidly overinflate tires and may cause the tire to explode and cause bodily harm. Always replace worn or damaged tires.

Never leave your scooter outside in adverse weather conditions or attempt to recharge if wet. Always store your scooter in a dry place. See the Batteries and Battery Charger patient instruction sheet for battery maintenance and charging information.

Your scooter manufacturer will have specific inspections and maintenances listed in their Operator's Manual; make sure you understand and follow these recommendations.

## **Accessories**

Scooters are very heavy pieces of equipment that may require a lift to transport. These lifts can be attached to most vehicles. These lift devices simplify the transportation of your scooter. Ask your medical scooter provider about the different models available to accommodate your needs.

Canopies are available for most scooter models. These canopies protect the rider from adverse weather conditions and can help make driving your scooter a more comfortable experience. Most canopies have to be specially ordered so they fit as the manufacturer intended.

Flags can be ordered that attach to the rear of the scooter to increase visibility. Because scooters are low to the ground, attaching a flag that projects above the head of the driver can increase the chances that other drivers will see you.